

THE DETACHED YOUTH WORKER

MARGINALITY, TENSION AND ATTRITION IN A  
TEMPORARY NON-PROFESSION

The Case of the Detached Youth Worker

By

W. McMILLIN CARSON, B. Sc. (Econ).

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AUTHOR: W. McMillin Carson, B.Sc. (Econ). (Queen's, Belfast)

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS:

The occupation of the detached youth worker is analysed in terms of marginality, tension and attrition. In spite of the high level of tension the occupation persists and workers remain for approximately two and a half years; this is explained by reference to the occupational ideology.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A The Problem

Since the early 1930's learned works have proliferated in respect to the delinquent subculture.<sup>1</sup> The literature is voluminous and of mixed quality. However, surprisingly little attention has been given to those who work with delinquent youth, as distinct from the delinquents themselves. The present thesis deals directly with the occupation of the detached youth worker and is thus a contribution to occupational sociology; it is hoped at the same time that it may have wider sociological implications, particularly in our understanding of what it means to occupy a marginal position in society.

This type of youth worker emerged only recently.<sup>2</sup> Prior to 1960, youth workers usually operated in the structured seclusion of welfare agencies, youth clubs or churches. With the increase of social unrest in the deprived areas of large cities, agencies began hiring men and women "to reach unreached youth".<sup>3</sup> While the occupational function is somewhat confused, it is clear that they work with neighbourhood youth who are not in contact with any ongoing agency or who, though attending agency functions are disruptive of the programme. The notion that the worker must operate outside the



agency in the milieu of the young people is basic to the occupational group.

The original intention of this study was to draw an occupational profile of a group which is currently attracting wide public attention. However, as the research study progressed it became clear that certain parameters were of exceptional interest and that examination of these would lift the relevance of the thesis out of the merely specific area of one occupation and place it in a wider and more general context.

Apparently viable projects involving detached youth workers lose their staff prematurely, people come and go from positions. Compared with other professionals, these workers are noted for the brevity of their careers. As the study proceeded, this high attrition rate became the focus of attention and the research shifted to a consideration of those factors which seemed to be associated with it. The problem, then, is to account for the attrition of detached youth workers.

#### B The Approach To The Problem

Detached youth workers do not form a clearly professional group in spite of their statements to the contrary. While the classical professions are distinguished by an occupational career which lasts for life, the detached youth work profession is marked by its brevity. Indeed research failed to turn up one worker who had occupied his position

for more than five years.

The occupation is further marked by the high level of tension under which the workers operate. In many instances this is almost intolerable, and it is not unknown for workers to suffer nervous collapse under the strain. While tension itself is not unique to this profession, the inability of workers to absorb it, and to develop a protracted occupational career, requires explanation.

It may be stated hypothetically that the high attrition rate is a consequence of the tension generated by the marginality of the occupation. The detached youth worker profession, not having fully established its own identity, appears as peripheral to the other helping professions rather than as a profession in its own right. The worker suffers from the uncertainty of his occupational position in the professional matrix. Within its own confines the profession has failed to develop the tension reducing mechanisms which would enable workers to tolerate the uncomfortableness of their situation.

On the cultural level, the marginality of the work situation is again obvious. Socialized in one sub-culture, the workers operate in another, and as a consequence they belong to neither.

The problem of accounting for the high attrition rate among detached youth workers requires consideration of a further factor. If the interpretation of the attrition rate

is in terms of marginality and tension, then the ability of the occupation to attract recruits and to retain workers for even a short period must be considered. As the research progressed it became clear that while attrition rates are high, the occupational ideology acts as a contravening factor in maintaining the profession and supporting the workers in their difficult position.

This thesis argues that the problem of attrition and retention among detached youth workers can be analyzed in terms of marginality, tension and occupational ideology. Before proceeding to an analysis of the occupation in these terms, the concepts themselves require comment.

#### The Variables

Marginality -- Marginality, or the marginal man, was first discussed in 1928 by Robert E. Park in a paper entitled "Human Migration and the Marginal Man."<sup>4</sup> In 1937, Park defined marginal man very succinctly in his introduction to a work by Everett V. Stonequist. Accordingly, "The marginal man ... is one whom fate has condemned to live in two societies and in two, not merely different but antagonistic, cultures."<sup>5</sup>

Since then the concept has been used in a wide variety of studies. At one time or another, adolescents, career-women, migrants, chiropractors, bilingual persons, monks, the hard-of-hearing, middle-income groups, catholics, church participants, factory foremen, druggists, the econom-

ically mobile, emancipated men, and sociologists of knowledge have all been considered situationally marginal.<sup>6</sup>

Stonequist,<sup>7</sup> while restricting the marginal situation to racial and national conflict, took up Park's argument and went on to maintain that the source of the distinctive personality characteristics of the marginal man is an ambivalence, or divided loyalty between two cultures. Alan C. Kerckhoff<sup>8</sup> carried this line of analysis even further by setting out more than twenty different "characteristic psychological features," grouped under the headings: ambivalence and doubt; introversion and apathy; inner turmoil and depression; aggression and paranoia.

This approach has been criticized<sup>9</sup> on the grounds that it really makes no clear distinction between the man in a marginal situation (i.e., being on the margin of two cultures) and the man with a marginal personality (i.e., showing characteristic features of personality). The main thrust of this argument is that it is possible for a person to be on the margin of two cultures without developing a marginal personality, and further that it is possible for a marginal culture to arise which is insulated from conflicting cultures and which does not promote the development of psychological marginality.

Interestingly enough, even the most ardent critics of the marginality concept have not attacked the view that a characteristic marginal personality type really exists.

What is lacking however is empirical knowledge; much of the debate so far has taken the form of attempts to reformulate the concept in terms of field theory, role theory or reference group theory.<sup>10</sup> The present study, fully recognizing the limitations of this concept, nevertheless accepts its usefulness in understanding an observable phenomena. If it is accepted that explanation consists of developing an intelligible pattern, then at least on the heuristic level the marginality concept casts light on the problem of attrition and retention among detached youth workers.

The position adopted in the present context is that marginality has both an objective and a subjective side. On the subjective side it refers to a set of divided loyalties to which the person in a marginal position feels compelled to subscribe. He is thus caught between obedience to the values of two cultures, neither of which he is able to accept fully, nor fully reject. Objectively it involves being excluded from a system of group relations in which the marginal man may wish to be involved. Marginality thus has three distinct though complementary components: 1. Exclusion from a system of group relations. 2. Divided loyalty between two cultures or sub-cultures. 3. Aspiration on the part of ego for membership in two distinct cultures or sub-cultures. These components will be used in discussing and analyzing the marginality of the detached worker.

Tension -- Is tension a psychological or sociological con-

cept? The answer is by no means clear. The term itself suffers the fate of many common words which are translated into learned discussion -- everyone knows what it means but all find it difficult to explain. In psychological circles the discussion ranges all the way from biological conditions of the viscera to the para-metaphysical conflict between the ego and the id.<sup>11</sup>

In sociological literature tension is not quite so common a term. Conflict is the much more frequent concept used to describe a state of affairs existing between parts of a system.<sup>12</sup> Those works dealing with role conflict are germane to the present discussion.<sup>13</sup>

Conflict and tension are in reality closely related, tension being the subjective experience of an objective condition of conflict. Failure to recognize this relationship has often led to debates regarding the purely sociological or psychological nature of tension. Both disciplines are in fact aware of this relationship and thus recognize the legitimacy of the socio-psychological theorizing which takes place on the middle ground between them. Harry Stack Sullivan is pre-eminent among psychologists who have moved away from the classical psychiatric position of Freud and Jung, who operated in terms of the mentally ill, to the position where psychiatry becomes the study of the processes of interaction between people.<sup>14</sup>

Within this framework tension has both psychological

and sociological relevance. It will be argued later that this relevance is not only a function of the condition itself but also of the means available for its resolution.

It is now possible to indicate the relationship between marginality and tension. To do so, we will return for a moment to the discussion of marginality. It should be noted that for a person to occupy a marginal position there must be sufficient similarity between two cultures so that the individual on the margins is uncertain about his acceptance by either of them. That is, two groups which are totally exclusive of each other will not permit one to remain on the margin between them; the person will be compelled to join one or the other, or vacate the position.

If the observation of Thomas and Znaniecki that "personality is the subjective aspect of culture"<sup>15</sup> is correct, then the relation between the marginal position and its occupant becomes clearer. The person occupying a position between two groups is molded in the partial likeness of each. Both make demands for conformity. Some of these may be met without any difficulty because of their similarity; others which are mutually exclusive cannot be met. Thus the person in a marginal position may meet some of the demands of both groups but not all. At some point he is forced to choose, although a simple choice is not possible. He is thus forced to attempt meeting both sets of mutually exclusive demands which he can do only partially. Thus certain aspects

of his life are continually undergoing change; he is constantly in a state of ambivalence. Tension, thus generated, can be visualized as the subjective consequence of occupying a marginal position. Of course tension is not exclusively the experience of the marginal position. Many other men experience it in positions which can by no means be called marginal.

It is generally accepted that the human organism requires three basic conditions to function effectively: an absence of terror, certainty of personal identity, and social acceptance.<sup>16</sup> If there is a deficiency in any of these, compensation must be made by redirecting energy away from the specific task in hand. This compensation and the necessary redirection of energy constitutes the phenomenon commonly known as tension. In a general way it may be defined as a feeling of strain, a general sense of disturbance of equilibrium and a readiness to alter behaviour to meet some threatening factor in the situation.<sup>17</sup> What then are the mechanisms usually available for tension reduction?

Obviously no occupational role is entirely free of tension in this sense. In some situations the overall tension level is higher than in others, and within any given situation it fluctuates from day to day. The occupant of such a situation may resolve his difficulty on both the social and the psychological levels. On the social, he may seek to redefine his position in such a way as to reduce the



tension which it imposes. By delegation of responsibility the threatening situation is shared, and so reduced to manageable proportions. By compartmentalizing the life pattern, the stressful situation is isolated from the rest of life, as for example, when an executive leaves his office at five o'clock on Friday and refuses to think about work until Monday morning. Tension may also be reduced by ritualizing the situation, that is by setting out specific patterns of dealing with problems and refusing to deviate for any reason. Thus familiarity with the ritual solutions reduces the number of occasions when threatening problems will arise. These mechanisms for tension reduction (i.e., delegation, compartmentalization and ritualization) will be used in the analysis of the detached worker's position.

It is not always possible to reshape the situation and so the occupant must respond on an emotional or psychological level to the threat which it imposes. Karen Horney<sup>18</sup> suggests two such responses. The threatened ego may move toward the object of his fear (e.g., an occupational position) in such a way as to place himself entirely at the mercy of his tormentors. In effect he is saying "I surrender, I am weak and helpless, do not hurt me." By this act of compliance he tries to negate the fearsome elements which threaten him. In the occupational situation this has the effect of making others feel compassionate and protective. Thus a foreman may say of a worker who employs this technique "Don't

push Joe, he is so weak, give him a chance." Horney's second suggestion is that ego may handle the threatening situation by movement against it. That is, he declares his own power by aggressive behaviour. It is as if he says "To be safe I must be strong, therefore I attack."

However, neither of these solutions can be applied over a long period. The first negates ego, thus being self-destructive and ends in depression. The second absorbs all the energy which ego can command and therefore, if protracted, ends in collapse.

A final solution is to withdraw from the stressful situation. This can be either functional or dysfunctional for the incumbent. In the former case ego takes a positive decision that "the game is not worth the candle," resigns (or leaves home) and seeks another job. It is dysfunctional when he fails to take positive action, letting the situation ride until, little by little he comes to believe that all life is nasty, the world is cruel, and so gradually withdraws into himself, refusing to become involved with others at any point; thus he suffers acute depression.

No one solution is consciously sought by an individual. Most people employ a combination of these techniques, so any specific instance of stress resolution might contain any or all of these components with one exception, viz, that the more a person is able to alter the structure of the threatening situation the less he will be forced to respond

to it emotionally in order to reduce the tension.

Attrition -- The attrition of an occupation is the rate at which workers terminate their occupational career. It must not be confused with rates of horizontal or vertical mobility within an occupation -- it is movement out of an occupational field. An occupation with a low attrition rate is one in which people rarely if ever change their occupation during their work career. On the other hand, a situation in which people remain in an occupation for only a short period is one of high attrition.

Occupational Ideology -- The concept of ideology has a long if not always creditable past. Dating back at least as far as Destutt de Tracy (1720-1796) who made it a substitute study for metaphysics, it has since been used in many and varied senses, ranging all the way from Napoleon's pejorative use against republicanism to the Marxist analysis.

In Marxist hands ideology became primarily an instrument of political polemics, which made it possible to challenge the validity of an opponent's ideas by submitting them to ideological analysis and so demonstrating that they represented nothing more than class interest. Ideology however proved to be a two-edged weapon, for as Mannheim points out, "Nothing was to prevent the opponents of Marxism from availing themselves of the weapon and applying it to Marxism itself."<sup>19</sup>

Karl Mannheim,<sup>20</sup> perhaps the greatest modern exponent

of this concept, distinguishes two levels of ideology. On the general level it represents the total orientation or essential character of the actor. It is the individual's Weltanschauung in terms of which certain meanings may be attached to his acts. It is a "dynamic" kind of understanding best achieved by sympathetic participation.<sup>21</sup> When the analysis moves from the individual to the group or class, ideology takes on its most general meaning and becomes "the ideology of the age" or "the characteristics of the group mind." The concept of total ideology attempts to place individuals or groups, in historical perspective.

At a lower level of abstraction ideology is an analysis of the actions of individuals or groups in terms of the life situation. It is this which influences opinions, perceptions, and interpretations. Ideas are seen as a function of the holder and his position in the social milieu. Thus the ideology of an individual or a group includes not only political views but also social values, attitudes, aspirations, and motivations. Typically the ideas which constitute the ideology of a group are considered to be self-evident by members. They hold supernatural authority and are therefore not open to debate. Ideology thus becomes not only the motivation for action but also its legitimization.

By exposing an opponent's ideology on the specific level one may accuse him of misplaced allegiance, if not, on occasion, purposeful deceit. However, dialogue can con-

tinue because both parties still accept the more general or paradigmatic ideology. If, however, the opponents accept totally different ideologies, then dialogue is impossible, since there is no common point of reference around which one can convince the other.<sup>22</sup>

Occupational ideology is clearly specific. It does not involve a total life orientation nor an historical perspective. If the ideas, values and attitudes of a group, as expressed in its ideology, can be attributed to the social conditions under which it lives, then occupational groups may be said to have occupational ideologies embedded in the unique conditions which distinguish one occupation from another.<sup>23</sup> In purely functionalist terms it is quite evident that men cannot act together unless they know why, when, and where to act, and it is then that the occupational ideology provides the paradigm within which these basic decisions can be made.<sup>24</sup>

Occupational ideology is only quantitatively different from class ideology. This difference springs from the differentiation of the two social groups considered. Indeed the two classifications are closely related since occupation has for a long time been considered basic to social and class stratification.

Studies in this area have not finally settled the question of which comes first, the ideology or the occupation (or social group). Most authorities contend that the group

is antecedent to the ideology. William Graham Sumner says "Men begin with acts, not with thoughts ... sentiments are produced to correspond."<sup>25</sup> Nietzsche takes the same position when he says "Our values correspond to our life conditions; when these change our values also change."<sup>26</sup> Marx could be quoted at length in defence of the same position. This may in fact be true of class, since individuals are usually born into a given social position and thus inherit a given class ideology. Durkheim makes the point that men can never recruit themselves into a class position by psychological invention:<sup>27</sup> "... thinking does not make it so;" social class has, in fact, objective grounds.

It is also a fact, however, that people move between classes and that occupational mobility is a significant factor in this movement. The factors determining choice of an occupation are largely objective, but subjective factors do play some part. This is particularly true when the choice is between a series of occupations on the same social levels.<sup>28</sup> Thus, in terms of this choice occupational ideology contains an element which is antecedent to the occupation.<sup>29</sup> This of course is reinforced and expanded by the occupational group. Examined from the standpoint of social class, it can be argued that this element of occupational ideology is part of the larger, though qualitatively similar, ideology of class.

It is important to draw this distinction because it will later be necessary to argue that detached youth workers

are able to maintain their difficult position because of their previous commitment to a certain ideology. It is this which becomes the contravening factor in the analysis.

Occupational ideology never quite breaks free of the psycho-sociological framework. So in this, as in the case of the tension variable, we must cross interdisciplinary lines.

### The Socio-Psychological Approach<sup>30</sup>

The approach so far outlined, might well be described as socio-psychological. The variables, tension and ideology, initially formulated as sociological concepts are later conceptualized as having psychological dimensions. Tension is considered the subjective consequence of social conflict. Similarly ideology is both a general attribute of class (or group) and a subjective commitment to a set of basic ideas. Thus both variables contain sociological and psychological elements. While the variable, rate of attrition, remains purely sociological, it is nevertheless true that this is composed of individual acts of attrition. This is not surprising since many behaviour patterns generally considered as sociological may also be seen as cumulative and additive aspects of individual (psychological) behaviour.<sup>31</sup>

The purely sociological and purely psychological approaches do of course provide much valuable insight into human nature. For example in the study of personality the sociologist concentrates largely on "social structure,"

"culture," and "role" as means of understanding. The psychologist, on the other hand, concentrates on the isolation and measurement of inner "traits" and their configuration. Both approaches are valuable only in so far as they recognize the existence of the variables relevant to the sister discipline and are able to assume that these are held constant. However, such an assumption is not always possible. In any situation where change over time takes place, both the social and psychological aspects must be considered together, since alteration in one has significance for the other. Both disciplines are aware of this relationship; sociologists who emphasize social interaction and psychologists who adopt a field view<sup>32</sup> of their data both take this relationship into account.

Social psychology comes into its own in the area between the two pure disciplines. It has as its unit of analysis individual behaviour in the social context. The human organism now becomes the focus upon which social forces impinge, and behaviour becomes the consequence of these forces and the individual psyche. Stated in another way, psychological elements provide the predisposing factors and sociological forces the precipitating factors which, taken together determine behaviour.

Returning to the variables of this analysis it is possible to argue that marginality taken alone might be considered a necessary but not sufficient explanation of high



attrition rate among detached youth workers. If, however, tension and ideology are added a fuller understanding is possible.

