



Cross-National
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on Human Development
and Criminal Behavior

Edited by

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IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPERSONAL MATURITY: CONTRIBUTION TO A
DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Evelyne van Poppel and Michael Born

INTRODUCTION

Following the perspective proposed by Pinatel (1963), and followed up by Selosse (1983) and, more recently, by Le Blanc and Fréchette (1987), we thought it was appropriate to distinguish between three levels of interpretation of delinquency: the delinquent act, the delinquent person, and the phenomenon of delinquency. We then have to study the relationships between these three levels.

Our study focuses on the relationships between the different types of delinquent behavior and the delinquents who are characterized by their interpersonal maturity and by their identifications. Because of the developmental implications of this question, the longitudinal method appeared to be the most appropriate.

For our typology of delinquent behavior we used the self-reported delinquency method and asked our subjects about their past criminal/delinquent behavior.

Indeed, hidden delinquency seems to provide the best measure of the actual extent of delinquency and crime; as reported by Porterfield (1946), Nye and Short (1958), Glueck (1959), Gold (1970), Chambliss (1973), Datesmann and Aichin (1984), Dunford and Elliot (1984), Born (1983), and Hausman (1984): the official records of an adolescent's crimes represent only very seldom an accurate picture of his actual delinquent behavior. As pointed out by Short and Nye (1958), Gibbons (1970), Belson (1975), West (1982), Le Blanc (1977) and Caplan (1972), the adolescents who are most susceptible to be brought into the circuit of justice administration are the ones who commit the highest number and the most serious offenses, and this fact tends to be especially true for adolescents from unfavorable backgrounds (Le Blanc and Fréchette, 1987).

In order not to confuse deviant and delinquent behavior, we decided to include in our typology of delinquent behavior only criminal and delinquent acts, being thus in agreement with authors such as Hirschi (1969), and Le Blanc and Fréchette (1987). However, an evaluation of status offenses such as drug use, alcohol consumption, and disobedience towards parental authorities proved that these behaviors generally evolve in ways similar to criminal behavior.

Concerning the psychometric qualities of self-reported measures of delinquency, the works of numerous authors such as Hindelang, Hirschi and Weis (1981), to cite only these, demonstrate

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these qualities, especially with regard to validity and reliability. Certain authors, however, e.g., Elliott and Huizinga (1989), and Thornberry (1989), stress that there exist still some problems that can affect the psychometric qualities of such a measure, problems for which they endeavoured to offer some solutions.

In our study of delinquent boys we were interested in their interpersonal maturity. This concept refers to the developmental typology of juvenile delinquents which was elaborated by Warren et al. (1966) in the California community treatment project on the basis of a theoretical formulation of Sullivan, Grant and Grant (1957) describing a sequence of personality integrations in normal childhood development.

This classification system focuses on how the delinquent is able to see himself, others and the world, i.e., on his ability to understand what is happening to himself and to others, as well as between other people. We subdivided the major levels of classification further into sublevels categorizing the individual's different ways of viewing himself and the world.

In the following we briefly describe each interpersonal maturity level which range from least to most mature, and each sublevel, which, although related to a specific level, is itself not based on a developmental theorization.

At level 2, the individual differentiates in his environment between objects and subjects but other people are primarily seen as "givers" or "withholders", and the threshold of tolerance to frustration is very low for the individuals at this level.

At level 3, the individual still underestimates the differences between himself and others, and between others: he is convinced that the relationship between others and himself is determined by extremely simplified rules and formulas instead of by an interiorized and stable system of values.

At sublevel 3 CFM (conformist, immature) the individual conforms himself to everybody who has the power at that moment; at sublevel 3 CFC (conformist, cultural) the individual conforms himself exclusively to a specific peer group; at sublevel 3 MP (manipulator) the individual is extremely distrustful of others and reacts against everybody who has the power, whether adult or peer.

At level 4, the individual has interiorized a system of social rules so that he is able to judge his or other peoples' actions based on criteria that neither refer merely to his own interests nor to rigid rules.

At the sublevels NA (neurotic acting out) and NX (neurotic anxious), the individual shows internal conflicts related to his negative self-image: the individual at the sublevel NA reacts to these conflicts by setting up a facade of strong self-sufficiency, by keeping a distance between himself and others, and by maintaining a high activity level; the individual at sublevel NX reacts by showing culpability, anxiety or depression, and by feigning introspection as a means of reducing anxiety.

At the sublevel CI (cultural, identifier) the individual has internalized some values which permit delinquent behavior. At the sublevel SE (situational-emotional reaction) the individual reacts to a recent crisis, either a situation or an emotional change.

At level 5, the individual is able to appreciate and share what other people think and feel, to tolerate a certain ambiguity and to differentiate between the many roles a person can play.

