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The shared meaning and value placed on children impacts how institutions respond to juvenile “deviants.” This study explored ways in which news media constructed images of young “deviants” and corresponding conceptions of “childhood” across two key historical time periods.

The key areas of focus included: first, the ways in which the print media reconciled the contradictory notions of “childhood” and deviance; second, power dynamics across sociocultural contexts; and third, how depictions of young “deviants” were reflective of their historical context. Data consisted of 157 newspaper articles from *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, ninety from 1960-65 and sixty-seven from 1980-85. Dual methods of content analysis and critical discourse analysis yielded telling results.

First, there was a distinct shift in focus across the two time periods from older juveniles to younger ones. The age of the “deviant” played a role in setting the tone of the articles regarding institutional responses and punishment approaches. Second, use and types of predications were found to be important tools across both time periods that contributed to negative depictions of young “deviants” while also trying to individualize and normalize them. Third, the attribution of responsibility was used to reconcile “childhood” and deviance, where the power of the family and social class were significant factors. Lastly, an emphasis on workforce involvement was used across both

time periods as a romanticized concept and as a way to gauge a young person's societal value. Such an emphasis was shown to reconcile deviance with adulthood.

Similar findings from both time periods were specifically interesting considering their differing sociocultural climates towards juvenile "deviants." This study also provided useful knowledge regarding narratives about "deviants" provided by the media and the importance of critically analyzing them.

RECONCILING DEVIANCE AND CHILDHOOD: AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF
MEDIA DEPICTIONS OF YOUNG “DEVIANTS”

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Contribution and Relevance of Research.....	2
Specific Aims, Goals and Research Questions	3
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	5
The Progressive Era	6
The 1960's	7
The 1980's	11
Youth, Deviance, and Media	17
Conclusion	21
III. THEORY & METHODS.....	23
Theory.....	24
Data.....	29
IV. RESULTS	36
Age Effect	38
Infantilizing v. Adultifying.....	48
Institutions and Jargon	60
Reconciling “Childhood” with Deviance.....	61
Results Summary	71
V. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION.....	75
Age Effects and Redefining Childhood	77
Predication, Conformity, and Individualization.....	81
Reconciling “Childhood” and Deviance.....	83
Summary and Conclusion	86

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	89
APPENDIX CODING WORKSHEET.....	98

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Number of articles throughout phased process and systematic sampling.	30
Table 2: 1960-65, 15 & Under Arrests	42
Table 3: 1980-85, 15 & Under Arrests	43

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: % of Total Juvenile Arrests, Ages 15 and Under, 1960-65 & 1980-85	42

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Constructions of childhood and children are continually redefined. Depictions of young deviants and ways to handle them shift over time and space. Issues surrounding children are particularly important to the public. Susan Moeller (2002) argued that concerns for children are unifying themes and that stories about them are essentially about the collective and political “Us.” The government, its leaders, and our individual circumstances are all judged by approaches to and treatment of children, both conforming and “deviant.” Because of the salience of child well-being in our society and the symbolic value of children in our culture, it is important to understand the processes that shape perceptions of children. In this study, I focused in particular on the changing portrayal of “deviant” children by the news media.

Ultimately, our understanding of “deviant” children manifest in political consequences. Jonathan Simon’s (2007) book, *Governing Through Crime*, discussed the use of “crime to promote governance by legitimizing and/or providing context for the exercise of power” (p. 5). While Simon was referring to crime more generally, I applied his idea specifically to juvenile crime and deviance. Therefore, I argue that the treatment of “deviant” young people is often used as a means to impose governance and power over the entire young population while also reflecting on “Us” as a society. Moeller (2002) argued that “children have become projections of adult agendas” (p.37). Media depictions of young people, specifically those exhibiting “deviant” behavior, are

controlled by adults and institutions of power. Those depictions may not necessarily be reflective of the needs or reality of young people, but rather may operate as a way to gain support for political and/or social agendas of adults in power.

Some contend that young people are *the* most governed population. To the extent that this is true, understanding the governance of children should be central to ensuring its validity (Muncie, 2006). John Muncie (2006) stated, “Arguably, more accurately, it is the constellation of images thrown up by *youth, disorder* and crime that provides the basis of contemporary contexts of governance” (p.786). If indeed the governance of children is based on images of “deviant” youth, then critical examinations of such images are especially pressing.

Contribution and Relevance of Research

This study contributes to two existing literatures: scholarship on the social construction of childhood, and the deviance literature. The critical perspective taken in this research is important as it calls into question existing modes of understanding. An historical perspective on constructions of deviant youth serves to improve our understanding of contemporary harsh juvenile justice practices and widespread social control of children (Scott & Grisso, 1998). By understanding ways in which media depict young “deviants,” both researchers and consumers of media can be more informed and critical of such practices. Finally, this study is relevant because of its ability to show how multiple institutions interact to define or re-define specific groups as well as promote certain “management” approaches towards those groups.

Specific Aims, Goals and Research Questions

The aim of my research was to understand the role media plays in shaping conceptions of juvenile deviance. I was specifically interested in how media reconcile concepts of childhood with notions of deviance in their depictions of young offenders. In particular, I was interested in power dynamics across differing sociohistorical contexts. The work of Michel Foucault, critical discourse analysis, and content analysis served as useful tools to uncover power dynamics that produce, reproduce and shape images of “deviant” youth. Finally, in this study, I explored the ways in which media depictions of young “deviants” might have been a product of historical and sociocultural contexts.

To achieve these research aims, my study stretched across two key time periods, 1960-65 and 1980-85. The data employed in this study included three national dailies: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. I drew a systematic sample of stories from these three papers for each time period.

Four research questions were employed in this study. First, how did the age of the deviant set the tone of the article? Did different age groups provoke different responses within and between time periods? Second, were there any overarching themes, concepts, categories or rhetoric regarding “innocence” or “danger” present within and between each time period? Specifically, were young “deviants” infantilized or adultified by media? Third, in what ways were institutional power relations enacted within the media. Lastly, and more generally, how was or wasn’t the concept of “childhood” reconciled with deviance in the print media samples?

Chapter two presents both literature regarding constructions of childhood and deviance as well as historical contexts of each time period of focus. It also covers literature around media and its handling of crime and deviance. This review of literature was meant to provide a sociohistorical context within which the analysis could be placed. Chapter three provides an overview of both the theory and methods that directed this study. This chapter explains the theoretical framework as well as the data gathering and analysis process. Chapter four presents the results of both the content and critical discourse analyses. Chapter five is where much of the critical discussion surrounding the results takes place. Relevant results such as the role of age as it related to institutional responses and punishment types, the use and implications of certain predications, and the reconciliation of childhood and deviance were all examined in regards to notions of power and resistance.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I trace the emergence and development of the concept of “childhood” over time. I also cover the history of the juvenile justice system as well as the social, political and economic climate of the two time periods under investigation in my research. Since this study was concerned with “deviants” under the age of 18, it was necessary to grasp the overall climate towards children and adolescents in order to inform the understanding of them as “deviant”. This was particularly important given that “deviance” is created by society and is not an inherent attribute of the individual (Becker, 1963). Further, one of the methods employed in this study, critical discourse analysis, involves the analysis of text situated in its historical context. The historical conditions for each time period covered here were imported into the analysis of media stories.