It should be clearly understood that the generic psychological propositions are ignored by this approach.<sup>33</sup>

This is quite in keeping with the above argument, since these are constant over a relatively long period. Thus psychoanalysis of the individual worker is irrelevant to an understanding of the problem. The present paper is directed towards an understanding of the dynamic interaction of the social and psychological variables.<sup>34</sup>

### C The Hypothesis

We are now in a position to state the hypothesis of this research, but first let us recapitulate the discussion so far.

A high rate of attrition is the most noteworthy feature of the detached youth work profile. It has been suggested that this phenomenon can best be understood in terms of the marginality of the work situation and the tension which this engenders in the workers. However, if the work situation is so tension laden, one must explain why people survive in it as long as they do. The answer is found in the contravening variable, ideology.

The formal hypothesis is that the marginality of the occupational role of the detached youth worker leads to a high level of tension, which in turn results in a high rate of

attrition. The ideological commitment of the workers accounts for the fact that the tension does not become so high as to eliminate the occupation. The remainder of the thesis will present data relevant to this hypothesis.

#### D Methodological Considerations

##### The Research Field

Limitations of time and resources made it necessary to restrict the research to those detached youth workers operating in the area bounded by Toronto, Hamilton and St. Catharines. Detached youth work first developed in the United States and it would have been more satisfactory to have been able to conduct the field work in some of the major U.S. cities. However, there is value in restricting the present work to Canada since there are significant differences between the occupational environments of Canadian and United States workers.<sup>35</sup> The gang culture is not so highly developed in Canada<sup>36</sup> and the problem of poverty, though obvious in Canadian cities, has not yet been segregated into the ghetto to the same extent. The difference in the size of cities is also significant. The Canadian political establishment seems, at this point in time, more open to the aims of detached youth workers and to the needs of their particular type of client.

On the general level of examining an hypothesis, the restriction of research to Canada has no significant effect.

So long as the necessary variables can be identified it does not matter where the research is conducted, or for that matter what group is considered. However, on the more specific level of understanding a particular occupation the circumscribed field does place certain restrictions on the general application of the results.

### Size and Definition of Population

An initial problem concerns identifying detached youth workers as an occupational group. It is not easy because even those who claim to be detached workers define themselves and their profession in different ways. Indeed different titles are applied to people doing substantially the same work. Some refer to themselves as workers with unreached youth, others say they are street workers. Most claim that the "pure" detached youth worker is one who works with young people outside the regular structure of an agency and who has no responsibility within it. In response to the question "What do you understand by the adjective 'detached' in the title "Detached Youth Worker?" (See Appendix I), there is wide disagreement. Some say that it means the worker is detached from the agency to work with young people in their home environment, while for others it is the youth who are detached from the rest of society, and the detached youth worker is one who seeks to correct this state of affairs.<sup>37</sup> In spite of this it is apparent that the detached worker is one who operates in the environment most congenial

to the client.

The purists are very distressed by any suggestion that people running drop-in centres might be considered detached workers. This just cannot be, because, the purists argue, these people do not make their contacts in pool halls, parks, and at street corners! Among detached youth workers, drop-in centre leaders are considered of lesser status than true detached workers because they operate in the safety of a building. This distinction is hard to understand, especially since most drop-in centres, with their non-structured atmosphere and pathological fear of the police, frequently seem much more dangerous places to work than the local restaurants. Not only is there a similarity of environment but there is no real difference between the type of young person with which each group works.

Because of the similarity of occupational environment, and of clientele, a detached youth worker is defined, for purposes of this research, as one who works with young people outside the normal structure of an agency in the environment in which the clients are most at ease. This may be the street corner, the drop-in centre or coffee house, the latter being created by the young people who use them.<sup>38</sup>

How many workers, conforming to this definition, operate in the designated area? There is no easy answer because no records exist which provide the information; the best that can be hoped for is an educated guess. One informant who

supervises a number of workers estimates that there are only twelve detached youth workers in Toronto. However, he claims to use a "pure" definition and thus excludes any who are in any way involved in an indoor programme.

A mailing list used by the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto (Nov. 1969) and covering roughly the same area as the research, listed fifty-two names. Many of these were not within the limits of the definition and had to be discarded. Taking into account the two extremes just stated and applying personal knowledge of the situation, it would appear reasonable to conclude that there are possibly thirty to thirty-five detached youth workers in the Toronto, Hamilton, St. Catharines area. This is only an estimate and is therefore open to question; however, it is accurate enough for the present purpose.

#### Research Methods

In order to gather sufficient data in the time available, it was necessary to use several sources. None of these is adequate if taken independently, but used together they provide a wide range of information about the variables.

Participant Observation -- The writer's own experience as a detached youth worker provided valuable, though subjective information. For eighteen months in 1965-66 he worked with young people on the streets of Hamilton, Ontario. During that period many of the insights and observations reported

in this thesis were formulated. A large quantity of written material was collected. This included case histories, case load analysis, and various documents written at the time for presentation to his supervisory committee, city council, and church groups. He also compiled extensive lecture notes which were used to interpret his clients to the general public.

During the actual research this written material not only refreshed the author's memory but proved to be a valuable source of data. The hypothesis, which the research is designed to examine, was developed three years after employment as a detached worker and thus did not influence the nature of the recorded material. However, the experience did influence, both consciously and subconsciously, the formulation of the hypothesis. In this sense the work experience had a heuristic effect upon the study. Rereading this material in the light of the hypothesis was most fruitful.

After the author's time "on the street" ended, he found himself much in demand as a consultant to agencies which wished to set up detached youth work projects. His own employment, while remaining in the youth field, moved further and further away from the detached situation. One agency retained him as supervisor to their worker; thus he had an opportunity to observe both the worker and the agency in detail. This was particularly helpful because, having no other involvement in the programme, he was able to be more objective than was possible in his own situation.

The Writings of Detached Youth Workers -- A second source of data is the writings of detached youth workers. Great quantities of material are produced in the form of position papers, reports, and case analyses. These are not published and can only be obtained from individual sponsoring agencies. During the research these documents were collected from as many agencies in the research area as possible; some also were obtained from further afield.

There is little or no published literature dealing with the detached youth worker as such. What publications do exist are mainly reports and analyses of programmes.<sup>39</sup> This work is of course valuable insofar as it throws light on the occupation; however, it only touches incidentally upon the actual role of the detached youth worker. The main burden of the work deals exclusively with clients, and the worker only as he interacts with them. Little or nothing is said about training of workers or about their relationship to other professions.

Structured Interviews -- The type of data discussed so far is characterized by its subjectivity. The writings are directed mainly to the middle-class culture of the sponsoring agencies.<sup>40</sup> Frequently it is intended as interpretative material and is apt to be clouded by the necessity for detached workers and their agencies to present a publicly defensible case.

In order to at least approximate a more objective understanding, the written data were augmented by a series of

structured interviews.<sup>41</sup> A questionnaire was designed around the most interesting aspects of the written material, and administered to nine detached workers in the field. (See Appendix I.)

Because of limitations on time and the possibility that the author might bias the interviews<sup>42</sup> by his presence, a research assistant<sup>43</sup> was employed. Before interviews began, the interviewer spent approximately ten hours in consultation with the author. Each question was thoroughly discussed and a few test interviews conducted. After each test the questionnaire was discussed and revised. The interviewer then conducted all the research interviews without further consultation, thus reducing the possibility that the interviewer's stance would change between interviews. Some of the interviews were recorded on tape and later compared with the interviewer's written reports.

Analysis of a Specific Occurrence -- During the period of research an interesting case came before the court in St. Catharines. A boy was charged with obscene behaviour for having certain words embroidered on his jeans. He was sentenced to three months in reformatory. In itself the case was interesting because of the severity of the penalty, but from the research point of view it was significant because this youth was championed by a detached youth worker. To gather data on this actual occurrence, the worker and his agency directors were interviewed. All local newspaper reports were collected



and examined. While analysis of this material did not provide information regarding all three variables, it did illuminate the problem of value conflict.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DETACHED YOUTH WORKER AND HIS CLIENTS

#### A The Client and His Needs

##### The Clientele Described

Much has been written about the delinquent and his culture. It is not the intention of this paper to add further to this material. However, the detached youth worker's clients are often described as "hard to reach."

This phrase is frequently repeated throughout the reports of workers. Most however agree that this is only an appearance of difficulty occasioned by the attitudes of the young people. Once the worker gets beyond this attitudinal barrier, there is little problem in establishing contact. The following quotation illustrates why the average citizen may easily perceive these youths as "hard to reach."—"There is a genuine feeling that authoritarian figures such as police, courts, and schools were out to get them (the clients) and certainly did not exist to help them. Fatalism and pessimism are prevalent. These attitudes affect every decision made, subsequently affecting the actions of the youth. For example, one youth, aged 17, who purchased a car, appeared to be making no attempt to get a license, insurance, or a change of ownership. A little encouragement induced him to get the latter two, but not the former. On obtaining a license, it became apparent that the boy had tried his written test several times previously. He consistently marked a few questions wrongly because his experience dictated that he was right and the Department of Transportation was wrong. He felt the examiner had something against him and was failing him out of malice. He tried the written test nine times before his stubbornness abated, enabling him to pass the test. The same thing happened when he

went to take his driver's examination. He felt the examiner looked down on his car - therefore he became belligerent and antagonized the examiner. He failed this test a number of times also."<sup>1</sup>

That anyone should want to reach these young people is a matter for later discussion, but the fact that they are conceived of as a distinct group does require comment.

They are best identified by their distrust of the establishment and the authority which it represents. While many have a history of involvement with various social welfare agencies, this involvement ends once they reach adolescence. They become "detached" in the sense that they have no meaningful contact with the "straight" world. They are non-joiners and their effect on youth clubs is disruptive. Having left home or been put out by their parents, their only contact with the adult world is through the police department. Any attempt by the worker to adopt an authoritarian attitude is met with hostility; consequently the worker-client relationship tends to be low-demanding and non-threatening. Sometimes a worker will unintentionally sound authoritarian and be met by what the clients call "static."

On one occasion the author was moving furniture with a group of clients. On the spur of the moment he said to a boy "put that chair in the front room." The atmosphere suddenly changed. The client stopped what he was doing and spun around. Eyes flashing and fists clenched he said "who the hell do you think you are?" Later when it was cooled out, and the client was able to discuss the matter he explained "you can ask me to do anything and I will do it, never tell me."<sup>2</sup>

Workers quickly learn to avoid this type of mistake and develop techniques by which to handle their clients. After a good relationship has been established with a group, it is possible for the worker to exercise considerable authority over it.

These young people are highly mobile, moving frequently from place to place within a given area, though never going very far afield. If they are taken by the worker on a visit to another city they seek out the same sort of environment as the one at home. It is usually possible for an established worker to find any client on any given night by just doing a round of the local gathering places. Frequently they have no fixed home, moving from "pad to pad"; they sleep with whichever friend is fortunate enough to have money for a room. Failing this, they sleep in cars, laundromats, or the doorways of apartment buildings.

One boy spent all winter in a disused car. He described in detail how he packed snow around the old car to keep out the wind. When the author remarked that it still must be cold, he replied that the Eskimos had used snow to build houses for thousands of years. Another boy recounted how he slept in the washrooms of a department store until closing time and then went to the doorway of an apartment building. He had no food for four days and was attempting to hold a job so that at the end of the week he could both eat and sleep.<sup>3</sup>

Those who have not left home frequently hold open house for their friends; if this is not possible they then come home only at night, spending the rest of the time on

the street.

Most of these young people are unemployed. With an average of grade eight education they can only get the unskilled jobs, but even these they do not hold for any length of time.<sup>4</sup> Lack of self-discipline is the most frequent reason for loss of employment. It is not uncommon to find that on the third day at a job the client takes "ill" and must go home. They are most likely to get work in those industries which require seasonal unskilled labour; consequently, they are "the last hired and first fired" off the labour market. Next to their lack of discipline, their refusal to accept authority is the most frequent cause of losing jobs. All may go well for a week until a foreman gives an order; then there is a fight and the kid leaves.

The detached youth worker is frequently frustrated by his clients' particular concept of time. An appointment in a restaurant may take place two days late because the client was "too busy." If, however, the worker is ten minutes late, the client has left and again he is "too busy." At first the worker is angry because the client has no job and obviously has all day to do nothing, but after a while it becomes obvious that his clients are perpetually on the move. They are always on their way to meet someone "to straighten out a few things"; frequently it is to discuss a real or imagined slight, usually with the hope of enlisting support. The worker's head spins trying to keep track of who said what,

about whom, where! To him it may seem trivial but to the kids it is important. Along with general gossip and news about who has been arrested, this "sorting out of problems" provides the main focus of interaction amongst the client group.

Boys generally like to be thought of as tough but the worker soon discovers that this is only a facade. Once out of their own environment or isolated from friends they become timid and afraid.

For example, during a camping expedition it was decided to play "foxes and hounds." A boy was chosen to be the fox and to go off into the bush. He refused because of the "danger"! The previous week the same boy had been observed to give a very good account of himself in a street fight. At the same camp the workers stationed themselves between the boys and girls cabins because of rumours reported by a probation officer that free sex was lined up for evening activity. Nothing happened, both boys and girls had locked themselves in because they were afraid of the dark and the noises in the bush.<sup>5</sup>

Just as they move from place to place, so they vacillate in their interpersonal relationship. Wanting a deep meaningful relationship, they make sudden but short-lived friendships. The firm friends of today are the bitter enemies of tomorrow, usually because of some trivial disagreement. Their sense of insecurity is so intense that any criticism or 'centre-shot'<sup>6</sup> completely destroys the interaction and the only alternative is to fight. By fighting they re-establish their identity, thus declaring their lack of fear.

The difficulties which the young people experience in interpersonal relationships is easily seen in matters of sex. Promiscuity is common, each affair being considered the "perfect match" although it lasts only a few weeks. Being unable to trust themselves they cannot trust each other; an atmosphere of suspicion and jealousy develops and the relationship breaks down. The new worker, especially from a middle-class background is shocked by the violence which the girls tolerate from the boys. The girls do not consider that a beating finally terminates a relationship; indeed, it is considered normal behaviour.

The author was once disturbed by a noise outside his office. He went out to find a boy holding a girl by her hair and punching her in the stomach. She fell to the floor where he proceeded to kick her. When it was over the girl left. It was anticipated she would not return for some time, however, an hour later the two were sitting holding hands in the lounge.

The author's wife was once asked what she did when her husband beat her. She was distressed that her audience would not believe her that she had never had the experience!

The level of general health is low among these young people. Frequently undernourished, they suffer the diseases common to such preconditions. They are terrified of seeking help even for the most obvious and serious disorders. The worker frequently has to accompany them to the clinic. If he sends a boy on his own, the very necessity of waiting in line is intolerable and he leaves; if he manages to get to the reception desk the most normal questions by the nurse are apt

to be construed as "centre shots" and met with hostility.

James Felstiner reports:

An older youth was in obvious need of medical attention for a special condition. For many weeks he resisted the efforts of the worker to arrange for him to be seen at a public clinic. Finally, he agreed to see a doctor, but he insisted that the worker accompany him to the clinic (a frequent request). The worker did this and left the youth only after he had been taken to be interviewed by a nurse just prior to seeing a doctor. The nurse asked the youth about his financial situation, and was probably skeptical or critical of the fact that the youth did not work but lived off his mother's relief cheque. The youth bridled at the nurse's comments on this and walked out of the hospital. For several weeks he resisted the worker's renewed attempts to obtain medical advice for him. Finally he agreed to return to the clinic if the worker would stay with him during the initial interview and up to the time the doctor actually began his examination. Later, when it became necessary for the youth to enter the hospital to obtain treatment for his condition, he asked the worker to take him and stay with him till he was shown to his bed. On two subsequent occasions the youth became upset at comments nurses made and threatened to leave the hospital, ignoring the fact that he was being helped and did feel better. His desire to leave may have been increased by other fears as well.<sup>7</sup>

Another factor which the new worker finds disturbing is the clients' ability to communicate in a language with which he is unfamiliar. This sub-cultural language is learned on the street. By its use the clients can discuss the worker in his presence and make jokes at his expense. All the worker can do is sit and feel foolish.

At first this worker found it difficult to get anyone to teach him the language. However, with time and increasing confidence teachers came forward. Once he knew a few words he was able to



use them in such a way as to give the impression of linguistic competence and the embarrassing conversations ceased. The simple explanation is that it was no longer fun to discuss the worker if he understood what was being said. However, perhaps the true explanation is that he was only permitted to learn the language once he was accepted by the group, such acceptance made this kind of kidding unnecessary.<sup>8</sup>

In spite of the apparent lack of money and obvious poor health, they cannot be described as dirty. Washing regularly, they appear for the most part tidy and clean. Usually they own only the clothing they are wearing. They have no possessions of any consequence, since, in moving from room to room they leave their clothing where it falls.

The author once found himself in the humorous dilemma of trying to sort out on the street an argument between two boys who had exchanged trousers. Both wanted to change back but neither was prepared to take the time to find a place of sufficient privacy!

As might be expected these young clients have frequently been in conflict with the law. Their offences are usually minor, committed either out of necessity or to gain status. Breaking and entering with theft under fifty dollars, along with disturbing the peace are the most common charges against boys, while girls are more commonly charged with shoplifting or prostitution. Drinking under age figures high on the list of male offences.

The worker, once he has secured his position "on the street", is struck by the openness with which his clients can discuss their crimes. Their attitude can best be expressed

by saying they are "honest about their dishonesty." Stealing is almost natural and to fail to take advantage of an opportunity for theft would be foolish if not irresponsible.

Once a worker is accepted by the group there is savage competition for his attention. If he presents himself as interested in the clients because of their delinquent behaviour then he will hear about crimes which were never committed. If the "bad guys" suddenly become "good" the worker might lose interest, so they must at least present an image which interests the worker.<sup>9</sup>

#### Interaction of Workers With Clients

All workers emphasize the necessity of being available at any time either in person or by phone.<sup>10</sup> Usually the working day begins with an appearance in court with a boy, followed perhaps by a visit to a social welfare agency. However, the real work begins about 7:00 p.m. "when the kids come on the street." The worker may just sit and drink coffee and talk with them or he may use his car to take a group for a swim; all the time seeking to "establish contact." He hears of problems and attempts to suggest solutions. He may need to interpret a particular bit of group behaviour to the police or interpret police action to his group, that is, he tries to explain one group to the other. Frequently he finds himself in the position of protecting the young people from what he considers undue pressure from the police. It is

important to note that it is what he considers undue pressure, because often the police action is quite legitimate.