Beyond its conceptual developmental interest, the classification in interpersonal maturity levels provides a valuable aid to practitioners: differential treatment strategies based on the interpersonal maturity levels and sublevels have been developed by Warren (1966) and they are still the object of studies, in particular by members of the IDTA (International Differential Treatment Organization; see: Harris, 1988).

In our study of delinquent boys we also investigated - again under a developmental perspective - their predominant types, and, more specifically, their developmental modes of identification: indeed, identification in a developmental perspective as described by Tap (1980) seems not yet to have been studied in delinquent subjects.

Furthermore, even though some authors like Lagache (1951), Glueck (1959), Kestenberg (1962), Erikson (1963), Bandura and Walters (1969), Lemay (1973), Selosse (1980), Vigil (1988), and Le Blanc and Fréchette (1987) have contributed to the study of the relationship between identification and delinquency, we know of no research that specifically investigated the different identifications of juvenile delinquents, i.e., not only their identification with parents or their substitutes but also with other individuals, groups, and abstract entities such as goals, values etc.

In general, one refers to the concept of identification without ever clearly defining it, as its meaning is supposed to be generally known. However, a review of the literature shows that the definitions of identification vary with time and with the theoretical orientation of the authors: after an initial, somewhat restrictive approach by psychoanalytic-orientated theoreticians (Freud, S., 1900, 1923; Freud, A., 1946; Lacan, 1949; Klein, 1946; Knight, 1940; Sanford, 1955), the concept was enlarged by the socio-psychological approach (Tolman, 1943; Foote, 1951; Becker and Carper, 1956; Hall, Schneider and Nygren, 1970; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Lau, 1989; Hinkle, 1989), while theorists of learning processes progressively attempted to approach the concept more experimentally (Mowrer, 1950; Sears, 1957; Withing, 1960; Mussen and Distler, 1959; Bandura, Ross and Ross, 1963; Bandura and Walters, 1969) and even tried to rationalize it in behavioral terms (Kagan, 1958). Tap (1980), taking into account these diverse approaches, tackles the concept of identification in a developmental perspective: based on genetical, psychoanalytical and psychosocial studies he describes six modes of identification; even though they can be assigned to different child and adolescent development levels, their effects can be recognized throughout the entire life.

The more archaic mode of identification is the fusional or dependence identification, which occurs every time the individual confounds himself with the desires of another and depends on that other to have his own needs satisfied, in particular his need of love, warmth and physical contact.

After this we have the identification with the aggressor: the individual tends to appropriate for himself the whole power of refusal and interdiction of the other, in reaction to the ambivalence of that other and in order to satisfy his wish for autonomy, and to permit the self to affirm itself.

The master imitative identification progressively replaces the identification with the aggressor: the individual tends to appropriate for himself the complete active power of the other and to acquire the means of access to autonomy, i.e., the instrumental aptitudes (motor, intellectual etc.) In most cases the identification with the aggressor is transitory or cyclical and in close interaction with the master and accomplishment identification.

Next appears the specular or mirror identification characterized by the tendency to maximize the similarities with another to the point that the other is confronted with a mirror self-image, an alter ego, which implicates, at least temporarily, the rejection or denial of what made the other specifically different from the self. The categorical identification will permit the child to escape from narcissistic fascination: having appropriated the virtual self-image and operated the distinction between self and others, the child will proceed to look for comparisons between others and himself and seek evidence of resemblances and differences, particular those linked to sex, age and related roles.

Finally, the identification with the project, characteristic of the adolescence, permits the adolescent to overcome dependency, egocentric contestation, narcissistic fascination and conformity to the group. However, that identification may also cause an alienation if the aspirations of the adolescent are totally dissociated from present actions and situations, thus risking to block future perspectives and hopes for change. We also have to be aware that the identifications of childhood may appear again in adolescence and be predominant, including the categorial identification within the conformism in the anti-conformism of the youth category.

When studying the relationship between delinquent behavior and delinquent personality we tried to determine whether the frequency of offending decreases as the subject reaches a higher level of identification and whether certain types of delinquent behavior can be assigned predominantly to subjects characterized by a certain type of identification and by a specific interpersonal maturity level and sublevel. We also investigated whether there is a relationship between interpersonal maturity and developmental levels of identification.

METHOD

Sample

Our sample is composed of 30 male adolescents aged 15, 16, and 17 years. All of them had recently appeared before a juvenile court for the first time. We chose this last criterion in order to avoid any stigmatization effect which might occur if the adolescents had already appeared before a juvenile court several times. To gain access to this population, we contacted all institutions working with delinquent adolescents in the provinces of Liège, Belgium.

After the director of the organizations connected us with adolescents meeting our criteria, we asked them whether they would agree to help us in our research by responding to our questions right now and again after a ten-month period. We informed the subjects that in our quality as researchers we were independent of all institutions, the court and the police authorities and that all information obtained would remain confidential. We also asked them to give us the address of their parents in order to be able to contact them again for the follow-up.