Children have historically and cross-culturally been associated with such words and ideas as innocence, hope, naiveté, and evil (Cunningham, 1998). Such a wide range of characterizations suggests that constructions of childhood are not consistently defined. A stark contrast exists between the modern view of the “child” as a precious emotional resource and that of medieval society where children were no more than small adults who were valued for their labor (Aries, 1962; James & James, 2001).

Whether it is from a biological, psychological, sociological, or cultural perspective, the definition of “childhood” has been continuously evolving since around the 13th century. Philippe Aries (1962) marks the 1200’s as the period during which

children were recognized as something outside of adulthood. Popular definitions of childhood are matters of perspective, place and time. So too do the child's lived experiences reflect this "historicity" in which biology, place, time and culture influence their personal perceptions of existence (Cunningham, 1998).

Childhood is defined by some as a biological or psychological phase of physical and mental development where necessary stages (such as puberty) must be achieved to reach adulthood (Erikson, 1985; James & Prout, 1990; Postman, 1982). Such perspectives present childhood as a universally prescriptive set of steps through which the child traverses passively. These approaches were emerging in late nineteenth and early twentieth century U.S. society. Jean Piaget's four stages of cognitive development from infancy to adolescence is a perfect example of such an approach (Damon, 2006). The construction of childhood into such biological phases results in a clear demarcation between adult and child.

Progressive Era

The boundary between adulthood and childhood was institutionalized with the creation of the juvenile justice system in the U.S. in 1899 and mandatory public education in the early 1900's. Much emphasis during this time, also known as the Progressive era, was on the new psychology of the child and brain development, as well as their "moral socialization" (James & Prout, 1990). Children during this era were viewed as "belonging to the nation" where society was responsible for providing a proper "socializing" environment (James & Prout, 1990, p. 50). Therefore, when problems with

children arose, they were considered to be victims of society's failure to provide sufficiently.

The juvenile court's establishment began what has been called the Progressive Era of juvenile justice and judicially institutionalized the fundamental idea that children were different from adults and should be dealt with in a separate justice system (Colomy & Kretzmann, 1995; Shook, 2005). Judge Ben B. Lindsay was a prime example of the Progressive mindset, where he approached juvenile deviance from more of a social reform perspective rather than blaming the individual child (Colomy & Kretzmann, 1995). Consequently, children classified as "deviant" during the Progressive era were not blamed or held solely responsible for their actions. "Deviant" children were not considered to be inherently bad, but instead were viewed as products of their environments who were failed by society (Scott & Grisso, 1998). As a result, early theories located delinquency primarily in the lower class, creating what some refer to as "other people's children" (Colomy & Kretzmann, 1995; Feld, 1999; Finn, 2001).

Mandatory public education was also instituted to prevent this "failure" by society. The prevailing ideology held that it was the public's responsibility to provide the opportunity for advancement and education to all children through a public system which should provide both intellectual and moral socialization (McDonogh, Gregg, & Wong, 2001).

The 1960's

The Progressive era was important as the foundational period of juvenile justice in the United States. Just as children during the Progressive era "belonged to the Nation,"

the 1950's and early 1960's have been acknowledged by various researchers as the period of the "family" where the child emerged as a cherished emotional resource within the institution of the family (Hall & Montgomery, 2000; James & Prout, 1990). As the family was considered the "heart and soul of America," notions of conformity, innocence and needing protection were not only expected but celebrated (Alanen, 1988; Grossberg, 2005).

Ideology

The wholesome notion of the "family" brought the fluid idea of the "correct childhood" where socialization was successful and morally acceptable behavior was assumed. The idealized "family" during the 1960's was a middle-class, two-parent, nuclear household where the father was the breadwinner and the wife/mother was assigned to the home and "proper" rearing of the child or children (Feld, 1999). Images of this idealized family could be found in various outlets, but most notably in such shows as *Leave It To Beaver*. Needless to say, such an ideal household and childhood was not available to all children, creating a distinct population of "other people's children" (Finn, 2001). However, children who deviated from the "correct childhood" were not directly blamed; rather the child's guardian was held responsible and consequently was expected to appropriately respond to the situation.

The notion of the "correct childhood" further established boundaries between the adult and child, where the child was placed in opposition to the adult, defining the former as immature, irrational, asocial, acultural, incompetent and inferior to adults (James & Prout, 1990; Wyness, 2006). Allison James and Chris Jenks (1996) argue that along with

the emergence of the “correct childhood” came the strong desire to restrict children to a separate space in order to ensure that they undergo the proper socialization toward adulthood.

Juvenile Justice

Legally, the 1960’s was a period of civil rights and liberal law creation, where the focus was equal rights and benevolence towards juveniles (Bartollas & Braswell, 1997; Sutton, 1988). This pre-“Get Tough” period focused on the offender and his or her rehabilitation, leading to major Supreme Court rulings in the juvenile justice system in the late 60’s. *Kent v. U.S. (1966)*, *In re Gault (1967)*, and *In re Winship (1970)* were rulings that afforded juveniles similar due process rights as adults, reduced discretion among decision makers and made the juvenile justice system procedurally comparable to the criminal system (Bartollas & Braswell, 1997; Coupet, 2000; Scott & Grisso, 1998). Such decisions were meant to benefit the young offender by equalizing the juvenile system.

Media

Newspapers during the early 1960’s were largely privately owned and non-corporatized (Cook, 2005). This private ownership blocked the influence of corporate demands and held objective and professional reporting in high regard. Nerone and Barnhurst (2003) discussed the 1960’s as part of the conservative period of industrial and public demand for professionalization of journalism and reporting.

Sociocultural Context

Socially, the 1960's "family era" consisted of turmoil and change. Racially, the early 1960's was a crucial period in the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement (Farber & Bailey, 2001; McDonogh et al., 2001; Zinn, 1998). The decade was full of both peaceful movements, violent riots, rebellions and protests, in both the South and North. Some attribute this to the migration of 50% of African Americans to the North by 1963 (Zinn, 1998). During the Movement, a new population of young, empowered African Americans who were fighting for their rights unlike ever before emerged (Farber & Bailey, 2001). The militancy of some groups and sheer size of others no doubt brought about anxiety within the White community. Such anxiety not only caused outward racism but violence between the groups as well. As a result, young African Americans were targeted by the White authorities, creating a new class of "deviants."

In addition to the Civil Rights Movement, the late 1950's and 1960's brought about persistent questioning of the U.S. government by some of the masses. During the Movement, the FBI was continually suspected of running counterintelligence programs against influential Black leaders as an effort to stifle the Movement and progress made (Zinn, 1998). Mistrust of the government was also heightened in the mid to late 1960's with the emergence of the draft and the Vietnam War (Farber & Bailey, 2001; Zinn, 1998). Protests of Vietnam were predominantly led by young, White American students (Farber & Bailey, 2001). These protests were portrayed as a form of rebellion by young people which resulted in law enforcement targeting the young people with increasing frequency.