The importance of this observation will become clear later when discussing the worker's values and his difficulties in distinguishing between what society in general requires, and what the youth sub-culture believes to be correct.

The emphasis which workers place on availability points to an important aspect of their role. There are no office hours; the time which is spent on the job is largely dictated by the clients. Most workers find that they are involved during most of their waking hours. This presents a serious difficulty since the average person requires some time to relax and attend to the other obligations of normal living. Many workers report that they experience severe conflict between the demands of their job and the demands of family and friends.<sup>11</sup> Nor indeed are the demands of clients restricted to the waking hours. Workers are frequently called from bed to attend to a problem which seems to the client to be a serious crisis. This is not always the case but most workers adopt the attitude that if it seems a crisis to the kid then it must be accepted as such by the worker. Supervisors experience considerable difficulty in getting workers to realize that in reality there are very few problems which cannot wait until morning, and indeed to permit a client to demand attention at any hour of the day or night may be contrary to the objectives sought by the

worker. The experienced worker attempts to have his client realize that he, the worker, has obligations to which he must attend. Most workers seem to resist this notion because they are dealing with a group of young people whose experience of the adult world has usually been marked by rejection. Thus, the rejection of a call for help even at the most inconvenient hour only enhances the client's belief that adults don't really care. Only after a long period of involvement and mutual trust can a worker refuse to answer a call and expect his client to be still interested at a later time.

It is difficult to establish with any certainty the average size of the detached youth worker's caseload. Most workers keep rather poor records, not because they are necessarily careless, but because the usual office facilities are not available on the street, nor is it easy to make notes with a number of rather active young people standing around. What records there are are usually restricted to factual information which may be required at a later date. But another factor makes it hard to measure the case-load, it may be illustrated as follows. A worker may be in a restaurant with a group of six boys and girls, three of whom may be ongoing clients in the sense that a current problem is being worked out. The intensity of the involvement with the other three may change at any moment, as for example, by the arrival of the police with a warrant for the arrest of a boy. Experience would indicate that on any given day

the average worker is intensely involved with about ten clients, less involved with twenty and only slightly involved with perhaps another twenty. In the language of the regular agency he has perhaps "fifty active files." (See Appendix II.)

James P. Felstiner in Detached Work gives the following brief summary of the detached youth worker's functions:

He arranged for medical help, job interviews and placements, provided lawyers, assisted courts in reaching the most appropriate decisions, helped to allay family dissensions and fights among peers, found places to live, provided temporary financial support, provided sources for constructive recreation, etc.<sup>12</sup>

## B Social Background of Detached

### Youth Workers

#### Educational Requirements

Most agencies advertising for staff to fill detached youth work positions want a person with at least a Bachelor of Arts degree. That they are unable to find these people is adequately demonstrated by agency reports and publications. Some agencies attempt to compensate for this deficiency by hiring more highly trained people to supervise several other workers. The field work conducted for this paper indicated that very few workers actually have a college degree; most are high school graduates and some have even less education.

Apart from the rigors of the job, low salaries contribute to this inability to attract staff with high formal education. In 1969 few workers received more than \$5,000 a year and frequently it was considerably less. It is not

that workers complain about their pay; indeed for most it is only of secondary importance. However, the realities of life must be faced. More people with higher degrees might be prepared to do this work if the remuneration were more adequate.

Agencies seeking workers are not primarily concerned with educational status; other more general qualities are required. By way of illustration the following statement should suffice:

...training specifically oriented towards street-work is difficult to establish because of the job's lack of definition and demand for diverse skills. Previous work experience in potentially relevant areas (e.g., camping) and personal skills which can be adapted to become 'tools' are useful 'training' but their development generally lies beyond the capacity of the agency; ability to make personal 'contact' with the youth is an intangible but key requisite similarly outside the agency's influence. ... it appeared to us that training and/or experience of field workers was not as important as their characteristics (i.e., personality). Even social work training though the best is available is not considered adequate.<sup>13</sup>

When discussing the problems of educational requirements, Charles E. Curry says:

Really now, how important is the success image to a youngster entering his teens? Does it really make a difference what education the potential street worker has? How much time will the workers spend talking to school officials, police, etc?<sup>14</sup>

Curry, himself a detached worker, is often confused in what he writes. However, it is obvious from this statement that formal education is not given high priority among workers.

There is a tendency in some agencies, when recruit-

ing detached work staff, to look for people who have personal experience of the delinquent sub-culture. They are declared to be those who have "made it" and are sometimes called "indigenous workers." This approach rests on the assumption that those who have had the experience best know how to help others in similar circumstances. This has very questionable consequences for the worker so recruited. It may in fact result in locking him into a deviant identity.<sup>15</sup> However, further discussion of this would lead away from the main argument.

In-service training programmes are frequently developed to assist workers. These vary in quality, sometimes taking the form of sensitivity groups but more often they become bull-sessions around mutual problems. The benefit of these programmes is reduced by the lack of objective material available for study. Some papers presented at such sessions are no more than a rehashing of the problems all too apparent to the worker. There is little or no attempt to develop a theoretical framework from which practical approaches may be derived, consequently discussion deals with specific cases in isolation. The only approach to generality emerges around recurrent problems like dealing with the police or employers.

#### Social Economic Background

Apart from the indigenous group, the majority of workers come from the middle or lower-middle class. It is hard to get reliable information about the father's occupa-

tion other than through the small sample questioned; however, it seems that they are not significantly different from teachers or social workers in socio-economic position.

### Religion

Workers are not a religious group in the sense of having strong church affiliations. If anything they are critical of the institutional church. They do, however, exhibit deep commitment to an ideology linked with a zealous crusading spirit. They see inequality and injustice in society and attack their sources (imagined or otherwise) with almost religious fervour. It is also significant that the vast majority of sponsoring agencies have at least historically religious and pioneering affiliations. Prominent among these are the Y.M.C.A. and church groups.

### Age and Sex

Male workers are in the majority of two to one in the sample interviewed and this is confirmed by examination of the available reports. This figure probably reflects the ratio of male to female clients considered to be in need. Also agencies are more aware of the disruptive influence of boys than girls and therefore more likely to consider a detached work programme a male undertaking.

In the sample the average age of workers is slightly over twenty-four years. Again, exact information is not available but general knowledge of a few workers not in the



sample gives the impression that this is probably correct. Further research is necessary on this point. If a larger sample was taken and the age of commencing employment as a detached youth worker was recorded, the average age would likely be even lower. This is predictable because most agencies assume, and probably correctly, that only a young worker can "keep up" with the clients.

### Occupational Experience and Aspirations

There is little information available about the previous occupational experience of workers other than what it is possible to glean from the field study. It seems that most workers occupied positions of fairly low status prior to their present employment. With the exception of those who had been students and moved directly from school to detached youth work, all had had monotonous, low paying clerical type jobs. After leaving detached work, some return to school to improve their education, some are taken into their agencies as quasi-social workers, while others go into unrelated fields. They all believe that they are occupationally upward mobile. In interviews people said "If you can do this job then you can do anything." In spite of their praise of the unstructured nature of their present work, all expressed a desire for more structured jobs in the future. This is in direct contradiction to their often stated reason for accepting the position in the first place; namely that they were "fed up with being part of the system," doing repetitious and mean-

ingless jobs.

### C Evaluation of Programmes

#### The Demands for Evaluation

Record keeping and evaluation are part of any detached youth work project. At first this is not surprising and easily dismissed as part of the social work modus operandi. Once the rationality behind this procedure is questioned, however, certain interesting factors become apparent.

The pressure for evaluation comes from two directions. First, workers are required "to prove" to their agency that they are doing a good job. Boards of directors are not always unanimous about the value of the work. Few people can see the work, and so the minority who support the project require from the worker evidence of success. Thus the needs of the bureaucracy for justification require evaluation of the programme, but these very needs also dictate what is to be considered successful. The criteria of success approved by the bureaucracy do not always coincide with even the functional criteria as judged by the client population. For example, less vandalism in the agency building might be considered a successful outcome by a Board of Directors, whereas a total destruction of the building and reutilization of the land might be a real success in terms of the client population.

Workers are also under pressure to evaluate their

work because it is "the thing to do." Like social workers and others, they feel compelled to worship science, and "evaluation" is one of the ritual rites. Because this necessity flows from the ideology of science, rather than a rigorous pursuit of knowledge, the evaluation becomes ritualistic.<sup>16</sup>

These pressures for evaluation have obvious consequences for the quality of the reports. Lacking any objective criteria and confused by client and bureaucratic oriented goals, the reports prepared by workers take on an air of apologia: a justification rather than an evaluation. Some workers recognize this and describe it as "legitimate manipulation of the establishment;" as one said, "They provide the money for me to do the work I believe needs to be done." The following is a gross example of the same attitude:

Some agencies are blessed with competent public relations staff. But not many. And—let's face it—the day of the long suffering, poor-but-honest street worker who quietly goes about his work without fanfare is over. This is the day of intelligent public relations—not to be confused with promotion or press agency. Street work programmes have to communicate, it's essential. They must be able to write letters, proposals, reports and informational material. Often they must be able to speak well: explaining their programme on panels, to prospective supporters, to the suspicious, in front of television cameras, to reporters. We must get across to our board, our contributors, agency heads and civic officials the need for innovative programmes and the need for support through finance, technical assistance and encouragement. And we have to polish our methods of hustling. Somewhere out

there, is the capital to help our kids help themselves. It's up to us to help them find these resources. We have to polish the area of interviewing to present our case. Then we have to teach our kids how. And we have to teach them the difference between this sort of "hustle" and the old con game they know so well. But there's danger in all this. We can't forget, not for a minute, who we are or what we're about. As we go about our public relating, we must not forget that our most important responsibility is to the kids with whom we work. Nothing is worse than exploiting the gangs in a frantic effort to get publicity or funds. (sic) 17

Other workers view their evaluative reports in a less machiavellian light. They see it as part of their work to interpret their clients to the public at large and to their boards of directors in particular. This is partly motivated by a genuine desire to educate, or the desire to reduce tension between clients and society at large. This results in high selectivity of reporting.

#### Difficulties of Evaluation

Beyond the lack of objective criteria and the external pressures on the worker, evaluation is made difficult by the very nature of the work itself. Since most of the time the worker is "on the run," dashing from crisis to crisis, he has little time for reflection. His main tool is his own personality and he thus becomes so involved in each situation that it is difficult for him to decide what change, if any, has taken place in his client. Failure to see change is very threatening to him on a deep personal level and for this reason observation is likely to be selective.

Usually it is impossible for the worker to compensate for this tendency by discussion with other workers who have had a chance to observe the same events. The worker alone sees the clients "in action," and possibly he is the only person in the adult world who has any contact with them; consequently his report must stand alone. Of course, there is always the possibility of observing and evaluating objective behaviour, but this is only really possible on more serious occasions. Thus a change in the frequency of arrest could be taken as an indication of success. (See Appendix II). Less vandalism or fewer street fights fall in the same category. However, these are gross phenomena and say little or nothing about the client's behaviour between arrests or acts of vandalism. Between "events" behaviour may have changed drastically.

#### Attempts at Evaluation

There are some valuable attempts at evaluating detached work programmes. These are notable in that they have been carried out by members of other disciplines, primarily sociologists.<sup>18</sup> They do not attempt, however, to judge the value of detached youth work programmes as such but rather to gain some better understanding of the delinquent subculture. In this respect they take their place among other literature on social deviance but contribute little to our understanding of the occupation of the detached youth worker. Most projects have, however, some written evaluation; usually

this is done by a worker who wants to demonstrate the value of the financial investment. This position is born out by the following statement:

The Y.M.C.A. along with other organizations must substantiate the fact that funds expended are reaching the desired results. Certainly this is true of the detached work programme which at times has been under criticism in various parts of the country.<sup>19</sup>

One of the most thoroughly documented and objectively evaluated projects in the research field is the work of James P. Felstiner at The University Settlement, Toronto (1961-65).<sup>20</sup> The research team consisted of people external to the agency, usually faculty members of Toronto University. In terms of the degree of interaction with the clients the report is objective, taking as indicators "number of phone calls," "initiation of phone calls," and "time spent with clients." However, when it comes to dealing with changes in clients, "The Hunt-Kogan Movement Scale"<sup>21</sup> is employed. This again depends on the subjective reporting of the worker who is placed in the invidious position of being selective. This possibility is enhanced by Felstiner's obvious dedication and personal involvement with his clients.

Most of the evaluations available for study can be characterized as apologia for reasons stated earlier. Felstiner in his earlier report says:

Although we are unsure of having caused major behaviour and personality changes, there are indications that with a smaller case-load, more consistent benefits could be derived. In countless

numbers of minor ways the worker brought help to the boys with whom he associated.<sup>22</sup>

The last sentence points to perhaps the most frustrating problem of evaluation. The detached youth worker wants to be "scientific" because that is a good thing and it satisfies the bureaucracy; however, he believes that what he does is a good thing in its own right and needs no justification by scientific evaluation. Reports are full of statements like "The worker was the only meaningful adult in the client's life," or "The worker established friendly contact with the client," or again "The worker was a friend in a time of crisis." To be a friend requires no justification. Just as the scholar considers the pursuit of knowledge to be a virtue in its own right, so the detached youth worker frequently considers his work to be self-justifying. In such a situation it is hardly surprising that the evaluation becomes a process of manipulation more than objective study.

#### D Communication

The detached worker stands at the junction of a four-way communication system. He is expected to communicate with his clients, other workers, his agency and the general public. The flow of information between the latter three differs in no way from that which takes place every day in other agencies and businesses. However, communication with the clients is quite different.

Detached youth workers concentrate on young people who find it very difficult to communicate with the rest of society. The worker's function is to re-establish some connection. He does this by his contact with the clients in their own environment, and seeks to interpret them to the rest of society, and visa versa. He runs into difficulty when the demands of the two groups are in conflict because both the clients and the agency (or society at large) perceive mutually exclusive behaviour as legitimate. Here the worker is forced to make a choice where none is possible and is likely to end up playing the game both ways.

Communication with fellow workers is difficult. Because of the nature of the task there is little on-the-job contact; what exchange there is takes place at meetings or training sessions. Detached youth workers find it particularly hard to form colleague groups, partly because of the pressure on their time and partly because of their individualistic approach to their work.

Communication with the agency is specific through the supervisor and generally through interaction with other workers. The relationship of workers to their supervisors does not appear to be satisfactory and indeed workers seem to think pejoratively of both supervisors and fellow workers who are not in detached work programmes. This flows from the highly prized and often expressed value that only those who do detached work are really committed, others take the



easy way out. As one worker said, "they are afraid to come out from behind their desks."

With respect to the general public the worker is both the medium and the message. Agencies are inclined to use the fact that they have a detached youth programme as a selling point in their drive for funds. It establishes the agencies seriousness about tackling the "real problem." As one board member asked when a detached programme was closing, "What will we do now? It was good public relations." On the other hand, the worker himself sees his communication with the public as a challenge, and as an opportunity to influence public opinion in favour of his clients. He approaches this task from the perspective of the clients, because he wants society to understand the problems and difficulties which they face.

#### E The Detached Worker and Authority

Detached workers experience considerable difficulty in dealing with authority. This is seen both in their personal acceptance of authority and their use of it in relation to clients.

##### Acceptance of Authority

Because of its nature, the occupation demands an individualistic approach. The worker spends most of his working life alone making his own decisions, often in intensely threatening circumstances. Most agencies appreciate the potential emotional danger which this presents and so provide

supervisors to alleviate the sense of isolation. The workers often find it difficult to accept this supervision because it represents the authority of the sponsoring agency. Reports are full of such comments as: "In your Association is detached work considered the dirty work -- with supervision coming from a guy who really doesn't give a damn -- but doesn't let an opportunity for public relations for himself go by?"<sup>23</sup>

This kind of comment appears again and again. Legitimation of the supervisor's authority is in terms of his own "on the street" experience. During the field study a group of workers was discovered who shared the same supervisor; all spoke highly of his help and noted that he had served his apprenticeship in detached work. His lack of formal training was considered an advantage for he was not encumbered by a lot of "useless academic knowledge." Other supervisors who had more formal education but little or no practical experience were resented. They were spoken of disparagingly as having only "theoretical knowledge."

All the workers interviewed showed some distrust of the authority structure. Even those who accepted the authority of their supervisor were distrustful of other authority figures. This is not surprising since nearly all gave, as one of their reasons for choosing the occupation, their desire to get away from being "pushed around."

This distrust of authority is never more apparent than in their attitude to the police. The author's super-

vision of a worker brought to light a situation where the intervention of the police should have been invited. The worker found it very difficult to ask for this and, when questioned about it, explained that even though she knew it was the correct thing to do, she could not trust the police to act correctly.

In their attitude to authority, workers seem to sympathize with their clients. Only from such a position is the following statement possible:

The worker consciously sided with the youth in all possible circumstances; though he often disapproved of their actions or attitudes, he continually reassured them of his support for, and interest in, them as individuals, no matter what they did. This stance, coupled with a non-directive attitude, created some difficulty when the worker sided with the boy against other institutions (e.g., the school) upon which the worker relied and theoretically supported.<sup>24</sup>

### The Use of Authority

Unless a worker is able to enlist personal respect from his clients he is unable to function in the detached work situation. Clients challenge the conventional authority structure and are therefore not impressed with the worker's position or the status of his agency. Being thus forced to depend on himself, he tries hard to develop a relationship with the clients which enables him to exercise at least some authority over their actions. This relationship is variously described as "non-authoritarian," "unstructured" or "personal." When workers describe their projects in writing

they frequently claim that it has been successful because clients have been able "to develop a mature relationship with an adult." It is hard to say what this means precisely but it does suggest that the relationship is such that the worker is unthreatened and accepted.

This notion of "non-authority" can in fact be very useful and creative. The author found that by developing an intensely personal relationship with individual group leaders he was able to manipulate a fairly large number of young people.<sup>25</sup> However, the "social price" which the worker may have to pay for this relationship can often be very high. It comes down to deciding on whose terms the relationship is developed. All too often it is on terms dictated by the client group. The worker is a "good guy" if he is prepared to tolerate a certain amount of deviant behaviour. But in his desire to establish a relationship he may end up tolerating everything but the most gross infraction of the law. That is not to say he gets involved in law breaking himself, but that he condones the actions of his clients. In the written reports this is legitimated under the heading of being "non-directive." This very non-directiveness is often taken as tacit approval and the clients are not slow to identify it as such.