The subjects were interviewed for the first time in 1990, and for the follow-up in 1991. We had some ethical problems with regard to the second interview: contacting the adolescents one year later in their habitual environment implied the risk of reminding them of a period in their life they might prefer to forget. However, we had previously explained to the adolescents in detail the objectives of our study and informed them that it was necessary to contact them again for a second interview after a one-year period. So, when they agreed to cooperate, they were fully aware of our research concept.

PROCEDURE

Types of delinquent behavior

Because of the problems and limitations of official measures of delinquency, we decided to base our study on a self-reported measure of delinquent behavior. To begin, we had to decide which offenses were to be included in our self-report questionnaire. We chose to evaluate a wide range of criminal behavior, ranging from petty offenses, to moderate and very serious offenses, including theft, damage to property (vandalism) and bodily injury as well as status delinquency, drug and alcohol consumption, and disobedience to parents or their substitutes. However, in order to

clearly delimit the field of investigation, and despite the probable existence of a continuum with regard to the above-mentioned offenses we decided to include in our definition of delinquency only criminal acts, all other behaviors being evaluated separately, but parallel to the criminal acts.

We based our questionnaire on the questionnaire of Dickes and Hausman (1982) but added additional items concerning a series of serious offenses not investigated by these authors. The validity of the Dickes and Hausman questionnaire has been proved twice: once by the authors themselves based on a reference population of 16- and 17-year-old adolescents from the provinces of Luxembourg, and once by Born (1983) who did a replication study based on a population of 16- and 17-year-old adolescents from the provinces of Liège.

In addition to a factor analysis and an analysis of correspondences, Dickes and Hausman also did a more differentiated analysis according to the Rasch model. They draw the conclusion that the addition of the responses to the items of the questionnaire is legitimate and constitutes a good measure of the latent trait "engagement in delinquency", whether the investigated domain is global or specific.

At the initial investigation as well as at the follow-up we first evaluated for each subject the quantity of the committed offenses; we did this separately for each type of the offenses mentioned in the first paragraph. In order to obtain contrasting groups, we then classified them according to ordinal scales corresponding to the different offenses and indicators mentioned above. For a more global evaluation of the delinquent behavior of each subject, we also retained three different indicators: the quantity, the seriousness and the persistence of his criminal activities. We combined these indicators for each individual subject at the initial investigation and at the follow-up, and - according to the results - we then classified the subjects according to ordinal scales, still in view of obtaining contrasting groups.

Depending on their position on the different scales, we could finally determine five specific types of delinquent behavior (for detailed information see Van Poppel, 1992). These appeared to be associated with specific styles of drug use and alcohol consumption, status offenses, and disobedience towards parents or their substitutes. We will describe these types of delinquent behavior further below.

INTERPERSONAL MATURITY LEVEL AND SUBLEVEL

At present, there exist two methods of classification in maturity levels and sublevels, each having its strengths and weaknesses.

The Jesness Inventory (1970, revised in 1985) is a classification method that permits the investigation of certain traits that are characteristic for a delinquent personality. Since 1985, this inventory is totally objective; it consists of 155 yes- or no-questions and can be applied to adults and to non-delinquent persons, although this last objective hasn't really been reached. We noticed that Jesness (1988) ultimately considered his classification method and the original method elaborated by Warren et al. (1966) as two different systems of classification: as a matter of fact, only 35% of the sublevels and 67% of the maturity levels are identical. At present, Jesness' interest seems to be focused on the sublevels, abandoning somewhat the classification according to maturity levels.

The advantages of the Jesness Inventory are its rapidity, the easiness of administration and correction, and its objectivity. Its validity is relatively well established (Jesness, 1988), but - according to the author - its test-retest reliability, i.e., its stability over time, varies depending on the length of time between the tests and on the age of the offender. When testing a sample of presumably non-delinquent adolescents after a one-year interval, Jesness (1988) reported an agreement of

46% for the subtypes, and 68% for the main types, whereas the agreement after almost two years was only 36%. Another study with a group of juvenile offenders retested after a two-year interval showed an agreement of approximately 58% on the subtypes (Jesness, 1974). However, as pointed out by Debuyst (1975), this tool has a certain disadvantage with regard to the interpretation of the yes/no response scales: A "yes" ("no") might not be an absolute "yes" ("no"), it might be an ambiguous "yes" ("no"). Debuyst stresses, however, that the validity of such questionnaires can be increased by carefully studying the formalized answers in order to detect what they really mean.

The original method of classification consists of a semi-structured interview elaborated by Warren et al. (1966). The purpose of this interview is to obtain as much information as possible on the individual's perception of the world, of the others and of himself, and of his reaction and adjustment to his perceived environment. The classification of the individual results from the rating by the examiner immediately after the interview in which he combines a series of corresponding factors to different maturity levels and sublevels. The interviewer has to be specially trained for this task; it is also very useful to record the interview in order to be able to re-listen to it. The interview takes approximately 90 minutes.