Women were also gaining independence in the 1960's. Throughout the decade, the role of women in society, and consequently their place in it, was challenged and reconstructed by the Women's Liberation Movement (Farber & Bailey, 2001; McDonogh et al., 2001; Zinn, 1998). As a result, the family as a whole was being called into question. As mothers and wives were beginning to organize and work outside of the household, children were becoming more independent and moving outside of the "family" (Zinn, 1998).

In addition, the "Pill" form of birth control was introduced in the early 1960's and its use slowed the birth rate of the middle to upper classes. This phenomenon structurally changed the middle to upper class child's cultural experience by causing smaller families, allowing the kids to have more "stuff," such as toys and space (Zinn, 1998). Education, as another facet of children's life, was also substantially different, where the focus was on the needs of the individual student and structure was tailored to those needs (Zinn, 1998).

In general, society, the family, and the justice system of the 1960's were all in pursuit of a "proper childhood" and consequently proper socialization towards adulthood and successful citizenship. The family was the foundation of the nation and the child was the heart and soul of the family.

The 1980's

Over time, childhood further evolved into a separate space in which children were, and still are, considered independent agents or participants in their own lives. Instead of passing through developmental phases with adulthood as the goal, the lived experiences of children have become increasingly recognized and valued (James &

James, 2001). As the space of the “child” moved outside the family, the responsibility for children’s actions shifted from the family to the individual child. However, society continued to hold on to the romantic notion of the “correct childhood” and still believed there was a proper place for children, which was more and more difficult for modern children to achieve (James & Jenks, 1996). With the dated ideas of a child’s “proper place” in society and the growing unavailability of such opportunities to a large portion of the young population, a new manifestation of the “deviant” child was inevitable. This distinction between ideology and opportunity created the modern idea of a “problem population” of children (Esman, 1990; Finn, 2001; Hil, 2000; Wyness, 2006).

Ideology

Moving to the early 1980’s, the “child” and space of childhood was moving outside of the “family” and becoming an independent space of its own where children and youth were considered independent social agents and actors. This resulted in the emerging idea of children and youth as a “problem” that needed to be controlled (Grossberg, 2005). With the emergence of the “problem child” also came various dualities of childhood, holding young people as both cherished and feared (Grossberg, 2005). The space of the “problem child” became a place where in order to protect the romantic notion of the “correct childhood,” a space outside of childhood was created where those who deviated from the norm were displaced and labeled a “threat” or a “danger” to society (Grossberg, 2005; James & Prout, 1990). Such displacement situated them as physical threats to society but also as symbolic threats to the ideal of the cherished young person.

Juvenile Justice

In response to “problem” youth, the early 1980’s period was also a product of the 1970’s “Get Tough” legislation which encouraged harsher sanctions and stricter social controls on the young population (Scott & Grisso, 1998; Shook, 2005). The years of benevolence or “soft” juvenile justice were long gone having been replaced by a “tough” approach to young offenders, meant to be a deterrent and attempt to teach them a lesson the “hard way” (Frazier, Bishop, & Lanza-Kaduce, 1999; Singer, 1996). Further, legislation implemented as a result of the “Get Tough” era was focused on transferring juveniles who had committed a widening range of acts to adult criminal courts (Singer, 1996). Also, within the juvenile justice system, proceedings and offenders were handled in ways that mirrored that of the criminal courts, blurring the line between juvenile and criminal justice and consequently between juvenile and adult offenders (Shook, 2005).

Media

Print media had also undergone fairly drastic changes since the early 1960’s. The Newspaper Preservation Act of 1970 opened up privately owned publications for corporate purchase, creating media monopolization that was on the rise during the early 1980’s (Cook, 2005). Print media had been taken over by corporate entities, for whom competition and profit were central factors in the reporting of news (Cook, 2005). As a result, journalism took a noticeable turn toward an entertainment format in order to draw larger audiences and make more money from advertisers (Berger, 2003; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992; Sacco, 1995). While the newspapers that were studied here were considered national dailies and were not as affected by acts such as the NPA of

1970, I believe that they were still affected by the changing approach, language, and formatting of news since it became what consumers wanted to see and, as a result, the norm.

Sociocultural Context

Socially, the early 1980's were different in many ways from the 1960's. The Reagan Era, circa 1981, began what most refer to as Reaganomics, a practice characterized by cuts to social programs and large scale military spending (McDonogh et al., 2001; Rose, 2004). Ronald Reagan was, to many, a nostalgic symbol of the 1950's America characterized by patriotism, conservative family values and conspicuous consumption (Batchelor & Stoddart, 2007). The goal of the Reagan administration was to project the U.S. as a strong, powerful and superior nation in the world (Batchelor & Stoddart, 2007). Such thinking was not only encouraged throughout the world but that mindset was spread within the nation as well.

Economically, Reaganomics brought social problems such as a significant shift in the distribution of wealth where the rich got richer and the poor got poorer (Rose, 2004). Ronald Reagan held an ironic duality, as Batchelor and Stoddart (2007) refer to it, where he represented the nostalgia of small town America but economically, through tax cuts, created widespread national corporatization. Much in the same way the newspaper industry shifted towards profit-minded corporations, so too did the economy as a whole. However, such corporatization only benefited those in the elite class. The middle or working class suffered from high levels of unemployment as a result of the recession brought about during Reagan's first term (Batchelor & Stoddart, 2007; Rose, 2004).

With the gap between the rich and the poor members of society growing, a double standard was held. For the rich, greed was considered “good” and rising incomes encouraged conspicuous consumption (Batchelor & Stoddart, 2007). For the poor, a stigma was attached to economic assistance programs which were progressively ended, creating what would become the “hyper poor” (Batchelor & Stoddart, 2007). The rhetoric towards the poor was similar to the “bootstrap” theory. They were held responsible for their positions and needed to pull themselves up by their symbolic “bootstraps.” Overall, the economy contributed to the individualizing of society and it was every person for themselves.

The “family” and the position of children were drastically affected by these governmental and economic changes. For the working class families, unemployment often left the traditional “breadwinner” unable to provide for the family. In addition, the ending of economic assistance programs created the need for both parents to work, opening the family up and leaving the children alone or in the care of others, creating what some refer to as “latch-key kids” (Alanen, 1988; Qvortrup, 1993). Generally, the nostalgic notion of the “family” was no longer available for a majority of the population during this time. As the family was reconstructed, it ceased to be the control center of the child.

As the economy and government reconstructed the “family,” the young people within it were consequently impacted since the traditional family could no longer act as a shield from social forces (Batchelor & Stoddart, 2007). With both parents working in most middle to lower class homes, more responsibility was placed on the children to help

with work inside the home. In addition to growing responsibility at home, young people were being directly marketed to as an emerging class of consumers (Postman, 1982).

Overall, young people during the early 1980's were being encouraged not only by their family but by society as a whole to grow up quicker. The increasing responsibility within the family, the increasing demands for education beyond high school, and the market treating young people as a new class of consumers blurred the boundary between adult and child (Batchelor & Stoddart, 2007; Nichols & Good, 2004). Such a blurring of the boundaries was caused by society equating adult-like actions of children with adulthood, which moved into the juvenile justice system as well.