Some reports describe success by saying that "the clients were enabled to develop a relationship with a mature adult;" that this is significantly different from "a mature relationship" should not fail to be noticed. However, both

the field research and the written reports frequently indicate that workers lack self-confidence and appear to give the impression of immaturity. It is probable that this is a consequence of their marginal position and the attendant lack of personal identity. Particularly those workers who find it hard to accept authority raise uneasy questions. A worker who is himself experiencing difficulty in accepting authority is at least partially committed to the same disrespect for authority exhibited by his clients. This makes it very difficult for him to decide what price he is prepared to pay in order to develop the required relationship with the clients. A real possibility here is that the worker may be manipulated by the group, and ultimately lose contact with the norms of society. He may in fact "go native" by becoming the group leader, there being little significant difference between the group behaviour under his leadership and previously.

Workers want to win the respect of their clients; this is an adjunct of authority and may prevent the worker from falling into the dilemma just outlined. Even though most have no respect for the conventional authority structure they have certain expectations of those individuals whom they consider worthy of respect. These expectations are frequently higher than the behaviour tolerated in the peer group.

The author was once reprimanded by a client for speaking of "cops." Asked why it was wrong to call the police by this title when all the other kids

did so, the client replied that it was allright for kids but not for a person in the author's position.<sup>26</sup>

The detached worker who seeks to establish a relationship by absolute tolerance may end up losing all respect and be forced to compete for a place in the group on the same terms as other members.

#### F Political Attitudes of Workers

Detached youth workers as a group are not satisfied with society the way it is. Their dissatisfaction is shared by many but they are forced by their occupation to adopt a very definite stance on the matter; it is not sufficient for them to lament the situation. They are very conscious of injustice and deprivation; they prize freedom and equality. Giving, as they do, high priority to these values they cannot work with their clients without first deciding what attitude to adopt to a society which at least the clients perceive as unjust, restrictive and full of inequality.

Two general attitudes are adopted. The worker may agree with the view that society is not as good as it ought to be, but he may suggest that it is necessary to play society's game in order to accomplish personal goals. Perhaps it is unjust that a boy should have to cut his hair in order to get a job. The worker may tell the client that employers like clean-cut boys so the hair must come off. Adopting this stance will encourage clients to accept the situation and work within the limits so imposed. At the

same time he may try to educate employers and the general public into a more liberal attitude to the deviant.

A second and apparently more frequent position taken is the view that society is bad and must be changed. Established agencies are seen as "ineffective" and perpetuating the very problems they seek to solve. All workers interviewed reported that their work had made them more politically radical. However, there is marked disagreement about how change is to come about. American reports often reveal militant activism.<sup>27</sup> This attitude is not quite so apparent in Canada though at least one worker interviewed declared himself to be a communist and stated that his whole objective was to organize his clients in such a way as to create public disturbance and controversy. He, in fact, succeeded in this, picking on a relatively minor problem and turning it into a major issue. The group he worked with frequented a shopping plaza where they were not entirely welcome. He encouraged them to intensify their nuisance value and thus created a situation where the police were called. He then made statements to the press about injustice and police harassment.<sup>28</sup>

Other workers who accept their client's evaluation of society nevertheless seek change in more democratic ways. They encourage open discussions between clients and the general public, represented by agency officials and political figures. They themselves are vocal in their attack on the establishment, frequently asking awkward questions and

entering into fierce debate.



## CHAPTER III

### MARGINALITY OF WORK POSITION

In Chapter One marginality was defined as having both a subjective and objective aspect. These were amplified by saying that marginality is comprised of three distinct though complementary components, namely: exclusion from a system of group relations, divided loyalty between two cultures or sub-cultures, and aspiration on the part of ego for membership in two distinct cultures or sub-cultures. It has further been argued that for marginality to be possible there must be sufficient similarity between the two groups to enable persons on the periphery to be ambivalent about their membership. Is the detached work occupational position marginal in this sense? This is the question which now requires attention.

It is customary in the popular mind to think of delinquents or deviants of any kind as a clearly distinguishable group isolated from the rest of society. This belief does not correspond to reality. A few moments reflection reveals how uncertain is the line between the deviant and the non-deviant.<sup>1</sup> This is most certainly true of the deviant sub-culture in which detached workers operate. Examples of interaction between the deviant and non-deviant cultures are plentiful. For instance, the author was very proud of his

success in organizing a group of "delinquents" into a basketball team and lost no opportunity to point out his outstanding success. Others were suitably impressed until it was discovered, with some embarrassment, that the two star players had regular jobs, made good money and had no criminal record. They in fact were "straight", but at night on the street they were very much members of the client group. The delinquent group is not clearly isolated from the rest of society and provides a situation where peripheral persons may be marginal.

#### A Exclusion From A System Of Group Relations

The detached youth worker interacts with at least four groups: on the cultural level with society at large and his client group; on the occupational level with his colleagues and other professional groups. The question is whether or not he experiences exclusion from any of these.

#### Relation to Client, Colleague and Professional Groups

On the occupational level the detached worker is expected by clients, other professionals and the general public, to act like a social worker, to solve the same kind of problems and to use similar techniques. But he is not a social worker and is excluded from their fraternity.<sup>2</sup> While he is expected to provide information for social workers he is not given the same access to their confidential information as

other professionals.<sup>3</sup> He is situated in fact on the periphery of the social work profession. He is, however, unable to come to any clear conception of his own professional status. The dilemma is well explained by Felstiner in Youth In Need. Discussing the qualities which make a good detached youth worker, he says:

He needs to be a disciplined person and a disciplined worker ... it is desirable that this discipline will have been learned in professional training and that he will be able to perform as a professional.<sup>4</sup>

Felstiner's argument in effect is that the detached youth worker requires the non-specific quality of professionalism regardless of where this quality is acquired. Thus, detached workers become a group which acts professionally but belongs to no profession.

Exclusion from other professional groups was experienced by the author,<sup>5</sup> borne out in the written reports, and confirmed by the field interviews. The following is a detailed report of these interviews.

All detached workers interviewed expressed antagonism toward other social workers. (Two reported dropping out of social work school because they felt it was irrelevant). In spite of this antagonism, however, working relationships with social workers is seen as tolerant to good. This, they claim, depends on making contact with a social worker who is sympathetic to the detached work approach. It is interesting that those workers who hold least to middle class values and whose

dress and appearance is nearer to their client group, reported most difficulty in working with other agencies. This is true in spite of the good name of the worker's agency (e.g., Y.M.C.A. as opposed to Citizen's Youth Committee—an unknown quantity). This highlights the personal nature of the occupational position even though workers frequently define themselves by reference to their agency rather than their occupation.

All male respondents report a negative relationship with the police;<sup>6</sup> for females it is the reverse. Thus men have to contend with open hostility while women workers are tolerated. The explanation advanced for this is that the police see the workers as crime prevention agents, a role the workers violently reject. The females are patronized, while the males are resented. Workers tend to resolve the conflict between their duty as citizens and their duty to their clients by leaning toward the standards of the client group.<sup>7</sup> This stance comes into conflict with the goals of the employing agencies, not necessarily at the level of the supervisor but more in terms of the expectations of the Board of Directors.<sup>8</sup> How such projects can continue in view of this conflict must be discussed later.

Exclusion from professional group membership is matched by the great difficulty workers experience in developing a colleague group. The following data supports this contention.

All workers interviewed, with one exception, report membership in a colleague group but meet the group infrequently. All have a few colleagues who are personal friends, and the remainder they see only at professional meetings. These meetings are informal (and non-structured). While no information is available about contemporary meetings, records show that those held in Toronto (1966-67) left no minutes other than place and time of meeting, name of speaker (if any) along with topic of discussion.<sup>9</sup> Meetings seem to have been held just for the sake of meeting. In the 1966-67 session the group had great difficulty in working out its purpose and often ended up with one worker speaking about his own project. They were typified as "sharing sessions" as if the non-membership in other groups was forcing workers to attempt the creation of their own group. However, the non-structuredness of their lives militated against this ever reaching a satisfactory conclusion.

The detached worker also experiences exclusion from a series of group relations on the cultural level. He is caught between the middle class culture from which he comes and which pays his salary, and the deviant subculture (frequently lower class) in which he works. In the regular social work agency this conflict is resolved by the client coming to the agency, thus moving out of his own cultural milieu and into the worker's. The worker is supported by the other staff with whom he interacts regularly. The

detached youth worker, on the other hand, moves out of his own culture into his client's. To do his work he must very clearly identify with the client culture. If, however, he is totally absorbed by the client culture, he ceases to be of value in terms of the goals set by his agency. If, on the other hand, he fails to identify at all, he is equally incapable of doing his job. He thus must walk the precarious line of divided loyalty between the two cultural groups. The very fact of standing in this position between the two groups leads to partial exclusion from both. Neither group fully trusts him because of his commitment to the other.<sup>10</sup> The worker, for his part, aspires to membership in both groups, attempting to change his stance according to the situation.

Workers interviewed reported acceptance by society at large as generally good (six said good, two bad, and one did not care what society thought). However, "good" seemed to indicate that society accepted what they were doing as courageous and venturesome -- "you're doing a good job, but I don't know how you can stand it" is how one worker perceived the public attitude.

Examination of press reports confirm this belief that the public has an ambivalent attitude to the work.<sup>11</sup> On the one hand, there is a feeling that it is good work and should be continued, but at the same time there is a little uneasiness about the people who do it. The press reports

focus on the glamour and the self-sacrificial nature of the workers. Detached youth workers seem to be reported in the press with a frequency far out of proportion to their numbers. It may be that their work, like that of police, is of the kind that sells newspapers. The author's own experience is that the press over-glamorizes the work and exaggerates the danger out of all proportion. The fact that this is not entirely unpleasing will be discussed later.

The structured interviews reveal some confusion around the problem of whether or not workers are stigmatized. Six respondents admitted that they felt this to be the case. This is contradicted by the fact that five felt their work experience was advantageous in obtaining further employment while three felt it was a disadvantage.

This contradictory evidence is explained by the fact that nearly all workers felt that a person who could do detached youth work could do anything. There is definite commitment to the notion that detached work is the most difficult of all the helping professions, at least so far as social work is concerned. "If you can handle this, you can do anything" was a recurrent statement among the respondents. Compared with detached youth work, all other work was considered 'safe'. The contradiction between feelings of stigmatization and the advantages for future employment can thus be resolved, if in fact the ideological commitment of workers to the danger and difficulty of their job is seen as colour-

ing their responses regarding future employment. It is also important to note that even those who denied stigmatization of themselves tended to feel that detached youth workers as a group are stigmatized.<sup>12</sup> On balance then, it seems that the work situation does carry with it some stigmatization which is, in turn, evidence of partial exclusion from society at large.

The suspicion which society at large expresses towards detached workers is matched by a lack of total acceptance in the client group.<sup>13</sup> All the workers interviewed describe their relationship to their clients as non-authoritarian, low demanding and non-threatening. This indicates a careful and rather circumspect approach to the group which would not be necessary if the worker was a well established member. The author spent a lot of time discussing with his group the circumstances under which he would call the police. He was also aware that from time to time things were going on around him in which he was not included. He was often disturbed to discover at a later date that the group had manipulated him into a certain piece of action to accomplish ends of which he was ignorant. Being left in the dark about group activities along with the continual testing of the workers' tolerance of deviant behaviour very clearly demonstrated less than total trust and a degree of group exclusion. This personal experience is confirmed by discussion with other workers. Time and again in the inter-



views, respondents, in speaking of the client group, said "they will test you, just to see how far they can go."

### Isolation

The evidence so far presented suggests that detached workers are excluded from group membership on both the cultural and professional levels and are occupationally in a marginal position. This conclusion is further confirmed by the fact that workers repeatedly complain of isolation in their work. As one worker put it "nobody seems to understand, not even you!"<sup>14</sup>

Isolation refers to two specific sentiments in this context. First, there is the feeling of being alone on the job, making decisions without being able to discuss them with anyone.<sup>15</sup> It is the sense of uneasiness one feels going into situations which are threatening.

Isolation, in the very specific sense of being alone on the job, facing every emergent crises and being forced by circumstances to make serious decisions, is hazardous enough.<sup>16</sup> However, most workers feel it is more than this. They feel alone in the sense that no one really understands what they are doing. Their efforts at interpretation to the general public are not very effective, and press reports, while they are ego-supportive for a time, soon lose their power because of glamourization. So they are alone. Being idealistic, they want to build a better world but very few people seem to share their vision; they see themselves as voices in the

in the wilderness; their efforts at mutual support are abortive so each stands alone facing what he frequently perceives as a bureaucratic and hostile world which he blames for making his clients what they are.

In the structured interviews seven of the nine respondents reported severe feelings of isolation in the work situation. The two who did not feel this way were the youngest of the group and, judging by their other responses, most nearly acculturated to their client group. Isolation in decision making was reported by only six workers.

The evidence presented above seems to confirm that detached youth workers, as an occupational group, meet one of the criteria of marginality, namely exclusion from group memberships on both the cultural and professional levels. A sense of isolation is a characteristic of the work situation and this is not alleviated by solidarity within the work group.

#### B Divided Loyalty

The second criterion of marginality is divided loyalty. This is seen as a conflict between the public and private lives of the workers and the conflict which they experience in terms of their goals and values.

##### Conflict Between Public and Private Lives

Detached workers are totally absorbed in their work. They regularly declare that they must be always available.

They work at night with the client group, and during the day they work on behalf of the same group by contacting agencies, finding jobs or attending court. Total availability means being on call twenty-four hours a day. Thus, the workers' life pattern becomes submerged in the work situation, all personal decisions about home and family are taken in the light of the demands of the job. This can develop to the point where the worker feels guilty about making private decisions. Taken to its ultimate limit this results in the worker being led around by his clients; his whole life comes under their control.

During the interviews four workers were discovered who felt no conflict between the demands of their work and their private lives. However, these same workers were most closely identified with the client group. They were unmarried, nearest to the client age, and dressed almost identically. Indeed the interviewer reported on one occasion suffering considerable confusion in distinguishing worker from client.

Supervisors are unanimous in their concern about this inability of workers to distinguish clearly between working and private lives.<sup>17</sup> Prompted by a desire to protect the health of the worker and so ensure the continuation of the project they attempt to have the worker become more objective. However, they meet with very little success because most workers see friendship with the clients as the immediate

goal of their activities. This carries with it a high level of affect which cannot be easily compartmentalized into the working day.

Workers find themselves caught between the demands of private and personal life and commitment to their clients. Some resolve this by permitting the two lives to coalesce even to the point of sleeping on the job. These are the younger, single workers who have few domestic ties. Other workers, who have private obligations, live in a perpetual state of tension between the two demands.

#### Goals and Values

A report on a Chicago youth project begins:

Chicagoans, like residents of other cities across the nation, during the past decade have become increasingly concerned with the seeming lack of adjustment of youth to existing community standards.<sup>18</sup>

This concern is basic to every detached youth work programme; although often disguised in grandiose language, it still comes down to an exercise in social control. Note the following statement of goals:

It was hoped that this (i.e., the programme) would provide these socially inadequate 'unacceptable' teenagers with an opportunity to have a programme of their own in an approved community agency.<sup>19</sup>

Workers in the sample interviewed strenuously denied the allegation, yet almost every report examined demonstrated implicitly or explicitly that the primary concern of the project promoters is social control.

The second most easily identifiable goal of detached work projects is the opening of opportunity channels to disadvantaged clients.<sup>20</sup> In terms of education and employment the worker attempts to help young people make maximum use of their potential for participation in the affluent society. It is interesting that this intention is frequently linked closely to social control. Workers readily admit to their facilitating ambitions but deny that they are agents of control. They thus see work and education as goals worthy of attainment in their own right. Any suggestion that work and education are really means of social control is fiercely resisted, yet reality suggests that such may be the case. The proposition that a measure of social control is a pre-condition of the other goals is also denied. The employment that a client can get is usually menial, uninteresting and poorly paid. Workers report that frequently their clients are forced to work for less than the legal minimum wage if they are to be employed at all. Even with the worker's intervention, it is unusual for these young people to reach a level of education that significantly affects their future.<sup>21</sup> It is possible, therefore, that the real reason for helping these disadvantaged young people is not so much to bring them into the main stream of society as to keep them out of trouble.

Helping clients to use available services is also a declared goal. By this workers mean that social welfare and medical services are available to a group of clients who need

them but in fact do not use them. So far as health is concerned this is demonstrably the case; many clients are undernourished and in poor health. However, it is not quite so obvious that they "need" services like mental health clinics, Children's Aid Societies<sup>22</sup> or the various youth clubs. These agencies all rest on the assumption that people who cannot make it in society ought to be helped to do so.<sup>23</sup> This, however, is a questionable value judgement; many young people challenge the whole basis of society and do not, in fact, want to succeed in the conventional manner. In Mertonian terms, they reject both the means and the ends of society.<sup>24</sup> This is true of both the middle class drop-out,<sup>25</sup> and, to a lesser extent, the young delinquent. The latter may in fact refuse to use the services because his entire behaviour is predicated upon a desire to beat the system. If he does accept help, it is with the desire to take what he can with little or no commitment to the notion of "rehabilitation."

These objectives stand in marked contrast to the life styles of the workers themselves. Social control is so abhorrent that it is denied, most workers describing their relationship to their clients as non-authoritarian. Work and education might well be considered concessions to middle class society. Utilization of services is contradicted by the frequently expressed hostility which workers feel towards established agencies. The workers interviewed demonstrated this confusion by rather general and non-specific statements

which avoided the necessity of facing the inherent contradictions of the situation. When this matter was probed further in terms of the values upon which the goals were predicated, the responses became even more confused. The interviewer noted that respondents became uneasy and appeared to feel threatened. It was often difficult to distinguish between what a worker declared as his own values and those which he attributed to the client group, even though the two were distinguished in the question. Thus to be against the establishment was often regarded as important, yet the same workers declared their intention to relate clients to establishment agencies. The clients seem to share the anti-establishment position but it is difficult to tell from the data collected who learned it from whom. The following extract from a private letter to the author is interesting in this connection:

The detached workers, with whom I am in contact, identify with the kids they work with to a surprising degree in speech, dress and outlook, and their distrust of, or disillusionment with, even the best of the youth-serving agencies make it difficult for them to help the kids get access to services or to resolve their conflicts with various authorities. I imagine that one of the toughest problems for these workers is keeping a foot in both worlds (sic) -- I am doing what I can to help! 26

The anti-authoritarian stance of workers is reflected in the notion of being a friend to the client. In this respect values and goals match. However, conflict arises when

those holding anti-authoritarian attitudes set out to help others to accept the restriction of society. The latter is an objective of any social work agency; detached workers say they try to relate their clients to agencies, but these agencies accept the rules of society which require respect for authority. It may be expected, then, that the relationship established by a worker, between a client and an agency, would not be long lived. It appears in fact that most of this "bridge" work is related to crisis help (a bad trip, pregnancy, medical help), and has only the limited intention of getting help at once with little attention to the problems implicit in protracted involvement.