The validity of this method seems acceptable; however, the sublevels only apply to juvenile delinquents, they should not be generalized. With regard to the accuracy, it depends whether we look at the test-retest reliability or at the inter-rater reliability. The test-retest reliability seems acceptable: Based on a sample of delinquent adolescents with a follow-up interview after a 8- to 12-month period, Palmer and Werner (1972) reported 91% for the level, and 75% for the sublevel. The inter-rater reliability is somewhat weak: Harris (1988) reported inter-rater agreement percentages of 86% for level and 74% for sublevel, this being due to the problem of selective listening and to the absence of rules for the treatment of weak or contradictory data.

The greatest advantage of this method is its flexibility: it permits the collecting of numerous information about the past and the present as well as about the future. Moreover, this information is not only limited to concrete perceptions, it also includes more abstract ones.

At our initial investigation we utilized both classification methods in order to obtain as accurate a classification as possible; however, at the follow-up we preferred the original method of Warren et al. (1966) because of its flexibility and clinical fruitfulness, the Jesness Inventory method being not differentiated enough even though it is more objective.

IDENTIFICATION

Before describing our method for the investigation of identifications, it is important to define the concept in an operational way. We relied for our study on the various contributions with regard to the concepts of identification.

Identification is characterized by the presence, within the psychological organization of a subject, of certain characteristics, attributes, states, and goals of a model. This model must not necessarily be an individual, but can also be a group, or an abstract entity. Consequently, the identifications of a subject may be many and diverse, consciously chosen or not, more or less strong, and even contradictory.

Identification differs from imitation as it results from an interiorization, which provokes a modification of the subject's psychological organization, although in certain cases imitation may be at the origin of an identification. Identification could be considered as well as a process of an accomplished fact, depending on the moment of apprehension. Nevertheless, it is never acquired at once: although certain identifications, which have their origins in early childhood, seem stable and

durable, every identification is susceptible to be contested regarding its interaction with other identity and environmental variables.

The maintenance of identification can be ensured by direct reinforcements, or by vicarious reinforcements, in which the subject may think that the more important the similarities between him and the model are, the more he should possess or command the desirable states and/or goals of the model, and/or the more the environment should respond to him in the same way as to the model. The perceived similarities might be real or spring from the subject's fantasy.

Each identificatory response is motivated: as general motives we can briefly point out the desire of the subject to reach positive goals and/or states commanded and/or possessed by the model; the desire to revalorize his self-image; the desire to be recognized in an identity, even negative; and the desire to obtain certain social or psychological benefits.

Because of our attempt to investigate the totality of the identifications of the subjects, it was not possible to utilize objective methods such as the semantic differential method of Osgood (Osgood and Suci, 1952) and its derivated methods (Sopchak, 1952, Brown and al., 1986, Hinkle et al., 1989).

We decided to start from the semi-structured questionnaire elaborated by Warren et al. (1966) because its numerous questions concerning parents, friends and peer groups, free time, school, and profession seemed to be an ideal starting point to investigate the subjects' identifications.

Either the subjects mentioned spontaneously a person, a characteristic, a behavior, an ideal, a style, a goal, a group, etc. that challenged them, positively or negatively, that belonged to them, or that seemed to be important to them; or, if they didn't talk spontaneously in particular about their parents or groups, we induced them to do so. We definitely did not try to obtain a total count of the subjects' identifications, but to try to determine those which were of some importance to them at that moment, that is, at the second time of our research.

We then prompted the subject to provide us on the one hand with more detailed information on his own characteristics, longings, and goals, and on the other hand on those of the evoked models. We had to show flexibility, keeping in mind the comprehensive and expressive capabilities of each subject. Besides this, we were attentive to the eventual use of certain mechanisms of defense by the subjects to fight against one or another identification.

Among others, we investigated the resemblances and differences that the subject perceived between himself and the supposed models, whether real or sprung from fantasy. Although the presence of resemblances does not allow us, by itself, to infer the probable existence of an identification, it could be a good indicator for it.

Besides, relating to the nature of the hypothesized identification and the comments of the subjects, we proposed to them some characteristics, goals, styles or behaviors which seemed relevant to us, and then asked them to evaluate their presence, their importance, and their significance. Occasionally we also asked them to make the same evaluation by imaging themselves in the place of their models.

Starting from a situation he evoked, and after having informed us about his reactions, actions, emotions, and the reaction of the environment to that situation, we also asked the subject how he thought that the presumed model should have behaved in the same situation. During and after this investigation, we evaluated whether the criteria inferring the presence of a certain identification

were met.