David Elkind, a child psychologist commented, "In previous generations, children had a clearly defined role in society. That notion changed in the 1980's when children and teens began taking on adult-like personas" (Batchelor & Stoddart, 2007). While the pressures on them and their roles in society had changed, biologically young people were still the same. Nonetheless, society's approach to them caused young people to feel the need to "find themselves," sometimes within cliques or subcultures that were considered by mainstream society to be negative.

Generally, the two periods of interest to this study were times of contrasting ideals regarding children and young people. During the 1960-65 time periods, society, the family, and the justice system were working for the child, in pursuit of his or her "correct childhood" and proper socialization towards adulthood. Conversely, from 1980-85 the space of childhood was moving outside of the family, leaving the child to blame for their own "deviant" behavior. This "problematizing" of youth led to harsher sanctions aimed at

children who were regarded as dangerous, out of control, and in need of discipline.

While this description does explain the “why” of the different approaches towards young offenders, it doesn’t provide the “how” explanation of what tools were used by media to establish such a difference. A review of literature specifically focused on youth, deviance and media was necessary to examine what other research found to be the norm in media coverage.

Youth, Deviance, and Media

An aim of my study was to understand and interpret media representations of young people who are considered “deviant”. What follows is a review of research on media representations of deviant youth.

Over the past 40 years news media have shifted toward an entertainment style of newscasting, earning the label of “infotainment” (Altheide, 1997; Berger, 2003; Sacco, 1995; Sotirovic, 2001). While crime and deviance have always dominated the news, crime is increasingly portrayed in this “infotainment” style. This format has had an increasingly negative impact on representations and perceptions of crime and criminals. The use of anecdotal information placing events out of context; episodic framing that makes events seem singular and random; use of law and order discourse encouraging harsh treatment; and sensationalizing of rare events by focusing on dramatic details, have all been found to contribute to negative perceptions of crime and deviance in news media (Altheide, 1997; Ashley & Olson, 1998; Gilliam & Bales, 2001; Goidel, Freeman, & Procopio, 2006; Grossberg, 2005; Hubner & Wolfson, 1996; James & Jenks, 1996; Wyness, 2006).

As a result, the phrase “if it bleeds it leads” has become the motto of news media coverage in the U.S. where crime and violence are the most frequently reported topics (Chermak, 1997; Hubner & Wolfson, 1996; Shepherd Jr., 1997; Yanich, 2005). Goidel, et al. (2006) found that crime and violence focused news media creates misperceptions of the realities of both adult and juvenile crime. These misperceptions tend to encourage support for harsher sanctions on young people. The media provokes and perpetuates a discourse of fear and creates the false perception that danger and risk are a part of everyday life (Altheide, 1997; Sotirovic, 2001).

Numerous researchers have found that juveniles are disproportionately portrayed as both offenders and victims and are most frequently associated with violent crime (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007; Wayne, Henderson, Murray, & Petley, 2008). Pollack and Kubrin (2007) found that juvenile crimes were trivialized and depicted as senseless and irrational while quotes from authority figures in the community were used to represent safety and security. The portrayal of young offenders as irrational and essentially dangerous positions them in direct opposition to the authority figures who represent rationality and safety. As a further endorsement, adult authority figures such as police or politicians are often given a voice where the young people involved are silenced (Chermak, 1997). Such priority of voice signifies existing power relations between powerless young people and the adults that govern them.

Generalization and exaggeration associated with crime are common techniques used in media coverage of young people that contribute to negative perceptions (Herda-Rapp, 2003; Thurlow, 2006; Wayne et al., 2008). Generalizations tend to be applied to

the entire population of young people instead of to an individual or small group specifically, as is generally the case with adults (Thurlow, 2006; Wayne et al., 2008). Further, news media often exaggerates the difference in negative activities between young people and adults (Thurlow, 2006). Media generalizing, attribution of negative behaviors to young people as a whole, and the exaggerated representation of difference between young people and adults can have lasting harmful effects on the public's beliefs about children.

Irene Vasilachis de Gialdino (2007) examined the representation of young people associated with crime in El Salvador's written press. Gialdino (2007) found that young people associated with crime were stereotyped and portrayed generally as a threat to law and order, and society as a whole. Such representations were created through the use of language practices such as metaphors, characterizations, and categorizations. As a solution, greater social control measures and tougher sanctions were endorsed by the press (Gialdino, 2007). Such endorsements were identified through the use of quotes from authority figures, "us" versus "them" rhetoric, and the overall use of a police discourse (Gialdino, 2007). Overall, her findings reinforced what others have found regarding media representations of "deviant" young people but she more importantly emphasized how the use of language practices created those representations in news media.

As one of the foundational works examining media representations of "deviant" young people, Stanley Cohen's (2002) study in *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The creation of Mods and Rockers* investigated the ways in which media contributed to a

widespread “moral panic” based on what were considered by some to be “deviant” actions of a small group of people. Cohen’s study of the 1960’s Mods and Rockers phenomenon in Britain exemplified how media response to deviance can shape the ways in which groups are classified and consequently treated.

According to Cohen (2002), a moral panic is defined as society’s misperception and overreaction to the actual seriousness of an event or events. Over time, moral panics have taken on fairly prescriptive qualities. By some action or event, a condition, episode, person or group becomes defined as a threat to societal values and interests (Cohen, 2002). The threatening group is what Cohen (2002) labeled “folk devils.” The folk devils in Cohen’s (2002) study were the Mods and Rockers.

Cohen (2002) examined how a few small incidents involving the Mods and Rockers at beach resorts in England escalated into a societal moral panic in a relatively short period of time. He studied those institutions that played a role in the expansion of the moral panic focusing on social control institutions such as police, courts, and media.

According to Cohen (2002) the media is a system of control which initiates panic by employing key tactics. These tactics include the use of headlines that create negative images; the linking of folk devils to other social trends; the use of popular stereotypes; and the application of value-laden labels and overexposure. All caused a negative societal reaction to the Mods and Rockers, and consequently, young people as a whole. Cohen (2002) discussed how over-reporting of initial incidents lead the public to be sensitized to crime, increasing its vigilance and lowering the threshold for deviance by young people. Such sensitization lead law enforcement to respond to any slight misstep by a young

person in an overly authoritative manner. Naturally, police encounters with young people increased arrests, thus creating a self-fulfilling prophecy.

However, Cohen (2002) stated that, “The importance of the media lies not in their role as transmitters of moral panics nor as campaigners but in the way they reproduce and sustain the dominant ideology. (p. xxix)” Similarly, this study focused on how such power was exercised through media regarding “deviant” young people.

Conclusion

Based on previous research, it is clear that young people have been and continue to be negatively represented by the media. However, no existing literature examined how depictions of child “deviants” might have changed over time. Furthermore, no existing literature attempted to understand how the age of the offender might have played a part in his or her depiction as “deviant”.