It seems, therefore, that workers are confused about their values and goals. They are very uncertain whether they give allegiance to the rules of society or to those of the client group.

This contention is further supported by evidence of conflict between workers and their sponsoring agencies.<sup>27</sup> The values and goals of the agency representing the desires of society are frequently at variance with the wishes of the clients. The worker is forced, therefore, to divide his loyalty between his employer and his friends. Were he able to see these young people as clients, this might be resolved by objectification, but this is precluded because of the method by which the programme is developed.



### C Aspiration to Group Membership

The third condition necessary before marginality can be attributed to a work position is that the occupant must aspire for membership in at least two groups. Such membership must be possible but only in one group at a time.

That workers desire to be members of the client group is amply demonstrated by their written reports and project descriptions. The evidence can all be subsumed under the recurrent phrases "establish contact" and "be friends of the kids." Every report examined contained these notions. They are described as going into a foreign culture to make contact with otherwise unreached youth. Offering themselves as friends, the relationship created is non-authoritarian and unstructured. It is as if each worker must decide how far he must go in his friendship to ensure satisfactory contact. The worker thus seeks membership in the client group as part of his job specification, and without this ambition he will fail utterly.

On the other side, workers claim membership in middle class society. From the perspective of their work, this is necessary for interpretation of their clients to society at large; it is also essential if they are to be able to assist clients in handling the system. Sponsoring agencies want workers to maintain this distinction, as is demonstrated by their attempts to prevent workers from taking clients to their homes.<sup>28</sup> But this is not complete membership. Some

workers are so closely identified with the client group in dress and manner that the uninformed cannot readily distinguish them. Knowledge of their work carries with it a certain amount of stigma,<sup>29</sup> and so there is a sense of not totally belonging to the middle class culture. The worker is only fully accepted in middle class society when his occupation is not known and he is inconspicuous by reason of dress and manners, or when he is especially invited to a group because of his occupation. In the latter situation he is regarded as a heroic figure, courageously sacrificing himself in strange and dangerous places.

The detached youth worker may thus be regarded as a person of middle class origin who seeks membership in a deviant subculture and by virtue of this, sacrifices part of his middle class identity. However, he must maintain some communication with middle class society in order to serve his clients and influence middle class institutions. Some agencies hire indigenous workers, that is, those members of the deviant group who come closest to sharing the middle class values of the agency. These people share the same difficulties as their middle class colleagues, though for them it is their aspiration to middle class status which requires them to sacrifice full membership in the deviant group.

#### D Conclusion

It seems reasonable to conclude on the basis of the foregoing information that the detached youth worker does in

fact occupy a marginal position. He definitely experiences some exclusion from his client group. Other professional groups do not consider him an equal, and his own efforts to develop a professional group do not meet with great success. Loyalty is divided between the client group and middle class society in general. His disloyalty to society may result in stigmatization. Aspiration for membership in the client group may or may not be his own, but it is certainly forced upon him by the implications of his work. Approval of his employer requires that he aspire to be a good middle class citizen, yet he must join the delinquent group (although not totally because this would result in exclusion from the main stream of society and loss of employment). Thus, he must work in that very hazardous position where he is in, but not of, his client group; and in, but not of, middle class society. He is, in fact, marginal to both.

## CHAPTER IV

### TENSION AND ITS REDUCTION

Every occupational position involves some tension. The intensity of this and the facilities for its reduction determine the comfort of the incumbent and, consequently, have a significant influence on the length of time he continues in the position. In Chapter One we argued that the human organism requires freedom from fear, certainty of personal identity and a degree of social acceptance to function efficiently. If these conditions are not met, it is necessary to redirect energy in order to maintain equilibrium; this places the organism in a condition of tension. In other words, tension is a general sense of disturbance of equilibrium and a readiness to alter behaviour to meet some threatening factor in the life situation.

It was further argued that tension is the subjective experience of an objective condition of conflict. Chapter Three described the marginality of the detached worker's occupation and contended that this, in fact, is a position of conflict; thus tension can be seen as a condition of occupying a marginal position.

Attention now shifts from the occupational position to the worker who occupies the marginal role. It can be argued that, tension-laden though the position is, it is not

this which differentiates the detached worker from other occupations but, rather, the lack of means for tension reduction. This lack is not an unfortunate consequence of the position but implicit in the very nature of the task which must be performed.

It is important at the outset to realize that the worker voluntarily accepts his position and its marginality. Unlike other professionals, who first choose their occupation and later discover its marginality, detached youth workers choose to be marginal.<sup>1</sup> It is a prerequisite of the work and might almost be written into the job description.<sup>2</sup> Indeed marginality is the dominant trait of the position.

#### A The Tension Laden Nature of the Work Position

Working hours, particularly in the early days of employment are constantly overshadowed by a sense of terror.

An ex-detached youth work supervisor recounted an experience from his work in Philadelphia. One night he got a call from one of his workers in the field; "come quickly" said the worker "they are going to kill him." The supervisor alerted the police and went at once. He was too late, the field worker was standing over the body of a dead youth who had been shot in the stomach with a shot gun at short range. The culprits had fled.

Later the worker stood by the casket as gang members filed past. Along came some of the attacking gang, who had, however, not been directly responsible for the murder. As they looked at the body they were heard to remark, "man he looks cool." The youth worker suffered a nervous breakdown that day and was admitted to a psychiatric hospital.

While this is a drastic illustration and perhaps more applicable to the U.S., it serves to indicate the presence of terror. The author well

remembers being present when the police fought with about a hundred young people. The violence and hatred were quite beyond his experience and produced all the psychological symptoms of fear. After the event he was overcome by sheer exhaustion.<sup>3</sup>

This animal fear of moving in circles which regular citizens seek to avoid is almost enough to paralyze action. It is not so much the fear of what is actually happening, since the worker acts almost instinctively, but the fear of what can happen which produces tension. The general stance of the work is one of uncertainty, both about his identity and his group membership. One authority commenting on the serious turn-over of workers says: "An important factor is that the job is so gruelling that its strains can be managed just so long, with advancing years making them harder to accept."<sup>4</sup>

The burden of tension is further increased by the necessity placed upon the worker to assume a non-identity. That is, the worker must not be too much of anything. One worker put this succinctly when he described himself as a "free-lance individual." In other words, he is forced back upon his own inner certainty of himself rather than being able to draw any support from the identity of his role. "It is the ability of the worker to make relationships with individuals and groups that they can understand and accept, which gives (the worker) identity."<sup>5</sup>

The problem of social acceptance has already been

dealt with. It is inextricably intertwined with the question of identity. Acceptance by society at large (including other professions) and the client group depends upon being readily identified. If the worker assumes any of the acceptable identities too forcefully, then he at once excludes himself from one or other of the groups. Such exclusion negates his work position and destroys his usefulness. Thus in terms of fear, personal identity and social acceptance, the detached youth worker is placed under severe tension simply because he has chosen to occupy a marginal position.

#### B The Accessibility of Tension

##### Reducing Mechanisms

Is the detached workers' task any more gruelling than a doctor's or a policeman's? These people face crisis situations day after day. Many doctors spend long hours "on call" without relief. What then is so distinguishing about the detached youth worker "that advancing years makes harder to accept"? The answer seems to be that while other occupations have available to them adequate reduction mechanisms, the detached worker is denied these advantages by virtue of his position and the task he must perform. What are these mechanisms and why are they denied to workers?

##### Sociological Mechanisms

The detached worker occupies the lowest position in a bureaucratic hierarchy and, as such, is required to interpret

his work in terms intelligible to the bureaucracy. It is impossible for him to build up a bureaucracy of his own and place himself at the apex. His own person is his only tool and his personality almost his only resource. This inability to bureaucratize precludes many of the sociological mechanisms of tension reduction, for these, to a large extent, depend upon the creation of such a structure. In Chapter One it was suggested that redefinition of work position, delegation of responsibility, compartmentalization and ritualization were possible sociological tension-reducing mechanisms. It now remains to ask if they are available to the detached youth worker.

Redefinition of work position -- The worker is unable to act upon his position or to alter it. He has chosen to be an outsider working with outsiders, and any attempt on his part to alter the relationship in which he stands destroys his value as a worker. He may attempt to alter his perception of this situation by reducing his interactions to a series of ritual statements. However, these soon become phoney and destroy the work he is attempting. He cannot live by any set routine because he surrenders the control of his own time into the hands of his clients. He may struggle to regain control later in his career when he is established on the street, but it is then too late. Part of the condition of his acceptance by the client group is his willingness to come when called. Change this and he places the whole relationship



in jeopardy. He cannot even relieve the position by merging the conflicting roles which he must play, into a composite role, unless in the very general sense of "being a man."

He may find some respite from his stressful position by reorganization of his belief system. In this way, it is possible to come to the point where he can identify the demands of people, other than his clients, as illegitimate or unworthy. If this is successful, he can interpret the inevitable criticism attendant on his failure to meet these demands, as a sign of his success as a worker "outside society." However, this situation cannot be long lived, for ultimately he must either accept the demands of society (agency and other professions as well as the public), or drop out and become totally identified with the clients. It seems from the interviews conducted that many choose this alternative. All respondents reported that their work had made them more radical. They drew strength from the vision of themselves as revolutionaries out to change "the system." But a revolutionary must either see some success for his efforts or lose his vision. The disillusionment is hastened by the clients on whose behalf he wants to enact change. They let him down at every turn because they do not share the vision and so fail to see any significance in the desired changes unless these changes make life easier. Two examples may illustrate the point:

The author once was distressed about a certain

institution which discriminated against his clients. He got the leaders of this institution to meet his clients to discuss the situation. After three nights of heated debate, it was decided that the segregation policy should be dropped. The clients came away delighted but never again used the facility even though they had brought the problem to the worker's attention in the first place.

On another occasion he was invited by a church congregation to preach at a contemporary service. The music was in the modern idiom and so he thought some of his clients might like to attend. They were delighted and packed the car. However on the return journey, it was obvious from the atmosphere that the group was angry. He was rather alarmed because he imagined that it might have been something he had said which had caused the difficulty. At last he plucked up courage and asked what was wrong. One boy gave the answer for all. He said "I have not been in church since I was in K... Penitentiary and to go back now and find that that is what they have done to the good hymns." Obviously for them guitar music, rock bands, and religion do not mix! This is just a further illustration of the frequently made point, that delinquents are conservative.<sup>6</sup>

The worker has, in such circumstances, altered his belief system in such a way as to project onto the clients a radical position which they in reality do not possess.

Compartmentalization -- It is difficult for a worker to compartmentalize his work and so cut off one set of tension-causing factors at a time. He cannot interact freely with his clients and disregard the demands of his agency and society. Nor can he isolate his private life from the clients. He has surrendered his privacy by accepting a high degree of availability to clients, and so his private hours are interrupted. He cannot easily send a substitute since the clients

are only ready to talk to him on the basis of long acquaintance. Thus he must go or no one goes.

Delegation of responsibility -- It is the intensity of the primary relationship which makes the delegation of responsibility impossible. If the worker attempts to use leaders in the client group he only adds to his own state of tension by accepting responsibility for actions which this leader might take and which may be based on an entirely different set of values.

The author learned this from sad experience. He gave one boy responsibility for ensuring that others went to work on time. This seemed a simple thing and should have succeeded. However, one day he came upon the said youth beating a client with a sawed off pool cue and saying "M... said you were to go to work and I am damn well going to make sure you do."7

It is only a little easier to delegate responsibility to a fellow worker. The worker/client relationship is typified by friendship and friends are not interchangeable. A client may accept a fellow worker because he is a friend of the known worker, but this new relationship must be tested and so the newcomer must start almost as far back as the original worker.

Ritualization -- The detached youth worker is usually unsuccessful in reducing tension by developing standard techniques for handling recurrent problems. Only in the most general way are situations repeated, and most workers take advantage of this by learning, as they say, "to ride with the punches." There is little possibility of developing a

series of precedents for future guidance. It does seem, however, that some relief is found by developing a series of fairly intense personal relationships with clients and professional workers which may be used repeatedly to handle given types of occurrences. It is not uncommon for a worker almost unconsciously to cultivate the friendship of the toughest or most respected boy on the street, and then use this boy to handle violent situations where his relationship to the client group precludes calling the police.<sup>8</sup>

#### Psychological Mechanisms

If social ways of altering the situation or changing his response are unavailable to the detached youth worker, how then can he tolerate the strain of the position? That he must be able to find some method of handling the difficulty is obvious from the fact that on an average he remains in the occupation for approximately two and one-half years. To find an answer, attention must shift to the worker's emotional responses. As stated earlier, he may either move toward the threatening situation in compliance or against it in hostility.

Compliance -- Many workers seem to be able to accept the compliant alternative. They seek to be good members of all groups, pretending to meet all the demands of the conflicting loyalties. In the early stages of the game this is relatively easy. Filled with enthusiasm for their work, for no

one can deny that they are dedicated, the very stress they are under spurs them on to fantastic efforts. They attend all the meetings scheduled by their agency, they pay strict attention to their clients without regard for sleep or nourishment. Before the general public they accept the popular benevolent opinion of the clients, and among the clients, they accept the client view of life. But this cannot last long. Soon they find that clients are not changing their way of living. The worker's acceptance<sup>9</sup> of clients' behaviour has gone too far, and consequently he has become the "right guy" who accepts them as they are and makes no demands for change. The worker finds it easier this way but his clients derive no benefit. The agency and society at large also fail to change. They are no more understanding of the needs of these particular clients than they ever were.

This deceptive state of affairs could continue indefinitely, neither party ever discovering that there was no real advantage to be derived from the project. The worker, through his subjective reports, may create an illusion of success.<sup>10</sup> All would be well if the worker could tolerate the ego negation implicit in this situation. But no one can be "all things to all men" for very long. The result may be a nervous breakdown.<sup>11</sup> He cannot go on refusing to accept his failure with equanimity. Collapse is hastened by the high personal commitment the worker has invested in the job.

Aggression -- Another emotional solution open to those embattled in this highly stressful position is to attack the persecutors. Open hostility to the source of discomfort enhances ego. Workers who choose this solution usually attack the establishment on every possible occasion. They are vocal in their criticism of all in authority. Hostility is most easily directed against the agencies with whom they interact. The workers are the champions of the underdog; they will not let people be "pushed around" by Public Welfare or "treated unfeelingly" by Children's Aid. They attack the educational system which "destroys the minds of young people." They reject society's demand for conformity. It is not so easy, however, to direct hostility toward clients. Any hint of rejection and the client is one no longer. On some occasions, however, it is possible for the worker to display hostile feelings in this connection, particularly if he is tired and depressed and no longer cares whether a specific client relationship is maintained. This is usually done selectively so as to protect contact with a core group of clients and discourages others. In this the worker may in fact be reflecting the feelings of the core group. Usually clients are known to each other and consider the worker as their special property; they resent the intrusion upon his time of other clients whom they do not know. It is against these strangers that the worker is prepared to direct his hostility and so limit his case load.

This hostile behaviour cannot continue long. At first it provides the worker with the needed security to do his job, and indeed so long as it is generalized as an attack on the establishment it may cause little difficulty. However, once it reaches the point where workers in other agencies begin to kick back at the employing agency things get out of hand. At first the employing agency attempts to quieten the worker, and his supervisor will discuss the implications of his behaviour. If the supervisor does not perceive that the behaviour is only a symptom of the deeper difficulty implicit in the situation, it is unlikely there will be any change. These efforts are likely to be interpreted as an attempt at forcing conformity and the worker-supervisor relationship breaks down. At this point, the negative voices of some agency directors are likely to be heard. They see the worker's public pronouncements and individual attacks as a threat to the financial security of the agency. Meetings are called to re-evaluate the project, and people are heard discussing whether or not this is the kind of project this particular agency should undertake. Appeals to the goals of the agency may result in a re-definition of the value of the work.

If the attacks persist it is likely that the worker will succeed in rocking the establishment at a rather vulnerable point (In one situation observed by the author the final blow was a public attack on the police department).<sup>12</sup>

The worker is now redefined by other agencies and the public at large, the public media playing its inevitable role. What he is attempting to do with his client is no longer "a good thing"; the employing agency must bow to pressure or risk heavy financial loss, so he is fired and the project ends. It may re-emerge later, but only if the agency staff is able to redefine the goals in terms compatible with those of the agency, which have so recently been refurbished as a result of the late disaster.

Compliance and hostility, while adaptive responses to the stressful situation, soon lead to disfunctional conditions for both the worker and his agency. Usually the end result is the same -- the worker leaves. He does not leave because he wants to, but because he has failed to accommodate to the stress of his position. He is angry with himself and may suffer deep depression if he fails to recognize that the fault is not in him but in the position he tried to fill.<sup>13</sup>

#### Withdrawal

However, all detached youth work careers do not end in this way. Many, and perhaps most, come to a positive conclusion. The worker has survived as long as possible using what techniques he can to handle the stress, but at last he makes a conscious decision to change his occupation.

When describing the reasons why their own careers would ultimately be terminated, interviewees pointed very



clearly to the stress of the marginal position.<sup>14</sup> With the exception of the low income, all reason pointed to a need for a greater security and a more formal structure. This latter is particularly surprising in light of the fact that one of the most frequent reasons given for entering the profession is desire to escape the structures of bureaucratic institutions. Apart from those who leave and seek employment elsewhere, others gradually change the slant of their work until they move back into their agency and a more secure position. This is frequently accomplished by a redefinition of the project on the part of the employing agency.<sup>15</sup>

As has been said, the average career of these workers lasts about two and a half years. How do they survive so long in so strenuous a position bereft as they are of many of the usual facilities for tension reduction? They say of themselves that the ability to tolerate tension is a requirement of their work. But two and a half years seems a long time even for the most self-sufficient individual. They are inclined to argue that it is physical stamina which is required. The literature is replete with references to the strain imposed by their constant availability.