The first of these criteria is that the object of identification has to be an integral part of the psychological organization of the subject: either the subject showed us, spontaneously or following our questions; that it "is a part of himself," that "it's him," that "he is like that,"... or else some of his verbalizations by taking into account his mechanisms of defense, permitted us to infer the probable presence of an identification.

The second criterion is that the subject has to derive certain psychological or material benefits of that identification, directly or vicariously, either that the subject expresses himself directly about these benefits, or that they may be inferred regarding to the existing psychological theorizations.

We tried to discern all sorts of identifications, whether they related to the identification with an individual or more specifically to the characteristics of an individual such as physical appearance, characteristic traits, intellectual, manual, artistic, athletic or social capabilities, values, projects, memberships; to the identification to a student, professional, athletic, political, religious, socio-cultural, familial or peer group; or to the identification with an abstract entity such as an ideal, a project, a value, or a style. We necessarily investigated the identifications to the parental figures. Furthermore, we evaluated for each subject some characteristics of his identifications taken as a whole: these characteristics concern the accessibility of the socially acceptable and positive models, regarding the effective potentialities of the subject, and the appropriateness of the subject's behavior regarding his identification with these models.

In order to synthesize all gathered information, we reported the data them in a grid, directly after the subject's interview.

Finally, in a developmental perspective, we attempted to determine the predominant developmental modes of identification of each subject based on the theorization of Tap (1980).

RESULTS

Typology of Delinquent Behavior

The criminal delinquent activities of our subjects led us to distinguish between five very specific types of delinquent behavior characterizing them. Moreover, each of these types is linked with certain specific styles of drug and alcohol consumption, status offenses and disobedience toward parents or their substitutes.

The first type of delinquent behavior, named persistent serious delinquency, that we found in five of our subjects, is characterized by very numerous and serious offenses, which appear to be persistent. Both serious and less serious offenses are committed very frequently. Destructivity against objects as well as persons, and drug and alcohol consumption acts are also numerous and generally serious. Even though, status offenses, disobedience towards parents or their substitutes were and remained high.

The second type of delinquent behavior, named persistent intermediate delinquency, was found in eight of our subjects. It is characterized by a low or middle degree of seriousness, but by an important delinquent activity, those two characteristics being maintained in time. The crimes of more or less importance, the destructive behavior against persons or goods, and the drug and alcohol consumption behaviors all range from middle to high quantity, and are persistent. The

frequency of status offenses and disobedience towards parents or their substitutes were and remained high.

The third type of delinquent behavior, named outbursting delinquency, was found in nine of our subjects. It is characterized by the emergence of a considerable number of diverse offenses of middle seriousness; however, their occurrence diminished significantly or totally in time: only some less or intermediately serious offenses persisted sometimes. The alcohol and soft drug consumption persisted in time, while status offenses and disobedience towards parents or their substitutes diminished or at least remained identical.

The fourth type of delinquent acting, named low intermittent delinquency, was found in only two of our subjects. It is characterized by a durable intermediate quantity of less serious offenses, the emergence of a somewhat serious delinquent act being totally sporadic. There are not necessarily drug or alcohol consumption acts, and the frequency of status offenses and disobedience towards parents or their substitutes was and remained intermediate.

The fifth type of delinquency, named occasional delinquency, was found in 6 of our subjects. It is characterized by a rare and generally not repeated apparition of some less serious offenses. There could be a light tendency towards alcohol and, but more rarely, soft drug consumption. Status offenses and disobedience towards parental authority were and remained much less numerous.

It has to be noted that these different types of delinquent behavior appear to be close to those found by Leblanc and Frechette (1987).

Interpersonal maturity level and sublevel

What about a possible evolution of our subjects interpersonal maturity? We observed that after a one-year interval, 70% of the subjects not only kept the same level of maturity, but also the same sublevel, whereas 16.6% of the subjects ranged at the same level, but at a different sublevel, and that 13.3% of the subjects changed the level and sublevel.

In the case of the five subjects keeping the same level but changing sublevels, three of them passed, within level 4, from the sublevels NX and NA to the sublevel SE, which corresponds to a more adapted style of response to the environment. Concerning the two remaining subjects, either their belonging to a certain sublevel is precised after an initial hesitation at time one or it is the opposite.

All subjects with an observed change in level, had already a double scoring at time one, the evolution towards a higher level confirming itself in the majority of the cases: three out of four subjects passed from level 2 - 3 or 3 - 2 to level 3. Only one subject seems to have passed from level 4 - 3 to level 3, which is probably more the reflect of a scoring difficulty at time one than a real regression at an inferior maturity level.

Since 86.6% of our subjects remained classified at the same maturity level at both times of our study, may we hence conclude that the concept of interpersonal maturity shouldn't really be developmental? We think that a one-year interval is too short to allow us to infer such an hypothesis: it's possible that after an interval of several years, we would observe some evolution in the interpersonal maturity of our subjects, which, at present, are still adolescents.