In sum, the position of young people in U.S. society has been continuously shifting. From the 1960-65 to the 1980-85 time period, notions of responsibility moved towards a more individual perspective both socially and judicially. Socially, in the 1980’s the family was less central than in the 1960’s. As a result, a “problem population” of independent youth emerged during the 1980’s, making young people seem out of control. Judicially, a juvenile’s age and social condition was less of a mitigating factor during the 1980’s than it was in the 1960’s. Attention was solely paid to the offense committed, which was frequently equated with adulthood leading to adultlike consequences. As Moeller (2002) stated, “nominal children who are depicted as no longer innocent are increasingly being considered as adults. (p. 45)” While the literature

presented provided a framework for understanding the historical context, it didn't examine media representations within that context.

Further, the coverage of crime and young people has been found to be sensationalized, disproportionately reported, and problematized by modern media. Such approaches have been shown to create a distinct and typical depiction of modern young people as a dangerous threat to the rest of society. While such modern approaches are helpful, how the media covered young people and crime was not looked at in a comparative historical manner. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework and research methods used to analyze the samples in such an historical manner.

CHAPTER III

THEORY & METHODS

In this study, I employed dual methods of content analysis and critical discourse analysis (hereafter CDA). CDA operated as both theory and method. Content analysis was used as a supplemental method to present basic frequencies of coded concepts. CDA was then used as a way to move beyond basic quantification to critically analyze the samples.

The aim of my research was to understand the role the media played in shaping conceptions of juvenile deviance. I was specifically interested in how the media reconciled concepts of childhood with notions of deviance in their depictions of young offenders. Particularly, I was interested in power dynamics across differing sociocultural contexts. The work of Michel Foucault and CDA were particularly useful tools to uncover power dynamics that produce, reproduce and shape images of “deviant” youth. Finally, in this study I explored the ways in which media depictions of young “deviants” might have been products of historical and sociocultural context.

To achieve these research aims, my study stretched across two time periods, 1960-65 and 1980-85. The data employed in this study included three national dailies: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, from which I drew a systematic sample of stories for each time period.

Theory

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was both the theoretical framework and method used in this study. Discourse, as discussed by Michel Foucault, provides a way of talking about something (Allan, 2006; Fowler, 1991). According to Foucault, discourse works as a structuring tool to understand and organize objects and groups (Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991; Fowler, 1991). Discourse demarcates what is possible and impossible as well as what a member of a group looks and acts like. Additionally, Foucault argues that discourse imposes order and meaning upon a social group (Burchell et al., 1991; Gordon, 1980). For instance, the discourse of childhood demarcates who a “child” is and isn’t, it determines what a “child” should think and feel, how he or she should behave, while it imposes a perception of order on children. Foucault also argues that power can be found in discourse (Gordon, 1980).

Power, according to Foucault, is a practice that is not centralized but dispersed through networks of people, organizations and institutions in society (Foucault, 2000; Mills, 2003). As one of those institutions, media exercise power in what they write about and how they write it. News stories are products of the media industry and are shaped by political, economic and cultural forces (Fowler, 1991). Critical discourse analysis takes Foucault’s more critical approach and looks to understand how power and inequality are related to text, language and meaning as they construct and reproduce topics and issues (Fairclough, 1995a; Van Dijk, 2001).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a widely practiced interdisciplinary approach involving disciplines such as media and cultural studies, social sciences, and linguistics

(Carvalho & Burgess, 2005; Fairclough, 1995a; Gialdino, 2007; Thomas, 2003; Van Dijk, 1988). The framework of CDA consists of a multi-faceted analysis of text, discourse practice, and sociocultural context (Fairclough, 1995a; Fairclough, 1995b; Fairclough, 2003; Richardson, 2007; Van Dijk, 1988). Critical discourse analysts view text and discourse as social actions which involve not only representation but a social interaction with the audience (Fairclough, 1995a; Fairclough, 1995b; Richardson, 2007). In addition, the inherently social aspect of text is found to be especially true for media texts since media themselves are considered to be a social system (Johnson & Ensslin, 2007). A multi-faceted approach is taken in CDA in order to address these multiple processes occurring in a given text (Fairclough, 1995a).

The first phase of critical discourse analysis consists of an examination of text, compiling practices and notions from social semiotics and critical linguistics (Fairclough, 1995b). Practitioners of critical discourse analysis suggest that the choice of words, structure of sentences, and the organization of the sentences that make up the text, carry with them ideological meaning, and as a result can together create or perpetuate ideological thought (Fairclough, 1995b; Richardson, 2007). Discursive practice looks at ways in which language is used to create different meanings, make meaningful connections between social actors and/or actions, and represent different identities and activities, often exposing power relations (Gee, 1999; Van Dijk, 1993).

Further, this framework situates the text within its sociocultural context, providing what Norman Fairclough (1995a; 1995b) terms a more “operational” understanding of the interrelations of the text, discourse, and sociocultural practices. CDA takes historical

context into account to better understand the environment in which specific discourses and texts are situated. This historical notion is reminiscent of Foucault's "historical specificity" which argues that conditions for the emergence and maintenance of discursive practices are dependent upon what is available in an historical instance (Hall, Hobson, Lowe, & Willis, 1980). Social context consists of understanding the economic and political practices of the appropriate time period to better understand the roles that both media and messages play in society (Richardson, 2007). As a result of the importance of historical context in CDA, the historical summaries offered in Chapter Two are a central part of my analysis. These summaries provided the climate of ideology towards children, juvenile justice, media and sociocultural context for each time period.

The power of discourse within our society has been elevated by media and other institutions that have the power to manipulate and create discourses which become naturalized through their repeated use (Berger, 2003; Gamson et al., 1992; Marsh, 1991). The media are further viewed as purveyors of the voice of the powerful who have access and control in the creation and legitimization of discursive practices (Fairclough, 1995a; Van Dijk, 1993; Van Dijk, 2001).

Young people have been a consistently criminalized and controlled population. They have been historically dominated by adults in authoritative positions around them. CDA has been used by many researchers to study the treatment and representation of minority groups like young people. John Richardson (2001) used critical discourse analysis to examine how the British broadsheet media portrayed British Muslims. He found that British Muslims were rarely discussed in the news except for negative contexts

and as a result often only showed up as participants in events covered by the news stories (Richardson, 2001). Richardson's (2001) research findings contributed to the notion that British Muslim communities were socially excluded from British society at large and viewed in many cases as the "Other."

Just as CDA was used in Richardson's (2001) study to expose media exclusion and Othering of British Muslims in print media, Teun Van Dijk (2000) employed it to examine how news media reproduced racism. He analyzed how events and their participants were represented by news media and found that an overall "Us versus Them" discourse was employed.

Similar to Van Dijk, Vasilachis de Gialdino (2007) employed a form of CDA investigating the ways in which "crime associated youth" were represented in the El Salvadorian print media. In Gialdino's (2007) study, language was found to reproduce the relationship of inequality and dominance by characterizing deviant youth through the use of metaphors and negative membership categories (Gialdino, 2007).

Gialdino (2007) found that police discourse was often used to attribute criminal responsibility to young people who were in fact only suspects. Gialdino (2007) also found that, textually, gangs were often found to be predicated by descriptions of serious, violent crimes which bound those actions to the gang or gang members. Additionally, self-reported quotes by young people were often used by the journalists to reinforce negative categorizations, such as gang membership, to young people (Gialdino, 2007). Frequent practices, such as these, oversimplified young people and overstated the problem of serious, violent gangs and gang members (Gialdino, 2007).