Elliot Jaques<sup>16</sup> suggests a possible answer. His research on management problems over a period of nineteen years produced the following conclusions.

- i      Hard work and long hours are not sufficient conditions to produce symptoms of stress.

- ii Stress inducing situations involve a responsibility for tasks which are either impossible or too difficult.
- iii The individual must be sufficiently self-destructive to remain in such a situation.

It is significant that every detached youth worker interviewed gave not long hours and hard work, but frustration or uncertainty about the validity of the work, as the primary reasons why people leave the occupation. It is the very real frustration of rarely seeing any success. This is not relieved by any feed-back which might indicate improvement in client behaviour. The longer a respondent had been in the occupation, the more keenly he felt this frustration, and the more he linked it with the lack of objective evaluation. But why do they continue? Is it possible that something they possessed early in their career is beginning to fade?

Jaques' third point provides a clue. People who remain have a high propensity for self-destruction. There is nothing surer to produce this propensity than commitment to an ideology. Is it this that at first gives the real rewards and in the end fades? Is this in fact the contravening variable?

## CHAPTER V

### OCCUPATIONAL IDEOLOGY

#### A The Ideology of Service

Detached youth programmes rest on a well developed ideological base. On the general level this provides the motivation for the development of programmes, and on the particular level it provides support to the workers.<sup>1</sup>

All detached work proceeds from the belief that the unreached must be reached. For young people to be out of the main stream of society is very unnerving for everybody. Even if they are not delinquent, they are deviant. Project planners frequently talk of "reaching out" to these youths so that they can become involved in "ongoing" programmes. A study conducted by the Toronto Social Planning Council includes the following statement:

Most of the agencies included in this study embarked upon detached youth work as a result of a recognition that the agency programme was not reaching a considerable number of disturbed youth. One agency emphasized that disturbed youth were a disruptive influence in the agency itself. These boys and girls were constantly challenging and defying the agencies' staff.<sup>2</sup>

Implicit in this is the assumption that there is something wrong with being a non-joiner; few even stop to consider that, for some young people, ongoing programmes as they now exist may have little to offer. The school drop-out is

not always stupid; sometimes he is too smart for the system and finds it unchallenging. The recent motion picture, "No Reason to Stay,"<sup>3</sup> declares loudly youths' counter-ideology.

Consider the following:

The conscious formulation "the unattached" is itself evidence of the immense gap that is increasingly revealed in the structure of modern society; "youth" and especially "unattached youth" have now become a "problem" to be investigated. This is a measure of the distance between "insiders" and "outsiders."<sup>4</sup>

"Unattached youth" have become a "problem." The "insiders" are not content to remain inside but must engage in activities which are designed to persuade "outsiders" to come "in."

When detached youth work programmes are directed toward crime prevention in the manner described by Spergel,<sup>5</sup> then this ideological commitment is circumvented. However, in practice, few agencies or workers are prepared to see their project in this light. They see themselves as building a bridge out from existing agencies to enable "unattached" youth to make more use of the available services. Commendable though this may be from the point of view of middle class values, it is nevertheless disconcerting to come up against an unattached youth who has no need of the services provided.<sup>6</sup> What is basically being asserted by these programmes is that most young people need most of the services available. The unreached must be reached; the unattached must be attached; but why? While welfare agencies tend to give answers in

terms of humanitarian concern, more tangible answers come in the form of dollars and cents saved for the taxpayer by preventing the need for institutionalization. The success of these projects is not immediately evident, and a dangerous by-product of the work may be that some young people learn more skillful ways to manipulate the system.

It is very soon apparent that "problem" youth are more problematic for those who feel they ought to work with them, but experience great difficulty in doing so. One agency emphasized that disturbed youth were a disruptive influence in the agency itself.<sup>7</sup> In such a situation the detached youth work programme comes to the aid of the agency.<sup>8</sup> It provides a means of working with "disturbed youth" outside the agency. Thus the agency can be faithful to its ambition to serve all youth and yet protect its programme from disruption. Thus the ideology of service can be maintained and the pressure on other agency programmes reduced. The only point at which this breaks down is when the detached youth worker starts to succeed in relating unattached youth to ongoing programmes. Then the conflict becomes apparent, and the "unattached" youth soon learn that they are not, in fact, wanted inside the building. The following is illustrative of the problem:

The most difficult time we ever had was one occasion when about four boys used the pool. The worker with the project was present and the regular lifeguard was instructed to act only if safety was in jeopardy. The boys hardly swam or used

the facilities at all, but indulged in wild behaviour, involving running around the pool deck and throwing the practice boards at each other, and it is possible that the presence of the life-guard led to it. The boys seemed much more comfortable when in small groups of two, three or four when their own worker was present. It was only at these times that they would try out a new skill, or attempt to improve on known skills. They seemed to need a great deal of encouragement from their worker and derived much satisfaction from showing off a learned skill to other familiar workers. They often reacted to praise from other workers by performing some childish act, such as falling backwards in the pool, or ignoring the praise altogether. In the gym they enjoyed individual activities such as games of twenty-one with their worker, or aimlessly throwing a basketball in the net. They did not seem to enjoy any activities which involved competition. Their favourite overall activity was using the weights, and it may be significant that the weight training room was the one area where discipline problems were minimal. (Sic) 9

The ideology of service<sup>10</sup> and its concomitant that the unreached must be reached and given service whether or not it is required, provides the background against which the detached youth worker profile must be viewed. Once this is accepted, some of the stronger features of the occupational position are understandable.

#### B Ideology of Self-Sacrifice

Workers see themselves as engaged in a heroic enterprise for the "unreached."<sup>11</sup> As one detached youth worker put it, "Detached work is a romantic and exotic occupation," where one is able to be a "freelance human-being." The greater the danger and the more excruciating the sacrifice, the better pleased the workers seem to be. By this, they

declare to their clients that they "care!" Their raison d'être is a crusade for humanity.

This may explain the hostility toward social workers, and the conflict between street workers and drop-in centre operators. To the true detached youth worker, these people represent the easy going attitude of those who have betrayed the faith by choosing to work in a building; they are seen as having exchanged danger for safety, sacrifice for security. This in turn is seen as a measure of their not caring and an explanation of why clients do not go to them. Committed to their ideology, workers are initially idealistic about what they can do. As was discussed earlier, they are political activists dedicated to changing the system.

### C The Myth of the Mature Adult Relationship

Though the ideology may take on the glow of revolution, the worker is still faced with the stark reality of "relating to the clients." While he may imagine this comes about because of his sacrificial service, there is some evidence to suggest that the clients interpret it as the activity of a "sucker."<sup>12</sup> How then is the relationship established? The worker attempts to establish a primary relationship and sets out to be a "friend" of his clients. By building a low-demanding relationship, the worker is able to create an appearance of success which in turn he can attribute to his self-sacrifice.

Dropping the requirements of the relationship to this level has another effect, arising out of a subsidiary ideological position adopted by many agencies. (Perhaps ideology is too strong a term to use here, and it would be better to speak of myth even though no pejorative criticism is intended). The friendship relationship rests on the assumption, stated by many, that an unattached youth cannot help but benefit from contact with a mature adult. This is problematic in two respects. First, it is by no means certain that detached youth workers are mature adults. Indeed, the following quotation implies something to the contrary:

On the other hand, there is considerable evidence that some detached youth workers were undisciplined and unskilled in their use of themselves as helping persons.<sup>13</sup>

Second, there is no real ground for believing that such a relationship, based as it is on the non-demanding attitude of the adult, does produce any effect. However, in terms of the public media's preoccupation with the "generation gap" this establishing of contact is "good" in and of itself.

The real effect of this low demanding relationship is, however, very significant for the detached youth worker. Having removed the basis of the relationship from the rational to the ideological, it is now placed beyond challenge. Evaluation now becomes impossible in any objective sense since the relationship is itself declared to be a "good



thing." However, evaluations continue to be made, and it is tempting to regard these as efforts to amass reliable knowledge for the subsequent development of the profession. This unfortunately, is not the case; the evaluations are ritual acts which formalize the general ideology held by the agency. They provide the "evidence" needed to satisfy the board of directors and the public which finances the project.

#### D Conclusion

It is the reinforcement of the notion of sacrificial commitment by the public media and the low level of objective validation made possible by the myth of the mature adult relationship which, taken together, constitute the contravening variable which helps to explain why workers continue in the occupation even under conditions of severe stress.

Neither financial reward nor freedom of action would be enough to ensure this continuance. As Elliot Jaques discovered of his managerial staff, the individual must be sufficiently self-destructive to remain in such a position.

These workers are self-destructive, but not blindly so; they have a cause and this is confirmed by the press. However, there is a limit. They start with a burst of enthusiasm, frequently to the accompaniment of press adulation. Agencies are not slow to declare that the project has been launched. But the press is a fickle friend, and soon its attention shifts to other and more exotic fields, leaving the worker alone. The excitement starts to fade and the worker finds

himself calling his ideology into question. If his ideological commitment is so strong as to remain unshaken, he soon starts casting about for another way to accomplish the same ends. It is no accident that many detached workers are under twenty-five. With the exuberance of youth, self-destruction is meaningless for them, but with passing years, the realization gradually dawns that self-destruction is just that, frequently passing unrewarded and unnoticed.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters describe the detached youth worker's occupation. While considerable information is provided about their clients and the actual mechanics of the job, it is the high attrition rate among workers which is the focus of attention. In conclusion, therefore, it is the factors which lead to an understanding of this phenomenon which are summarized in Section A of the present chapter. In Section B some implications of these findings are discussed briefly. Section C suggest some areas for further research.

#### A Discussion of the Hypothesis

This study set out to explain the high attrition among detached youth workers. The hypothesis was that workers occupy a marginal position on both the social and cultural levels and, consequently, experience a high level of tension. Investigation revealed that the social and psychological mechanisms for tension reduction are not available within the occupation, and thus workers leave their employment at a remarkably high rate. However, it was further discovered that, in spite of the high level of tension, the survival period is, on the average, two and a half years. This was surprising, since one would expect the level of tension to eliminate workers with greater rapidity. Indeed the evidence

presented leads to speculation as to why the occupation continues and apparently can still recruit workers. The resolution of this apparent contradiction is found in the occupational ideology. From the point of view of the workers, this operates to inspire them to exceptional efforts in the early days of their employment. However, as time passes and the anticipated results do not materialize, workers are forced to call their ideology into question; once this happens it is not long until they seek other employment. The more general ideology held by society at large serves to perpetuate the individual worker's commitment to his occupational ideology. By glamourizing the work and providing certain, though qualified, social approval, the workers are enabled to continue longer than might be the case if their work went on unnoticed by the public.

The data presented in this thesis, while not proving the hypothesis beyond all question, does seem sufficient to give reasonable grounds for contending that the attrition rate of detached youth workers may be explained in terms of the combined effects of the variables marginality, tension and occupation ideology, along with the lack of tension reducing mechanisms.

#### B Implications of the Findings

If the findings of this research are acceptable, then certain implications flow from them. In the field of occupational sociology it may be claimed that at least another

occupation has been examined, and thus enlarges our knowledge of the various ways in which men are employed. However, it is possible that there are matters of further significance. Detached youth workers are not the only occupational group to experience high attrition rates. It seems reasonable to suggest that the insights derived from this thesis may be used profitably to examine such occupation groups.

Furthermore, it is possible that this work has contributed to our understanding of the notion of the marginal man. If it has, then perhaps this is its most valuable contribution. Marginality as a sociological concept has not had much attention in recent years; its exploration at this time may prove fruitful. It may be particularly valuable in the context of the rapid cultural changes taking place in western society. If, as Everett Stonequist says, "Marginal man is the crucible of the cultural fusions,"<sup>1</sup> then the implications for this line of study, directed at racial conflict, student unrest and the gulf between generations, may prove valuable.

The study also has implications for a society which is becoming increasingly complex, with more and more potential for forcing individuals and groups into marginal positions. Any knowledge of the condition of marginality which we may gain from occupational studies may provide information for understanding the problems which are rapidly developing.

The implications of this thesis for social workers in general and detached workers in particular need not be laboured here. Perhaps it is sufficient to say that the analysis should prove interesting to those proposing to set up detached work projects. If it has no other value, it nevertheless may serve to force a stricter scrutiny of motives.

With the rapid increase in the service professions there has arisen the valid criticism that peoples' needs are being met in isolation by a series of specialists. In the medical field the family physician is rapidly losing status to his more specialized colleague. Success in dealing with problems is judged in terms of the specific bureaucracy of which the specialist is a part. In a society of increasing anonymity this is becoming more and more unsatisfactory for the recipients of service. They want to be considered as people, not as cases or clients whose problem is dealt with in isolation from the rest of their lives. It has been suggested that in the welfare field a "generalized specialist"<sup>2</sup> should attempt to meet the needs in total. Without going into the possibility of developing such an occupational role, it would seem from the present study that such an occupation, were it to develop, would occupy a marginal position. If this is the case, then it is reasonable to assume that it would experience some of the same problems as the detached youth work profession. Consequently, this study may contribute to a fuller understanding of such work.

### C Further Research

This thesis opens up some interesting prospects for further research. In terms of the detached work occupation, a further study using a larger sample would serve to amplify the present findings. This would allow for a fuller investigation of the stigmatization of the marginal group. Are marginal groups stigmatized? If so, is this functional for the group? What are the factors which lead to stigmatization, and are they related to the marginality of the group? These are some of the questions it would be interesting to pursue.

If, as Stonequist argues,<sup>3</sup> marginal men are part of the process by which society grows, then it would be interesting to explore what connection the emergence of detached youth work, in the early sixties, has to the rapid development of a distinctive youth culture.

This thesis raises another interesting question. Is it possible to rejuvenate the ideology and so extend the occupational career of detached youth workers? Further research might provide the answer, particularly if techniques for maintaining ideological commitment can be developed.

## NOTES

## Chapter I

1. The Chicago School of Shaw, Moore, McKay and Thrasher were among the earliest.

2. As far as can be ascertained New York Mobilization for Youth was the earliest programme (1960-61).

3. A phrase frequently repeated in agency reports and other literature on this subject.

4. Robert E. Park, "Human Migration and The Marginal Man," American Journal of Sociology, XXXIII (1928), 881-893.

5. Everett E. Stonequist, The Marginal Man (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1937), p.x.

6. John W. Mann, "Group Relations and The Marginal Personality," Human Relations, XI (1958), 77-92; I.L. Child, Italian or American? (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943); S. Patterson, Colour and Culture in South Africa (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953); Traveres J. Nilo, "Social Marginality and Political Marginality," R. Brasil Estud. Polit., XIII (January, 1963); William M. Evan, "On The Margin - The Engineering Technician," The Human Shape of Work, ed. Peter L. Berger (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1964); Hugh H. Smythe, "Nigeria's Marginal Men," Phylon, XIX, No. 3 (1958); Richard F. Hamilton, "The Marginal Middle Class," American Sociological Review, XXXII, No. 1 (1966) 192-199; Elliott A. Krause, "Structured Strain in a Marginal Profession," Journal of Health and Human Behaviour, VI, No.1 (1965); Walter I. Wardwell, "The Reduction of Strain in a Marginal Social Role," American Journal of Sociology, LXI, No. 1 (July, 1955), 16-25.

7. Stonequist, The Marginal Man.

8. Alan C. Kerckhoff and Thomas C. McCormick, "Marginal Status and Marginal Personality," Social Forces, XXXIV, No. 1 (1959), 48-55.

9. Milton M. Goldberg, "A Qualification of the Marginal Man Theory," American Sociological Review, VI, No. 1 (1941), 52-58.



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12. See Talcott Parsons, The Social System (Glencoe: Fress Press, 1952).
13. For example Robert L. Kahn and Elise Boulding, Power and Conflict in Organizations (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1964); Martin L. Cohnstaedt, "The Process and Role of Conflict in the Community," American Journal of Economic Sociology, XXV, No. 1 (1940) 5-10; William J. Goode, "A Theory of Role Strain," American Sociological Review, XXV, (1960) 483-496; Herman Piven and Donnell M. Pappenport, "Strain Between Administrator and Worker: A View of the Field of Corrections," Social Work, V (October, 1960), 37-45.
14. Harry S. Sullivan, Concept of Modern Psychiatry (Washington, D.C.: William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundations, 1941). Also by the same author, "Introduction to the Study of Interpersonal Relations," Psychiatry, I (1938), 121-134; and "Towards a Psychiatry of Peoples," Psychiatry, XI, (1948), 105-116.
15. W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, The Polish Peasant, XXVII, (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1965), 372.

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Chapter I--Continued

16. The following specific references may be adduced in support of this statement: Carl G. Jung, "On Psychical Energy," Contributions to Analytical Psychology (New York: Pontean Book, 1928). p43; A. P. Noyes and Lawrence C. Kolb, "Mental Conflict," Modern Clinical Psychiatry (Philadelphia: Saunders Press), p.81; F. Kluckhohn and J. Spiegel, Integration and Conflict in Family Behaviour, Group for Advancement of Psychiatry, Report No. 27.

The following sources also lend general support to the contention that man requires to be free of terror, certain of his personal identity, and social acceptance, if he is to function adequately: Alexander J. Renton, "Mental Health of Adolescents," Lecture, University of Waterloo, 1965. (mimeographed.); A. Johnson and S.A. Szurek, "Etiology of Antisocial Behaviour in Delinquents and Psychopaths," Journal of American Medical Society, CLIV (1954), 814; H. Stiner and J. Gesber, Anxiety, A Condition of Modern Man (Geneva: Editions Alpha S.A., 1962); R.R. Grinker and J.P. Spiegel, Men Under Stress (London: Churchill Press, 1945); C.S. Sherrington, The Integrative Action of the Central Nervous System (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926); E.H. Erickson, "Growth and Crises of Healthy Personality," Personality in Nature, Society and Culture, C. Kluckhohn and H.A. Murray (eds.) (New York: A.A. Knapp, 1953).

17. John Drever (ed.), A Dictionary of Psychology (London: Penguin, 1952), p. 291.

18. Karen Horney, The Neurotic Personality of Our Times, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1937). Also by the same author, New Ways in Psychoanalysis (New York: W.W. Norton, 1939).