Nevertheless, we have to point out that Werner and Palmer (1972) obtained similar results at a one-year interval with a population of juvenile delinquents (they found 91% of level agreement and 75% sublevel agreement). However, remember that Jesness (1988), using a different classification method, found, also at a one-year interval, but with a sample of presumed non-delinquent adolescents, an agreement of only 68 % for the levels and 46% for the sublevels.

Concerning the concept of sublevel, which is not properly developmental, it seems interesting to us that certain subjects passed from a sublevel corresponding to a lesser adapted style of response to a sublevel corresponding to a more adapted style of response to the environment.

We observed no marked relationship between the maturity levels of our subjects and their age; however only very few subjects aged 15 were to be found at level 4.

TYPES OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR AND INTERPERSONAL MATURITY

TYPE of DELIN- QUENCY	INTERPERSONAL MATURITY LEVEL AND Sublevel (TIME 2)							
	2	3 CFM	3 CFC	3 MP	4 NA	4 NX	4 CI	4 SE
I	23		16,28		2,18			
II	5	15	14,26	7		3,24,25		
III		4,10,12		20			6,13,19	17,22
IV	21	1						
V		8,9,27			11			29,30

The numbers in the columns correspond to the subjects, numbered from 1 to 30.

It can be noticed that the subjects more engaged in delinquent behavior, that is, the subjects belonging to the types of delinquent behavior 1 and 2, almost all belong, at time 2, to the maturity levels and sublevels 2, 3 CFC (Conformist Cultural), 4 NA (Neurotic Acting Out), and 4 NX (Neurotic Anxious), which correspond to a less adapted style of response to the environment. On the contrary, the subjects characterized by a weak or nonexistent delinquent behavior, or having stopped or strongly reduced their delinquent behavior, i.e., the subjects belonging to the types of delinquent behavior 3 and 5, almost all belong to the maturity levels and sublevels 3 CFM (Conformist Immature), 4 CI (Cultural Identifier), and 4 SE (Situational-Emotional Reaction), which correspond to a more adapted style of response to the environment. So, it seems that there is not really a relationship between the maturity level and the type of delinquent behavior, but rather between the type of delinquent behavior and the sublevel, that is, the style of the response to the environment: the subjects characterized by a less adapted response style (the subjects classified at sublevels 3 CFC, 4 NX, 4 NA) appear to be more engaged in delinquent behavior.

Concerning the sublevel 3 CFC, these results might be explained by the fact that one of the CFC sublevel characteristics is the exclusive conformity to a specific peer group: so, the subjects of sublevel 3 CFC who had affiliated with a delinquent peer group at the time 1 of our research maintained this affiliation, and consequently persisted in their delinquent behavior.

On the other hand, the sublevel CFM is rather characterized by the conformity to whomever has the power at that moment. So, either the subjects belonging to that sublevel have always conformed to parental authority, or, after having been influenced by delinquent peers for a certain time, they have conformed again to parental authority or, most of the time, to the authority in the institutions where they had been placed.

With regard to the subjects belonging to the sublevels NX and NA, it seems that most of them couldn't resolve their internal conflicts, and continued expressing these by adopting delinquent behaviors, which moreover always appeared to be linked with drug consumption, which sometimes aggravated their delinquent behavior.

Concerning the subjects belonging to the sublevel CI, although they have internalized some values that permit them to adopt delinquent styles of behavior, they also have internalized some other socially accepted values: they are thus able to renounce to a certain degree to the socially unaccepted values. Moreover, they often appeared to be motivated by the desire to later practice a certain profession, which seemed to them incompatible with a criminal record: thus, at age 18 these subjects chose to terminate their delinquent behavior.

As to the subjects belonging to the sublevel SE, either these had never adopted a noticeable delinquent behavior, or, after having adopted such a behavior, they put an end to it: their delinquent behavior corresponded then to a temporary response to a crisis, situation, or recent emotional change.

When we investigated the relationship between the few evolutions we observed in our subjects' interpersonal maturity sublevels and their delinquent behavior, we couldn't discern marked change in delinquent behavior by the few subjects (3 out of 30) who passed from a lower to a higher level, i.e., from level 2 to level 3. However, for the few subjects (3 out of 30) who passed, within the level 4, from sublevels NA or NX to the sublevel SE which corresponds to a more adapted style of response to the environment, we observed in parallel a reduction in their delinquent activities. As will be shown, these subjects then also reached a higher level of developmental identification, i.e., the level of the identification to the project.

TYPES OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR AND TYPES OF IDENTIFICATIONS: PRINCIPAL TENDENCIES

We immediately noticed that for most of the subjects, the identification with a father figure was of great importance, whatever the type of delinquent behavior was.