In addition to CDA, I employed content analysis as a method to access the overarching themes in the data. Content analysis generally involves using a representative sample and developing category or coding rules to measure and reflect differences or changes in content (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005). However, in this study a systematic, rather than a representative sample, was used. Specifically, Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005) state, “The data collected in a quantitative content analysis are then usually analyzed to describe what are typical patterns or characteristics or to identify relationships among the content qualities examined” (p. 3).

Because content analysis is often criticized for its lack of interpretation and overreliance on quantification, critical discourse analysis was used as a complementary tool of inquiry. CDA offers theoretical depth and interpretive significance in its analysis (Thurlow, 2006). One of the central tenets of CDA is the fact that texts, especially media texts, are structured to reflect a certain exercise of power. The role of a critical discourse analyst is to deconstruct the text to better understand how this power and dominance is created and perpetuated. Put simply, John Richardson (2007) stated:

What this means is that critical discourse analysts: offer *interpretations* of meanings of texts rather than just quantifying textual features and deriving meaning from this; situate *what* is written or said in the *context* in which it occurs, rather than just summarizing patterns or regularities in texts; and argue that textual meaning is *constructed* through an interaction between producer, text and consumer rather than simply being ‘read off’ the page by all readers in exactly the same way (p.131).

The central limitation of CDA is bias held by the analyst regarding the role of power in text (Blommaert, 2005). However no analysis is done without some measure of bias. Critical discourse analysts acknowledge their biases while some researchers do not (Van Dijk, 2001).

Another weakness of CDA, as noted by Jan Blommaert (2005), is the vagueness of the concepts used within the analysis. While many of the foundational researchers utilizing CDA use similar concepts, there is variation because of the differing topics of study. In an attempt to address this limitation, I imported existing concepts into this study (Richardson, 2007). The concepts employed here are: the significance of predication, implications of differing types of reported speech, and important questions concerning critical analysis of text within its sociocultural context. Richardson's (2007) concepts fit nicely into my study because of his print media-specific approach to the discussion of CDA.

Data

The data for this research consisted of newspaper articles from three national dailies, *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. The samples stretched across two time periods: 1960-1965 and 1980-1985. The final sample analyzed consisted of 157 newspaper articles, ninety from 1960-65 and sixty-seven from 1980-85. This final sample was obtained through a phased, systematic process. Initially, a keyword search of *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* was performed using the ProQuest online database. Since the *Los Angeles Times* was not in any online databases until 1985, keyword searches were done on the *Los Angeles Times* website online archive for 1960-65 and 1980-1984 and ProQuest for the year of 1985.

The uniform keywords used in the searches were “juvenile AND crime.” Preliminary searches were performed using variations of the words, “children,” “juvenile,” “delinquency,” “youth,” “delinquent,” and “deviance” by themselves and in combination with “AND crime.” Of those, the combination of “juvenile AND crime” produced the widest array of pertinent and focused results of articles. The other keywords tried were too vague or too specific, either leaving out too many articles of interest or including too many unrelated articles. The searches were broken down by time period, going from 1/1/1960-12/31/1965 and from 1/1/1980-12/31/1985. Table 1 displays the number of articles resulting from the keyword searches, in addition to the number of articles at each stage of the process. Using only two uniform keywords limited the number of articles found and it should be emphasized that this research was not exhaustive.

Table 1: Number of articles throughout phased process and systematic sampling.

Newspaper	Time Frame	Database	Search results #	# Chosen from search results	# in Final Sample
Wash Post	1/1/1960-12/31/1965	ProQuest	547	366	45
Wash Post	1/1/1980-12/31/1985	ProQuest	535	223	25
NY Times	1/1/1960-12/31/1965	ProQuest	482	294	20
NY Times	1/1/1980-12/31/1985	ProQuest	437	251	20
LA Times	1/1/1960-12/31/1965	LA Times Archives	703	339	25
LA Times	1/1/1980-12/31/1985	LA Times Archive & Proquest	1719	840	22

A total of six initial keyword searches were performed. During the initial data collection, article relevance was defined broadly by any mention of juvenile justice, young offenders, young deviance/deviants, child welfare, juvenile justice policy/reform, juvenile crime statistics, schools and any other related topics that emerged. For *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* searches, this process involved a brief skimming of the full article. However, on the *Los Angeles Times* website archives, in lieu of free full text availability, a one or two line summary was provided for each article in addition to the headline. As a result, initial articles chosen from the *Los Angeles Times* online archives were a broader sample due to the limited amount of information available.

Following the preliminary collection of articles, I went back through those chosen from *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and the 1985 *Los Angeles Times* and read them more closely to determine if they should remain in the sample. Articles not chosen at this stage were saved separately for possible use as supplemental pieces if time permitted. In order to obtain a rich sample that was focused on the representation of age and deviance, the most important criterion was that the central focus of the article was on young offenders, youth deviance, juvenile justice, and policy/reform. Additionally, I included only articles that were at least 100 words long. After reading a large number of articles it was clear that articles with less than 100 words did not provide enough significant information for analysis.

To maintain consistency throughout the reviewing process, exclusion criteria were established as they emerged. As such criteria emerged, articles already covered were re-read with the new criteria in mind. For example, when editorials were deemed

inappropriate I removed all editorials from the sample. Additionally, the exclusion criteria helped to reduce the large number of articles making the samples more manageable. Eight general exclusion criteria were established and used.

First, since I was interested in the depiction of young people and deviance in the U.S., articles that focused on youth crime issues in other countries were excluded. Depictions of children, childhood and deviance differ greatly between nations and cultures and coverage of other countries would distract from the U.S. focus. Next, as mentioned earlier, articles were chosen only if their central focus was youth and crime and issues relating to that. As a result, articles focused on larger issues in which juvenile justice or delinquency played a small part were excluded. For example, the 1960's *Washington Post* contained a number of articles focusing on poverty programs in the area. While juvenile deviance was discussed briefly as a side effect of poverty, it was not discussed in detail enough to merit analysis.

In a similar vein, text of political speeches, synopses of candidates running for office, and summaries of what happened in Congress or the Senate were excluded. Again, despite the fact that juvenile justice issues were often discussed, it was briefly and not the central focus of the article. Book/television/radio reviews, advertisements of any kind, and program, workshop or event announcements were also excluded. Further, announcements of people appointed to juvenile justice or youth service positions were excluded since they typically only provided background on the person of interest.

In the preliminary article selection, some articles discussing children as victims were included. However in the second round of reading they were removed from the

sample since this study was focused only on young people as “deviants.” Lastly, editorials, opinion columns, and question and answer articles were excluded. There were numerous articles of this sort, often as responses to previously published articles by the newspaper. I decided that, since this study was concerned with media depictions, public opinion pieces fell outside the parameters of the study.