## NOTES

Chapter I--Continued

19. Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, trans. Lewis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York: Harcourt, Bruce and Co., 1937), p. 75.

20. Karl Mannheim, Essays on The Sociology of Knowledge, ed. Paul Kecskemeti (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1952), pp. 13ff.

21. Karl Mannheim, "The Meaning of Ideology," Man, Work and Society, ed. Sigmund Nosow and William H. Form (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1962), p. 407.

22. For example, the Catholic-Protestant conflict in Northern Ireland.

23. Social scientists have for a long time been aware of the significance of occupation for the individuals social position. See for example, Kingsley Davis, "A Conceptual Analysis of Stratification," American Journal of Sociology, VII (1942); Talcott Parsons, "An Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification," American Journal of Sociology, L (1940), 841-862; John Dewey, "Interpretation of the Savage Mind," Psychological Review, IX (1902), 217-230.

24. Werner Stark, "The Nature of Social Determination," The Sociology of Knowledge (Glencoe: Free Press, 1956), Chap vi, particularly p. 250.

25. William Graham Sumner, Folkways (New York: Dover Publications, 1959, new ed.), as cited by Werner Stark, The Sociology of Knowledge (Glencoe: Free Press 1956), p.250.

26. Fredrick Nietzsche, Studies From The Time of Revolution: 1882-1888, Collected Works, XVI (Munchn: Musarian Verlag, 1920-29), p. 177.

## NOTES

Chapter I--Continued

27. Emile Durkeim, Rules of Sociological Method, trans. Sarah A. Solovay and John H. Muller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938).

28. For discussion of the factors influencing occupational choice see the following: Eli Ginzberg, et al., Occupational Choice: An Approach to a General Theory, New York: Columbia University Press, 1951); for a condensed version of this theory, see Eli Ginzberg, "Toward a Theory of Occupational Choice," Occupations, XXX (1952), 491-494; also Delbert C. Miller and William H. Form, Industrial Sociology: An Introduction to the Sociology of Work Relations (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951); Wilbert E. Moore, Industrial Relations and Social Order (New York: Macmillan Co., revised ed. 1951); Paul K. Hatt, "Occupation and Social Stratification," American Journal of Sociology, LV (1950), 533-543; Seymour M. Lipset and R. Bendix, "Social Mobility and Occupational Career Patterns," American Journal of Sociology, LVII (1952), 366-374.

29. For a discussion of the influence of ideology on occupation see Morris Rosenberg, "Facts Influencing Change of Occupational Choice," The Language of Social Research, ed. Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Morris Rosenberg (New York: Free Press, 1955) pp. 250-259.

30. The following quotation may be adduced in support of this approach: "We start from the supposition and shall try to show that they (i.e., sociological and psychological view point) are mutually supporting and complementary, meeting in a middle ground which has been described as social-psychological," Robert K. Merton, The Student Physician (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957) p.53. See also Alex Inkeles, "Personality and Social Structure," Sociology Today ed. Robert K. Merton, et al. (New York: Basic Books, 1959), chap. xi.

31. "The life of an individual cannot be adequately understood without references to the institution within which his biography is enacted." C. Wright Mills, Sociological Imagination (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959) p.161.

## NOTES

Chapter I--Continued

32. Kurt Lewin, A Dynamic Theory of Personality, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1935); Alfred R. Lindesmith and Anselm L. Strauss, Social Psychology (New York: Dryden Press, 1956); Gardner Murphy, Personality (New York: Harper & Bros. 1947), chaps. xxxviii and xxxix; Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils, Toward a General Theory of Action (Cambridge: Mass. Harvard University Press, 1951); Inkeles, "Personality and Social Structure;" Newcombe, Social Psychology; And a valuable but somewhat neglected book by Walter Coutu, Emergent Human Nature (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1949).

33. "Generic propositions" indicated "how any condition... has grown out of an individual's past". "Dynamic propositions... are concerned with the interaction ... of forces within the individual and with their reaction to the external world, at any given time or during brief time spans." H. Hartmann & E. Krist, "The Generic Approach in Psychoanalysis," The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child (New York: 1945), I, p.11.

34. See the work of J. Milton Yinger, particularly "Research Implications of a Field View of Personality," American Journal of Sociology, LXVIII (1963), 580-592.

35. Evidence for this statement is largely derived from a study of the written reports of workers in both countries. See for example Don Peterson, "Detached Youth in North Toronto," (n.p. 1969); Gord West, "Street Work Report," (Toronto: Y.M.C.A., 1967); J. Thomas Kirby, "Evaluation and Progress, Effectiveness and Accomplishments or Failures of a Detached Worker Programme " (Y.M.C.A. of St. Louis, 1969); J.C. Pratt, "Detached Work - Relationship to Community Agencies and Other Community Groups," (Y.M.C.A. of Rochester and Monroe County, 1969); Theodore Jordan, "Recruiting Detached Work Personnel " (Y.M.C.A. of Metropolitan Detroit).

36. For this reason Canadian workers should regard critically any literature issuing from the United States. The situation in that country is so dominated by violent gangs that, were Canadian workers to accept American methods and techniques without reservation, they might well end by creating the very problem they believed themselves to be solving; i.e., gang warfare.

## NOTES

Chapter I--Continued

37. This confusion is also apparent in the titles of reports and situation papers prepared by workers. Sometimes the adjective "detached" qualifies "clients" and sometimes "youth workers".

38. Drop-in Centre and Coffee House are strictly two names for the same thing. Confusion is not reduced by the fact that it is frequently impossible to buy coffee in either place. They have usually been created by the people who use them - namely, the kids on the street. So in a sense "the street comes inside". They share a oneness of atmosphere which may best be described as "agreeably sinful." It should, of course, not be forgotten that there are coffee houses which serve quite a different function, mostly for middle-class youth; however, these are really teen age clubs with an open programme.

39. For example: George M. Goetschius and M. Joan Tash, Working with Unattached Youth (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967); Samuel Bernstein, Youth on The Streets, (Associated Press, 1964); M. Joan Tash, Supervision of Youth Work (London: National Council Social Services, Ditchling Press Ltd., 1967); E.G. Ackley and B.R. Fliegel, "A Social Work Approach to Street Corner Girls," Social Work, V (Oct. 1960); J.P. Felstiner, Detached Work (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1965); Youth In Need (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1966); These works are a description of clients and the service which a detached worker tries to render. They are notable for their superior quality by comparison with the other Canadian literature. They are also unique in that they are among the few reports of a detached work project available to the general public. Also, they are the only such works quoted directly in the Report of the Ontario Legislature's Select Committee on Youth, C.J.S. Apps, Chairman, (Kingston: Hanson and Edgar Ltd., 1967).

40. The present writer's own material collected during his time as a detached worker is also subject to the same criticism.

41. This should not be taken to imply any claim to profound objectivity. For a discussion of the use of this method see Robert K. Merton and P.L. Kendal, "The Focused Interview," American Journal of Sociology, LI (1946), 541-557.

## NOTES

Chapter I--Continued

42. The author's opinions are well known to workers in the field through his participation in training programmes and his consultant relationship to several sponsoring agencies.

43. The research assistant was well qualified for her work. Along with her B.A. and B.S.W. degrees, she had extensive experience in youth work both as a volunteer in a drop-in centre and as a high school teacher.

## NOTES

## Chapter II

1. Taken from the author's field notes compiled when he was a detached youth worker (1965-67).

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. The average age of the clients was slightly over eighteen years and average educational grade was eight. The same records show that at best these young people only retain their employment for three to four weeks. For further information see Appendix II.

5. Ibid.

6. "Centre-shot" is a term used by clients to describe a situation where an individual is made to look weak or foolish before his peers.

7. Felstiner, Detached Work. p.39.

8. Ibid. A rather vulgar joke learned by the author in this subcultural language begins as follows. "Deze eyous hisz avez thiez teaz liezes beez. Weezs ez bez ez weezs ez geazs". It translates as follows. "Did you hear about the two little babies. One a boy and one a girl".

9. A call late one night from a girl alarmed the researcher because she said she had a knife and was about to kill her cousin. He went at once knowing he was being manipulated but afraid to risk "turning the kid off". When he found her she certainly had a knife but had no intention of hurting anyone. All she wanted was attention.

10. "He cares. That's why he is in street work in the first place. He works long hours in potentially dangerous situations without the salary or the benefits which comparable efforts in business or another profession would win him. He knows he will never be rich, the demanding profession is hobby, family, church and job all rolled into one. There is little time for anything else". Charles E. Curry, Historical Review of Detached Work, Youth Action Programme, Toronto, (1969), p.8.



## NOTES

## Chapter II--Continued

11. "...there is considerable evidence that some detached youth workers were undisciplined and unskilled in their use of themselves as helping persons. For example one young worker reported that he worked long hours, often time daily from eleven at night until seven o'clock in the morning". Report on Detached Youth Work (Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, November 1, 1965). It should be noted that 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. is only a regular eight hour shift. Why the reporter considered this a lack of discipline is unclear (author's note).

12. Felstiner, Detached Work, p. 47.

13. George W. Goetschius and Joan Tash, Working With Unattached Youth (London: Rutledge and Kegan Paul, 1967) p. 129.

14. Curry, "Historical Review ... ."

15. Erving Goffman, "Management of Spoiled Identity," Norman R. Jack, et al., "The Self-Image of The Prostitute"; Albert J. Reiss, Jr., "The Social Integration of Queers and Peers," all included in: Earl Rubington and Martin S. Weinberg (eds.), Deviance - The Interactionist Perspective (London: Macmillan Co., 1968).

16. West, "Street Work Report," p.13.

17. Curry, "Historical Review ...," p.9.

18. For extensive list see Marshall B. Clinard (ed.), Anomie and Deviant Behaviour (New York: Free Press, 1964); also James F. Short and Frederick L. Strodbeck, Group Process and Gang Delinquency, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

19. Kirby, "Evaluating ..."

20. Felstiner, et al., Youth in Need ...

21. J. McV. Hunt and L.S. Kogan, Measuring Results in Social Casework: A Manual On Judging Movement (New York: F.S.A.A., 1950).

## NOTES

Chapter II--Continued

22. Felstiner, Detached Work, p. 47.

23. Jordon, "Recruiting ...,"

24. West, "Street Work ...," p.5.

25. It was advantageous to know the first names of all leaders and to isolate them for special attention. Armed with this type of relationship the author was frequently able to step into hostile situations and "cool it" by a direct appeal to the group leader. The use of humour was also significant in this connection. It was discovered that if he could develop a relationship which made him privy to the "in joke," he could use this information to good advantage. Author's "Field Notes." (1965-67).

26. Author, "Field Notes." (1965-67).

27. "Characteristics of the Suburban Street Worker- Realistically thinking, I can best answer this by looking at the staff on our Project H.O.W. The majority are college juniors. They have all been active in college concerns, i.e., Black Student Associations, S.D.S., College Government. They have an uncanny desire to work with teenagers. Probably the most unique and perhpas the most important characteristic is that they care about what's going on among the youth in this country - they're idealists at heart." (sic) Michael Finn, "Position Paper on Suburban Detached Work," (Washington, D.C: 1969), p.4.

28. Some of this dispute was reported in the St. Catharines Standard, July, 1969.

## NOTES

## Chapter III

1. For further discussion on this point see Leslie T. Wilkins, Social Deviance, Social Policy, Action and Research (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Inc., 1965).

2. Membership of the Canadian Association of Social Workers is restricted to persons with Master of Social Work degree even though many without this degree do the same work. See Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers Newsletter (December, 1969).

3. The question of confidentiality arises here. It is "in confidence" if the social worker has the information but not so the detached worker. The author found it easiest to get around this difficulty by clearly stating to the social worker that he wished to be considered as standing in loco parentis to the young person.

4. Felstiner, et al., Youth in Need, p.81.

5. One social worker was heard to comment of the author, who by profession is a minister, "who does he think he is standing on the corner trying to convert prostitutes?" On the other side, a ministerial member of his advisory committee when asked about programme ideas suggested that discussion groups and some sort of worship service would be appreciated.

6. During attendance at detached work meetings in Toronto in 1966-67, the author noted that frequently the conversation turned to various accounts of how male workers had just avoided arrest.

7. The author resolved this conflict by deciding in advance that violations of the law involving danger to life, or serious offences like detaining a female against her will would be reported to the police. He made this position clear to his clients. He decided that offences involving property (breaking and entering, car theft, etc.) would not be reported, and make his position on this point clear to the police. This enabled him to get involved in some very interesting discussions about impending crimes.

## NOTES

Chapter III--Continued

8. Several workers reported that their Boards of Directors were not entirely happy with the programme.

9. Summary of Detached Work Meetings, October, 1966-June, 1966. Prepared by Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto.

10. When addressing public meetings the author was frequently asked if his own standards of behaviour had changed as a result of his work. Implied in the question was the suggestion that he had in some way compromised his values by his acceptance of client behaviour. Another example of this distrust is the experience of a minister who did detached work for a number of years and then applied for a position as a pastor of a congregation. His application was rejected because, as the committee said, "there must be something wrong with him to do that kind of work." On another occasion the author was asked to attend a camp run by a church group. The camp director approached him and very awkwardly pointed out that the people attending the camp would not be like his clients and that he ought to be careful how he approached them.

11. For example see, "Those Youngsters Don't Trust You and Your Toronto - The Unreachables Part I," Toronto Daily Star, May 10th, 1965. Also, "Y.M.C.A. for 'Detached Youth' Shifts to High Gear," The Montreal Star, Feb. 17th, 1968.

12. There is, however, an interesting argument against detached workers being a stigmatized group. It could in fact be argued that the absence of any clear pattern of socialization within the group is evidence of a lack of stigma. See James H. Bryan, "Occupational Ideologies and Individual Attitudes of Call Girls," Social Problems, XIII, No. 4 (1966), 441-450.

13. Early in his period as a detached worker the author ran a weekly dance. After each dance he was surprised to find a large number of empty bottles on the premises. The quantity of liquor which these represented was far out of proportion to the seeming intoxication of the group. The discovery of these "empties" caused a lot of conflict with the owners of the church hall but he chose to ignore the problem as far as the clients were concerned. An explanation

## NOTES

Chapter III---Continued

later emerged: the kids had, in fact, been picking up empty bottles outside and hiding them, none too cunningly, in the building. When asked for an explanation his informant said they had been testing him to see whose side he was on. This information only came to light after the detached work programme had ended and the one time client, now turned informer, was hired in a new programme.

14. Taken from the author's own notes on supervision of a detached worker. The statement was made in a real crisis of emotion, the worker breaking down and sobbing directly after making this angry accusation.

15. The author was very conscious of this type of isolation and quickly recruited a lawyer, social worker, doctor and psychiatrist, who would agree to discuss problems at any time. The lawyer and social worker were frequently called late at night. A few minutes on the phone gave the security of knowing that at least one other person was interested and prepared to help.

16. Many of the decisions which the detached youth worker is forced to make are immediate and leave no time for consultation. The author was asked on one occasion for advice by a boy who had just returned from prison. He had been asked to go with a group planning an armed robbery. If he did not go he was going to be beaten up. Being a small lad it seemed unlikely that he could defend himself and yet if he went the chances were that he would end up as the "fall guy." The question was posed at nine in the evening, so no consultation was possible. The job was planned for midnight, and a decision was needed at once. The worker found it impossible to make this decision and so procrastinated. In the end, the client solved the problem very effectively by getting drunk in company with his associates. In this situation they would not risk taking him and at the same time were prevented from beating him up by the demands of comradeship which is common among drinking companions. This solution was noted for future use!

17. "Report on Detached Youth Work," (Toronto).

## NOTES

Chapter III--Continued

18. "Summary Report - Hyde Park Youth Project," Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago, May, 1960.

19. D. Wing and C. Lawson, "A Programme for Hard to Reach Youth," (u.d.), p.2. The following quotations also support the contention that programmes are implicitly or explicitly agents of social control.

The aims and goals (of detached youth projects) for the most part were short range. (a) Cur-tail the anti-social behaviour of groups, developing some contact, rapport and trust with the group. (b) To change the behaviour of groups from more serious illegal or antisocial to less serious, and from less seriously antisocial to conventional, within the class and cultural norms of the local population. Curry, "Historical Review..."

Why does the "Y" have street workers at all? Is it to stop riots, keep dirty black kids in the ghetto and dirty white kids out of the "Y"? Are we knowingly the biggest perpetrators of tokenism in the "Y"? Theo Jordon, "Recruiting Personnel..."

The wider community was obviously interested in controlling and preventing delinquency and other types of behaviours deemed anti-social. West, "Street Work..." p.2.

20. This goal rests on the work of Marshall B. Clinard and Lloyd Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity (Glencoe: Free Press, 1960), and is particularly well operationalized in Irving Spergel, Street Gang Work (Meading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1966).

21. Most clients at best can only reach grade eight. This is not significantly different from grades six or seven from the point of view of the labour market which considers grades ten, eleven and twelve as the basic condition of employment. This situation forces most of the young people to lie about their grade. Since there is rarely, if ever, any check up, they can get away with it. It is also important to note that they usually can do the job just as well as the grade ten graduate.

## NOTES

Chapter III--Continued

22. Except for those under sixteen years for whom the Children's Aid has legal responsibility.

23. For an interesting article on this point see Lewis A. Coser, "Sociology of Poverty," Social Problems, XIII (1965), 140-148. The basic thesis is that "... the public identity of an actor is transformed (by welfare agencies) into something looked on as lower in the local schemes of social types ... Social workers, welfare investigators, welfare administrators and local volunteer workers seek out the poor in order to help them, and yet paradoxically, they are the very agents of their degeneration. Subjective intentions and institutional consequences diverge at this point."

24. Robert K. Merton, "Anomie, Anomia and Social Interaction," in Anomie and Deviant Behaviour, (ed.), Marshall B. Clinard (New York: Free Press, 1966) p.213.

25. Finn, "A Position Paper... "

26. Private correspondence from a detached work supervisor, Toronto.

27. This fact is exemplified by the controversy which took place in St. Catharines in the summer of 1969 and reported in the St. Catharines Standard of late July and early August. In essence the conflict came down to a disagreement between the staff and sponsoring agency about the action the staff had taken with respect to several minor problems. The matter came to a head when a boy was arrested for having obscene words written on his trousers and the judge handed down what seemed like a very severe sentence. This was identified by the workers as persecution by the establishment.