The subjects characterized by the most numerous and the serious persistent delinquent acts (type 1) usually identified themselves strongly with paternal characteristics like power and aggression. All of them identified themselves with delinquent and anti-social peers, groups, values, lifestyles, and were orientated towards seeking immediate pleasure.

On the other hand, the subjects characterized them by a weak or non-existent delinquent behavior (type 5), or stopped or greatly reduced their delinquent behavior (type 3), mostly identified themselves also with the father or father substitute, but this time with regard to generally positive and socially valued characteristics. This identification was accompanied most of the time by an identification to a study direction and/or a profession.

The subjects characterized by numerous and persistent offenses of only average seriousness also showed an identification with parental characteristics. The nature of these, however, were quite diverse: parental power and authority, rejection by the father or indulgence. Nevertheless, almost all subjects identified themselves with deviant or delinquent peers.

Thus it can be concluded that the paternal figure plays a major role in the development of these adolescents, not only as a factor for the development of positive characteristics, but also, more specifically, in the adoption of certain delinquent behaviors by the subjects: either the father is an aggressive, violent, or deviant identification model, he is described as less severe or indifferent, he is absent from the education of the subject, he has rejected the subject, or he is devalued by the mother of the subject. These findings confirm those of Le Blanc and Fréchette (1987) and of Bandura and Walters (1958).

TYPES OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR AND CHARACTERISTICS OF IDENTIFICATION

Concerning the accessibility of socially acceptable and positive characteristics of the models, the subjects characterized by a weak, non-existent (type 5), or strongly or totally diminished delinquent behavior (type 3), all identified themselves with accessible or at least more or less accessible characteristics, while the subjects characterized by frequent and persistent delinquent activities (types 1 and 2) mostly identified themselves to less or not accessible characteristics.

With regard to the appropriateness of the subjects' behaviors regarding their identification to socially acceptable and positive models, we observed that the subjects characterized by a weak, non-existent (type 5), or strongly or totally diminished delinquent behavior (type 3), almost always adopted an appropriate behavior, while it was the opposite for the subjects characterized by frequent and persistent delinquent behavior (types 1 and 2).

The subjects characterized by persistent, frequent and serious delinquent behavior (Type 1 and 2) present a developmental level of identification which, in most of the cases, does not pass the level of categorial identification. Moreover, when reached, that level is accompanied most of the time by more archaic types of identification. This is most true for those subjects who commit the gravest delinquent acts (Type 1).

On the contrary, the subjects characterized by a weak or non-existent delinquent behavior (Type 5), or who have greatly reduced or terminated their delinquent behavior (Type 3), present a developmental level of identification which most of the time reaches the identification to the project, and which moreover is never accompanied by more archaic modes of identification. This is also the case, with one exception, for those subjects that are at the level of categorial identification.

Type of delinquent behavior and developmental level of identification

TYPE OF DELINQUENCY	DEVELOPMENTAL LEVEL OF IDENTIFICATION				
	FUSIONAL, DEPENDENCE	TO THE AGGRESSOR (MASTER IMITATIVE)	SPECULAR (MIRROR)	CATEGORIAL	TO THE PROJECT
I	(23)	(2,18,23,28)	(16),23	2,16,18,28	
II	5,25,(24)	(7)		7,14,15,(24),26	3,24
III			(4)	4,12,20	6,10,13,17,19,22
IV	21			1	
V				9,27	8,11,29,30

The numbers in the columns correspond to the subjects, numbered from 1 to 30.

(Recall: When we talk about the developmental level of identification, it refers to the identification(s) which appeared as being dominant for that subject at that moment.

() : When the subjects are put into parentheses it means that they are located at a higher level of developmental identification as well.

Regarding the identification with the aggressor and the master imitative identification, please note: the possible presence of the identification with the aggressor, accompanied or not by a master imitative identification seemed to be more frequent than to find the possible presence of the master imitative identification occurring alone. Beyond that, Tap '80 (in 27) noticed that in most of the cases the identification with the aggressor appears transitory or cyclical and in strong interaction with the master imitative identification. Therefore, we decided to regroup these two modes of identification.)

Because we are talking about identification in a developmental perspective, it might be interesting to know the classification of our subjects' identification with relation to their age.

Developmental level of identification and age

AGE AT TIME 1	DEVELOPMENTAL LEVEL OF IDENTIFICATION				
	FUSIONAL, DEPENDENCE	TO THE AGGRESSOR (MASTER IMITATIVE)	SPECULAR (MIRROR)	CATEGORIAL	TO THE PROJECT
15	5	(28)	(16)	12,16,28	8,22
16	21,(24)	(2,18)	(4)	1,2,4,14,15,18 20,(24)	13,24,29
17	(23),25	(23,7)	23	9,26,27,7	3,6,10,11,17,19,30

The numbers in the columns correspond to the subjects, numbered from 1 to 30.