As for the *Los Angeles Times* sample, once the initial set of articles was chosen from the online archives, the full *Los Angeles Times* microfilm archives were accessed to examine articles for 1960-1965. As the articles were found, they were read to determine their appropriateness for the sample. If found to be appropriate, they were scanned from the microfilm into Adobe .pdf files, which were then compiled and printed for further reading and analysis. However, a side effect of scanning from the microfilm was that some of the articles were unreadable due to heavy black color and blurred images from the original newspaper. Whatever basic information that could be read was collected, such as headline and date, but if the entire article could not be clearly read it was not analyzed. A total of twenty-five articles were lost due to poor color, seven from the *Los Angeles Times* and 18 from *The New York Times*. The *Los Angeles Times* sample from 1980-1984 was obtained by purchasing the chosen articles from the online archives since many of the microfilms for that time period were unreadable.

Once the second phase of article collection was complete, a systematic sample was drawn. Every fifth article for each time period and newspaper was chosen. This was done to decrease the sample size to one that was more manageable for a single researcher under time constraints. I believe the smaller sample size also allowed for a more in-depth

analysis. Basic information from each final article was entered into two SPSS databases, one for 1960-65 and the other for 1980-1985. Basic information entered consisted of date, publication title, page number and section, main headline, sub headline, author, location (if given), the 2nd headline if continued to another page, photos, photo caption(s). Originally, I intended to use a computer-based text analysis program such as Atlas.ti; however, the format in which the articles came was incompatible with such programs, leaving SPSS as the next best option. SPSS 16.0 allowed for the coded data to be systematically analyzed using mostly descriptive statistics such as frequencies and averages.

Throughout the process of compiling articles, various studies using content analysis and CDA as well as literature by foundational scholars in content analysis and CDA were collected and read to thoroughly understand the methods. An initial coding worksheet was created based on this research. A supplemental coding worksheet with operational definitions for each variable was also created to be used as a reference when questions arose during the reading and coding process. All drafts of the coding worksheet were tested on five articles to determine whether they produced a comprehensive set of information necessary for the content analysis and more thorough critical discourse analysis. The original coding worksheet went through three consecutive drafts until a final one was reached (Appendix). A total of 49 variables, including the basic information, were coded for in each article,. Once the final coding worksheet was established, the variables were set up in the SPSS database where corresponding data for the articles was entered as they were analyzed.

Each article was read and coded but not entered into the database until being reread to ensure all necessary themes, concepts and points were drawn. The initial coding was strictly based on the coding sheet mentioned above. As articles were reread larger themes were also noted and coded for, allowing concepts to emerge from the sample. Brief descriptions and extraneous notes for each article were also typed up in Word documents, allowing for information of interest that didn't fit into the codes to be included. The SPSS analysis and article notes were compiled and then used for an historical analysis within and across each time period sample of articles. The results are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The aim of my research was to understand the role media played in shaping conceptions of juvenile deviance. I was specifically interested in the reconciliation of “childhood” and notions of deviance by media. Power dynamics across differing sociocultural contexts were also of interest. The work of Michel Foucault and critical discourse analysis guided the examination of power dynamics that produced, reproduced and shaped images of “deviant” youth. I also explored the ways in which media depictions of young “deviants” might have been a product of historical and sociocultural context.

The data analyzed in this study included three national dailies: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times* across two time periods, 1960-65 and 1980-85. I drew a systematic sample of stories from these three papers for each time period.

Dual methods of content analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA) guided the study. Content analysis was chosen because of its ability to expose fundamental themes in the data. CDA was chosen because of its focus on the relationship between discourse and power and attention to socio-historical context. This chapter provides the results of the analysis. A lengthier discussion of select themes was reserved for the discussion chapter.

Four research questions guided this analysis. First, how did the age of the deviant set the tone of the article? Did different age groups provoke different responses within and between time periods? Second, were there any overarching themes, concepts, categories or rhetoric regarding “innocence” or “danger” present within and over each time period? Specifically, were young deviants infantilized or adultified by media? Third, were particular institutions and jargon bound up with particular relations of power? Lastly, how was or wasn’t the concept of “childhood” reconciled with deviance in the print media samples?

A total of 157 newspaper articles were analyzed, ninety from the 1960-65 period and sixty-seven published between 1980-85. A breakdown of article totals by newspaper and time period at each stage of the searching and sampling process can be found in Chapter 3, Table 1. Text collected from the sample was entered into the program SPSS, which yielded basic quantitative frequencies on variables. Results from the SPSS frequency analysis together with research notes taken for each article provided the foundation for the subsequent critical discourse analysis.

The first phase of analysis involved coding each article for basic information such as title, location, institution, jargon, and sources reported. Interpretive concepts were also coded. These included overarching metaphors employed, predications applied to young people, and categories directly and indirectly applied to young people. A total of 49 variables were coded (Appendix). The second phase of analysis occurred during and following the article coding. It involved detailed research notes of each article and continuous re-reading of the articles to examine emergent themes within and across the

time periods. Part of that examination also involved a continuous awareness of the socio-historical context.

Findings are organized in this chapter by themes. In each section the content analysis results are discussed first, followed by more interpretive critical discourse analysis of the text. While some critical analysis appears in this chapter, much of it takes place in Chapter 5.

Age Effect

Age defines children and childhood. At the time of this writing, the age of 18 defines the legal boundary between child and adult. While the age of adulthood is an arbitrary delimiter, it is an important threshold, especially in the area of deviance. For example, a crime committed by someone who is 17 years old could receive a different sentence than if the same crime were committed by an 18 year old.

In this study, age was of specific concern in the analysis of the newspaper articles. Age was found to be a significant factor in both samples. There was a distinct shift in focus across the two time periods from older juveniles aged 16-18 to younger ones aged 15 and under. In addition, approaches to deviance and punishment were also examined to determine whether discourse about age changed from the 1960-65 period to the 1980-85 period. The focus on younger ages in the 1980's sample seemed to coincide with more of a focus on negative sanctions, specifically that of confinement.

Age of the “Deviant”

1960s Sample

Age appeared to be differentially approached in the two time periods. The 1960’s sample focused on young people aged 16-18 more so than other ages. By reporting on disputes regarding age limits between the adult and juvenile court systems, the 16-18 age range was highlighted as being indistinguishable and potentially adultlike. As an illustration, a 1962 *Washington Post* article reported that, “The *biggest troublemakers*, he said, are 16 and 17-year-old boys, *just shy of the 18-year-old status* that would make them *liable to adult law* [italics added]” (Lewis & Casey, 1962). The article went on to discuss the juveniles as defiant, scornful and contemptuous, and pointed to the juvenile court as the central problem. In the quote above, referring to the specific population of juveniles as the “biggest troublemakers” and following it up with the observation that they were “just shy” of being held liable in adult court implied that adult court might have been a more appropriate response. By emphasizing how close the “deviant” young people were to the “adult” age and discussing their negative attributes, the article provoked doubt regarding actual differences between a 16 year old “juvenile” and an 18 year old “adult.”

As a result of doubts regarding the true differences between 16 and 18 year olds, the juvenile justice system was frequently criticized as “inefficient” in the 1960-65 sample. The lowering of juvenile court jurisdiction from 18 to 16 years old was presented in a few cases during the 1960’s as a solution to reported rises in juvenile crime. This was the case in a 1964 *New York Times* article reporting on a Governor’s

response to a “seeming rise in juvenile crime” to which one of the proposed solutions was lowering the juvenile age from 18 to 16 years old (Wright, 1964). Reducing the juvenile age suggested that crimes being committed by those aged 17 and 18 were serious enough to merit adult treatment, equating specific actions with adulthood.