28. One agency encouraged the worker to change her residence because it was too close to the area of the city in which she worked and too convenient for clients to go to her home. The worker was at first reluctant but under pressure from the Board of Directors she at last complied. (personal supervision by author).

## NOTES

Chapter III--Continued

29. "The social identity of those an individual is with can be used as a source of information concerning his own social identity." Goffman, "... Spoiled Identity," p.247.



## NOTES

## Chapter IV

1. Walter I. Wardwell, "The Reduction of Strain in a Marginal Social Role," American Journal of Sociology, LXI, No. 1 (1955), 16-25.

2. Descriptions of the job requirements frequently contain the statement "The worker must be able to relate meaningfully to delinquent teenagers, other agencies and the public at large."

3. Author. Field notes.

4. Jordon, "Recruiting ...," p.5.

5. Goestschius and Task, ...Unattached Youth, p.96.

6. Author. Field notes.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid. The present writer for eighteen months ran a rather rough dance using this technique. It came to an end when a member of his advisory committee attended and was horrified by the amount of violence. The committee insisted the police be hired to "protect" the worker. The level of violence at once started to rise and the police department gave notice that two officers must be hired because it was too dangerous for one. As might be expected, attendance dwindled and the dance was soon discontinued.

9. Respondents to the interview frequently declared the ability "to be accepting" of the client behaviour as a prerequisite of their job.

10. Most agencies write into their job description a clause saying that the worker is "allowed to fail." The same provision is reflected in the title of a paper called "Evaluating the progress, effectiveness and accomplishments or failures of a detached work programme." J. T. Kirby, (Washington, D.C. 1969).

11. There is no information about how many detached youth workers suffer nervous breakdowns. However, of the twelve or so workers known personally to the author at least

## NOTES

Chapter IV--Continued

four have required psychiatric help. A psychiatrist who at one time practiced in New York City reports that detached workers figured high on his list of patients. Their number was certainly well out of proportion to the size of their profession.

12. This event took place in Hamilton in 1964. An agency had hired a worker who was open in his hostility toward the establishment. The whole problem came to a head when the worker went on an open-line radio show to state his case. Soon afterwards the project ended and the worker left.

13. This is so well known among workers that they describe it as "burn-out." The workers interviewed when asked why others had left the profession frequently gave the following replies "emotional fatigue," "emotional exhaustion," and "emotional drain."

14. Reasons why detached workers leave their occupation as listed by respondents to structured interviews.

<u>Reason</u>	<u>No. Times Mentioned</u>
Frustration	6
Lack of privacy	5
Doubt about validity of work	4
Inadequate salary	3
Need for further education	2
Emotional exhaustion	2
Lack of promotion	1
Lack of status	1
High identification with clients	1
Loneliness	1

15. Limitations of case-load suggests one way of relieving the tension which is possible to the worker. James Felstiner once said in a private conversation with the author that the primary aim of any detached youth worker is to get off the streets. By this, he meant go out into the client milieu, and establish contact with a small group, help them get over their inhibitions about entering a building and seeking the worker in his office. Then stop going out, remain in the office and see the clients there. Refuse all other contacts and work exclusively with this group (for Felstiner this was 16). Only go out to meet them when the

## NOTES

Chapter IV--Continued

situation demands. This no doubt explains why this particular worker was able to continue his job for four years. Also, of course, he was a highly skilled professional, trained as a lawyer and social worker.

16. Elliot Jaques, "Executive Organization and Individual Adjustment," Journal of Psychosomatic Research, X 1966.

## NOTES

## Chapter V

1. See Karl Mannheim, "The Meaning of Ideology," Man, Work & Society, ed. Sigmund Nosow and William H. Form (New York: Basic Books, 1962) pp. 407-410.

2. Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, Report on Detached Youth Work, (Nov. 1965).

3. See film No Reason to Stay, National Film Board of Canada (Serial number 106B0166006).

4. H.A. Hamilton, "The Christian Commitment," (Paper prepared for World Christian Youth Commission, May, 1964). Reproduced in Working with Unattached Youth, Goetschius & Task, Appendix VII p.372.

5. Irving Spergel, Street Gang Work -- Theory and Practice, (Addison-Wesley Publishing, Canada, Ltd. 1966).

6. The following anecdote illustrates the point: While seated one night around a table with a group of young mothers who had been selected to attend a camp because of their obvious social problems, the conversation ranged over all manner of casual subjects; at one point, a girl turned to a stranger and asked "What is your problem?"; "I haven't got one." "Well, what the hell are you doing here?" was the reply.

7. Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, Report on Detached Youth Work.

8. The following quotations reinforce the point:

In this type of neighborhood the street worker was called on to go into the streets and seek out and locate youth groups who were creating (in many cases) problems for local residents, merchants, Y.M.C.A.'s, schools, police, etc., and to give meaning to youth who lived in a seemingly meaningless society. Curry, "Historical Review ...," p.3.

During the last several years a number of 'detached' youth workers have been employed by several community agencies and assigned to work

## NOTES

Chapter V---Continued

with alienated youth. Reports of this work indicate that some success has been achieved in helping some youth make use of existing agency services, return to school, find jobs, and to re-integrate themselves more fully into community life. "Report on Detached Work," Toronto, p.2.

9. Felstiner, et al., Youth in Need, Appendix V, Oct. 1966.

10. It is significant that the Y.M.C.A. is the agency most frequently responsible for detached youth work programmes. With its high middle class commitment and memories of its own beginnings, detached youth work provides it with a unique solution to problems of disturbed (or perhaps disturbing) youth.

11. "M... Wins The Hearts of Young Losers,"-- "He was young, energetic and bursting with idealism -- the first time he went eagerly slumming as a social worker brimming with faith, hope and charity he was thrown out of a Toronto bar by a prostitute." The Hamilton Spectator, Feb. 9, 1970.

12. At one point in the detached work programme the author discovered that he was being asked for an ever increasing amount of money by his clients. After a little investigation he discovered that his previous responses in this direction had earned him the reputation of being an "easy touch". Once he started refusing money the demand decreased and relationships became more open, focusing around real every day problems. Field notes.

13. Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, Report on Detached Youth Work, p.8.

## NOTES

## Chapter VI

1. Everett V. Stonequist, The Marginal Man, (New York: Russel and Russel, 1961), p.221.

2. The author is indebted to Professor Richard Brymer for introducing him to this concept.

3. Stonequist, Marginal Man, p.219.

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APPENDIX I  
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STRUCTURED INTERVIEW  
WITH DETACHED YOUTH WORKERS

To be filled out by interviewer before interview:

NAME

NAME OF AGENCY

Age

---

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1. I understand you are involved with youth - by what specific name do you describe your job?	Note any uncertainty.
2. Where do you contact the majority of your clients?	
3. How long have you been in this employment?	
4. Most people seem to spend only a few years in this work. From your knowledge of the field do you agree or disagree with this statement? Please indicate some of the main reasons why people leave detached work.	
5. Who is/was your sponsoring body (e.g. a Church, a Y.M.C.A., a service club, etc).	

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Comments</u>
What type of support -- financial, moral?	
6. Please give a short outline of the structure of your project e.g., was there an advisory committee and/or a professional supervisor, and/or resource people? What qualifications did these people possess?	"Supervisor" as in Social Work. Try to get exact relation to Supervisor. Was he happy about Supervisor?
7. How were you treated by other agencies, including police? Did the attitude of agencies change during the project? In what way?	Note any sense of inferiority.
8. How do you introduce yourself to other professional people when you want help with a client? (e.g., to a doctor)	Residual proof? Agency affiliation? i.e., How do they imagine themselves perceived by other workers?
9. State briefly the goals of the project.  a) at the start   b) at present or end	Any written material on this?
10. What do you understand by the adjective "detached" in the title "detached youth worker"?	Note uncertainty.

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Comments</u>
11. a) What was your educational status when you were hired as a detached worker? (e.g., Grade 12,13,B.A., University student, etc).	
b) State further education.	
12. What working experience had you before accepting employment as as a detached worker?	
13. a) Why did you become a detached worker?	Discover motivation.
b) Why do you remain in this occupation?	
14. a) Do you know other detached workers? Approximately how many?	
b) Do you meet them -- often, sometimes, seldom?	
What circumstances?	
15. Do many detached workers return to their old professions? (e.g., to teaching, pastoral ministry) Did you return to yours?	



<u>Questions</u>	<u>Comments</u>
16. a) In your opinion is there any stigma attached in being a detached worker?	Any idea why the stigma is attached?
b) By whom is this stigma attributed?	
17. When seeking a new job is the fact that a person has been a detached worker an advantage or disadvantage? Is there any difference in the attitude of prospective employers--i.e., is there any agency or group of agencies which are reluctant to hire ex-detached youth workers?	
18. a) Did you experience a feeling of isolation at any time during your employment as a detached worker? If so, can you account for it and how was the problem resolved?	Explore feelings of tension.
b) Did you experience lack of support in decision-making?	
19. Did you experience conflict between meeting the demands of your clients and preserving your own private life?	Time - emotional
a) If you did, discuss conflict as mentioned, how was it resolved?	Time allocation -- could they help it?

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Comments</u>
b) If the conflict was resolved, did you find the solution easy or difficult to implement?	
20. What was the basis of your relationship with your clients? Please comment on the notions of "Authority" and "Manipulation".	
21. a) How were you accepted in your role as detached worker by society at large?	
b) Were you expected to speak at public meetings?	
c) Was your work ever reported in the press? Was this negative or positive?	
22. Could you briefly describe the values most strongly held by your clients. What value is it most important for them to learn from you?	Note uncertainty of values. (a) respondents (b) clients
23. What provision is made for you to pass on your knowledge of this field to others? Is it successful?	
24. Are you conscious of having examined your personal philosophy or attitude to life in the light of your work? If so, in what respects?	Try to get at changes and reasons.

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Comments</u>
25. What provision is made for evaluation of the project?	Any written material.
Who does it?	
What effect has the evaluation had,-- on the project --- on you?	
26. If the project has come to an end, give reason. How long did it last? Was it expected to last longer?	Get copy of original brief or job description.
27. Are there any other matters which you think might be interesting to a person studying the position of detached youth worker?	

N.B. Don't forget to obtain any written material.  
Record on tape at least one third of total  
number of interviews.

EVALUATION BY INTERVIEWER

Date:

## APPENDIX II

## DETACHED WORK FIELD NOTES

BY A TORONTO WORKER

Tuesday, January 30th

P.M.

5:45: - Met Ron. Went to Forest Plaza. Ron confirmed that glue and liquor were at the party. Said his father knew about the liquor but not the glue. Joe and Mary mentioned as on glue. Jack and Roc as well. Ron mentioned an incident I had heard before. Hank at party was crying about a sister who had died and showed some anger. Also wanted to kill himself-- tried to take a bottle of cough medicine.

6:30: - White Lane - Roc's Garage. Both Roc and Allan sniffing glue. Gary in the back seat. Said he had not been sniffing. They went into the house immediately.

Later, Roy, Nick, (new guy) and Sara claimed they had grass at the party.

- 6:40: - Ron invited Gary and I to play pool. His father seemed angry about something (heard him yelling upstairs) --- Ron considers his father stupid. Ron's relation to father is poor.
- 7:45: - Returned to Rowan. Gary made comment "you're too nice a guy to hang around with us." Gary poor self-image. I wanted to cry.
- 8:00: - White Avenue. Roc, Roy, Red, Ron, Nick and Sara talking. Plainclothesmen approached - they knew Roc and Roy. Then a squad car arrived. Police checked the lanc. Asked about a Dic D... Then left. Saturday near the L.C.B.O. a police officer had asked about the same guy. Both times I was tense about police.
- 8:20: - Many others came running up and asked re: police - Win, Sherry, Owen, Roland, Al, Bill, Nick and Hank. No one even thought about trying to connect me with the police except the new Nick.
- 8:30: - In front of laundramat. Some went inside. Willy and Doug came in. Win and cousin meanwhile had left and returned with a suitcase. Win told me that she had been kicked out of the house. When I responded, she said she was only kidding. Didn't realize Win was putting me on - taken in.

- 9:00: -- Most went home. Nick, Doug, Willy and I stood outside. Some went to Ron's to play pool. Sherry and her mother came to the T.T.C. stop. Both gave me strange looks while they waited for T.T.C.
- 9:30: -- Nick went home. Doug, Willy and I walked up to Powers (Dune & Rowan). They had gone to the "Village" Saturday. They claimed that Hank bought a nickel bag.
- 10:30: -- We met Hank. He said that there was going to be another party, but no glue or getting stoned. Wanted me to go. Walked Willy home. Talked for quite a while. Claimed that he had taken our suggestion and not sniffed. Didn't enjoy the weekend. Said that he was only getting high from now on, not stoned. He also felt bad that Gary had left the party because

-he was drunk. Told me he also  
apologized to Angie for kissing  
her on the street when he was  
drunk.



## APPENDIX II--Continued

TABLE

## CHARACTERISTICS OF BOYS SELECTED FOR MOST

## INTENSIVE CONTACT - A WORKER'S REPORT

CLUSTERS	AGE	FAMILY SITUATION	#BROTHERS	# SISTERS	ON WELFARE	SCHOOL	GRADE	SCHOOL PROBLEMS	CHARGES	USUAL OFFENSE
B.F.	9	A.	1	5	-	D	4	T	3	B&E
T.F.	11	A.	1	5	-	D	5	T	1	B&E
B.C.	10	N.F.	1	1	x	RP	2	T	8	V
W.C.	8	N.F.	1	1	x	RP	OP	-	1	B&E
R.M.	10	N.F.	1	4	x	D	5	S	6	TH
G.C.	10	N.F.	0	1	x	D	5	S	1	TH
G.S.	9	N.F.	3	4	x	SP	4	-	0	-
R.S.	11	N.F.	3	4	x	SP	6	-	0	-
R.S.	14	N.F.	3	4	x	SP	8	T	1	T
T.B.	13	N.F.	3	5	x	D	OP	-	2	B&E
R.C.	13	W.	3	?	-	P	7	-	1	B&E
J.C.	11	W.	3	?	-	D	OP	T	2	B&E
E.M.	9	N.F.	2	2	x	D	4	T	5	TH
D.B.	12	F.S.	3	0	-	D	OP	S	0	-
M.B.	11	F.S.	3	0	-	D	5	S	0	-
J.H.	11	N.F.	1	?	x	D	5	-	0	-
K.V.	12	A.	?	?	-	P	7	-	1	?
L.T.	13	N.F.	2	3	x	-	-	T	2	V
Average	11	-	2.0	2.8	-	-	5	-	1.9	-
Percent	-	65	-	-	60	-	-	T:44	-	-
		N.F.						S:22	70	
BIKE GROUP										
G.L.	16	-	4	?	-	?	10	T	0	TH
D.L.	14	-	4	?	-	C	9	T	0	TH
G.D.	16	-	2	?	-	-	W	T	0	TH
J.D.	12	-	2	?	-	D	6	T	0	TH
T.R.	14	N.F.	3	2	-	P	8	T	1	TH
J.A.	13	-	?	?	-	P	7	T	1	TH
B.P.	15	-	?	?	-	?	9	T	0	TH
Average	14	-	2.6	2.0	-	-	8	-	.3	-
Percent	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	T:100	28	-
		N.F.								
Comb.Avrge.	12	-	2.1	2.7	-	-	6	-	1.4	-
Percent	-	55	-	-	40	-	-	T:60	60	-
		N.F.						S:15		

TABLE--Continued

CLUSTERS	# CHARGES DURING PROJECT	# COURT AP- PEARANCES WITH WORKER	CLUB ATTENDED	CAMP ATTENDED	OTHER AGENCIES INVOLVED
B.F.	2	4	-	B	P. CAS. D.H.
T.F.	0	0	-	B	CAS
B.C.	7	9	-	FF	P. CAS. Psych. T.S. D.H.
W.C.	1	1	-	-	-
R.M.	1	3	M	IC	P. CAS. D.H. Psych.
F.C.	0	0	-	Y.SA	(P)
G.S.	0	0	CNH	KC	-
R.S.	0	0	CNH	KC	-
R.S.	0	0	-	KC	P
T.B.	0	0	CNH	-	-
R.C.	0	0	CNH	-	-
J.C.	0	0	CNH	-	-
E.M.	4	5	-	Bo1	CAS. D.H. Psych
D.B.	0	0	-	SA	-
M.B.	0	0	-	SA	-
J.H.	0	0	IC	IC	-
K.V.	0	0	-	SA	(P)
L.T.	1	3	-	-	(P) D.H. TS
Average	1.9	1.4	-	-	-
Percent	33	33	-	70	50
BIKE GROUP					
G.L.	0	0	-	Fam	-
D.L.	0	0	-	Fam	-
G.D.	0	0	-	Fam	-
J.D.	0	0	-	-	-
T.R.	0	0	-	-	(P)
J.A.	1	1	-	-	-
B.P.	0	0	-	Fam	-
Average	.14	.14	-	-	-
Percent	14	14	-	-	14
Comb.Avrge.	.7	1	-	-	-
Percent	23	23	25	-	40

KEYFamily

A - Alcohol Problems  
 NF - No father  
 FS - Father sick  
 W - Both parents work

Camp

B - Boulderwood  
 FF - Frontier Forest  
 IC - Inner City  
 Y - Y.M.C.A.  
 SA - Salvation Army  
 KC - Knights of Columbus  
 Bol - Bolton  
 Fam - Family Camping

Club

M - Metropolitan Boys Club  
 CNH - Central Neighborhood  
       House  
 IC - Inner City Boy's Club

Grade

OP - Opportunity Class  
 W - Working

Agencies

P - Probation  
 CAS - Children's Aid Society  
 DH - Detention Home  
 Psych - Psych. Clinic Assessment  
 TS - Training School  
 (P) - Previously on Probation

School

RP - Regent Park  
 D - Duke of York  
 P - Park  
 SP - St. Pauls  
 C - Central Commerce

Offense

B&E - Break and entry  
 TH - Theft  
 V - Vagrant  
 T - Truant

School Problems

S - Suspended  
 T - Truancy

Information is based on worker's observations, agency contacts' files, and youths' self-report. It is thus only approximate, although the worker has attempted to verify it where possible. The majority of contacts between boys and other agencies were established during the summer, either by legal necessity (e.g., probation) or at the worker's urging. The worker also was instrumental in encouraging a large number of boys to attend summer camps.