We observed that the older the subject got, the more the identification to the project occurred; however, the categorial identification, clearly predominant at the age of 16, can still be found in numerous 17-year-old subjects. Concerning the more archaic modes of identification, occurring alone or, most of the time, accompanying the level of categorial identification, we found them at every age.

It seems that although certain of our subjects already identified themselves with the project at age 15, most of them only reached that level later, around 17 years old, and that even at that age, a great number of our subjects had not yet reached that level.

Developmental level of identification and interpersonal maturity

MATURITY LEVEL AND Sublevel (TIME 2)	DEVELOPMENTAL LEVEL OF IDENTIFICATION				
	DEPEN- DENCE, FUSIONAL	TO THE AG- GRESSOR (MASTER IMITATIVE)	SPECULAR (MIRROR)	CATEGO- RIAL	TO THE PROJECT
2	5,21,(23)	(23)	23		
3 CFM			(4)	1,4,9,12,15,27	8,10
3 CFC		(28)	(16)	14,16,26,28	
3 MP		(7)		7,20	
4 NA		(2,18)		2,18	11
4 NX	(24),25			(24)	3,24
4 SE					17,22,29,30
4 CI					6,13,19

The numbers in the columns correspond to the subjects, numbered from 1 to 30.

It also seems interesting to know the relationship between developmental level of identification and interpersonal maturity: indeed, both are developmental concepts.

First, we notice that every maturity level in general corresponds to a different level of developmental identification. Thus, the subjects belonging to the lowest maturity level (level 2) are all characterized by rather archaic predominant modes of identification while the subjects belonging to maturity level 3 have reached the level of categorial identification, and almost all the subjects belonging to maturity level 4 have reached the identification with the project.

We observe that the subjects belonging to level 4 and characterized by at more archaic modes of developmental identification belong to the sub-types NA and NX, that is, to those corresponding to a lesser adapted style of response to the environment. Moreover, these subjects are all seriously engaged in delinquent activities.

Some of the subjects belonging to sublevel CFM, i.e., to the sublevel which corresponds within level 3 to a more adapted style of response to the environment, did not reach the level of identification with the project although almost all of them were characterized by weak, non-existent, greatly reduced or terminated delinquent behavior. It is to be stressed that these subjects generally appeared to be greatly dependent on their parents or parent substitutes.

It is of interest that, although we observed, after a one-year interval, only very rare passages to a higher maturity level, the parallel evolution of both of the developmental concepts of interpersonal maturity and developmental levels of identification seems to reinforce the developmental nature of the concept of interpersonal maturity: we can hypothesize that such passages will be more frequently observed if we compare the maturity levels reached by the subjects at adolescence and at the adult age.

DISCUSSION

The preceding observations lead us to certain more general statements and prospects.

The qualitative follow-up, after a one-year interval, of 30 male adolescents who recently appeared before a juvenile court for the first time permitted us to observe that the subjects characterized by a less, greatly diminished, or terminated delinquent behavior preferably belonged or evolved to sublevels corresponding to a more adapted style of response to the environment, whatever their maturity level. Additionally, these subjects were characterized by a positive identification to their father or father figure and by an identification to a study direction and/or to a profession, and the positive characteristics with which they identified themselves were almost always accessible to them. Moreover, these subjects almost all reached the upper level of developmental identification, that is, the identification to the project, and this was never accompanied by earlier modes of identification.

On the other hand, the subjects who were seriously engaged in delinquent behavior almost all belonged and remained at the sublevels corresponding to a less adapted style of response to the environment whatever their maturity level, or remained at the lowest maturity level. Moreover, their identification to their father was either negative or conflicting and often occurred at the same time as an identification to delinquent peers or peer groups; and, when they identified themselves to more positive characteristics, these were often not accessible to them. Furthermore, most of them did not surpass the developmental level of categorial identification, and, when having reached that level, they still showed most of the time earlier modes of identification as well.

It would be interesting to further investigate the relationships between types of delinquent behavior and maturity levels and sublevels, also in a longitudinal perspective, but after a longer time interval, extended from adolescence to the adult age.

A promising prospect for further studies seems to us the relationship between types of delinquent behavior and identification in a developmental perspective: since the identification to the project either prevents individuals from delinquent behavior or helps them to renounce to their delinquent activities, it is to be asked whether we shouldn't even more associate actors of delinquencies to projects, in order for the identification to the project to progressively take the step forward over a more archaic mode of identification which appears as frequently associated with heavier delinquent behavior. For that purpose, it will be interesting to investigate which factors could promote or at the contrary slow or prevent such an identification to the project.

A qualitative longitudinal approach may result in a better understanding of the relationship between the process of psychosocial development and desistance or persistence in delinquent behaviors. Furthermore, such a study project should be carried out in different countries, in order to explore the interactions between personal development, macrosocial contexts, and changes in delinquent behavior.

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