1980s Sample

In contrast to the 1960’s sample, which focused disproportionately on older teens, the 1980’s sample focused more on a younger population, specifically those 15 and under. This shift suggested that the discourse of concern surrounding “deviants” was that they were getting younger. A common topic in the 1980’s sample was that the juvenile justice system was too lenient on offenders. Juvenile justice laws were often criticized as protecting the juveniles at the expense of the victims.

For instance, a 1984 *Los Angeles Times* article discussed a 14 year old girl accused of murdering her mother. By law, the girl had to be tried in the juvenile court because she was under age 16. The article stated:

Newton *actually* was sentenced to serve 25 years to life, but *because she was less than 16* at the time of the crime, the CYA [California Youth Authority] *must release her* when she reaches 25. She also could be found fit for release after serving a *minimum of six years* [italics added] (Warren, 1984).

The difference between juvenile and adult court sentencing was highlighted by the juxtaposition of the “actual” sentence of 25 years to life, with that given of nine years. The use of the term “actually” suggests that 25 years to life was the appropriate sentence, but that “because she was less than 16” she received a more lenient sentence of nine years. The role of age in this statement depicted those under 16 as “getting away with

murder.” Further, the fact that she “must” be released at 25 but only had to serve a “minimum of six years” highlighted the huge disparity between juvenile sentences and adult sentences.

Another example of age and lenient treatment was reported in the *New York Times* in 1981. The article discussed a 15 year old male who was accused of rape, torture and murder of a 12 year old girl. Again, because of his age it was required that he be tried as a juvenile, toward which “public outrage” was the reported response (United Press International, 1981). Media handling of such cases suggested that *actual* sentences be placed on young “deviants” based on their actions, not their age. Depictions such as these of “murderous” deviants getting younger and receiving lenient sentences *because of* their age called into question the juvenile justice system as well as notions of childhood and protection.

Discourse in newspaper articles in the 1980’s sample suggested that “deviants” were getting younger. However, an analysis of FBI juvenile arrest data for both time periods showed that the “deviant” was not getting younger. According to archived national crime data reported by the FBI, the 15 and under age range accounted for a smaller percentage of total juvenile arrests during the 1980-85 period than in 1960-65 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1960-65,1980-85). Figure 1 shows the percent of national juvenile arrests that were accounted for by young people aged 15 and under for each year being studied. Further, as shown in Table 2, the years 1960-63 did not report juvenile arrests for anyone younger than 13 years old but the percentage of juveniles ages

13-15 accounted for larger portion of the juvenile arrests than the 1980-85 period when arrests for young people under 10 was reported.

Figure 1: % of Total Juvenile Arrests, Ages 15 and Under, 1960-65 & 1980-85

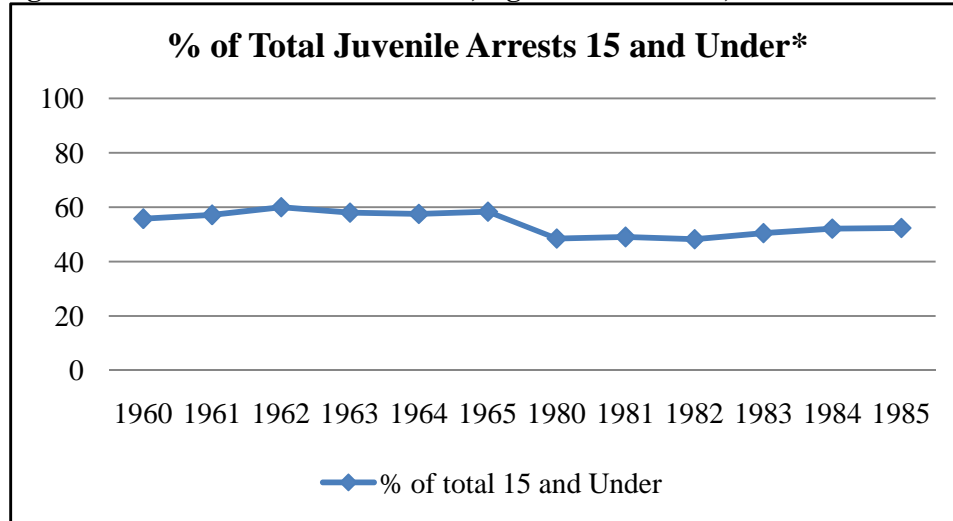


Table 2: 1960-65, 15 & Under Arrests

	Under 11	11 & 12	13 & 14	15	% of Total Juvenile Arrests, 15 & under
1960			239805	100689	55.7%
1961			260022	106105	57.1%
1962			296674	141401	60%
1963			330415	156621	58.01%
1964	65757	92614	242703	191044	57.5%
1965	71123	101747	250850	201476	58.36%

Table 3: 1980-85, 15 & Under Arrests

	Under 10	10 to 12	13 -14	15	% of Total Juvenile Arrests, 15 & under
1980	45662	119544	352330	324865	48.44%
1981	48448	140239	379289	343289	49%
1982	44633	139965	366151	318701	48.19%
1983	47064	142276	375542	305776	50.46%
1984	45928	135084	386487	304165	52.07%
1985	49759	141362	412798	346712	52.36%

The fact that the national data did not support the media shift in focus to younger aged “deviants” supports the common idea that media create misperceptions of the reality of juvenile crime and tends to encourage support for harsher sanctions (Goidel, Freeman, & Procopio, 2006). Historically, as part of the late 1970’s “Get Tough” legislation, lowering the age for juvenile waivers was common as a way to prosecute a higher number of young people in adult court (Bartollas & Braswell, 1997). Such a lowering of ages wasn’t necessarily explained by an increase in crime but is inconsistent with a political need to “Get Tough.” Media could have been covering younger ages as a way to support such legislation.

Institutional Responses to Deviance

Media stories reflect both the climate towards crime and the climate towards young people. One of the ways I attempted to capture this climate was to observe types of institutional responses to deviance. For instance, if an article discussed juvenile crime policy and recommended the courts take a more rehabilitative approach, the institutional response was coded as “rehabilitation.” Multiple institutional responses were often discussed in a single article, in which case all were coded. In general, the 1960-65 time

period was characterized by a more multi-institutional approach to deviance than the 1980-85 period.

1960's Sample

For the 1960-65 sample, the responses to deviance reported were evenly distributed across prevention (24%), negative sanction (25%), and rehabilitation (25%). Such a distribution implies that the juvenile justice system of the 1960's had several response tools.

The 1960's sample suggested a stronger concern for finding a solution to juvenile crime and/or rehabilitation. A focus on "potential delinquents" and deterrence was also common among the 1960's sample. For example, a *Los Angeles Times* article from 1961 stated, "All *experts* agree that early spotting and treatment of *potential delinquents* is *essential* for any widespread success of a delinquency prevention program [italics added]" (Barnes, 1961). The statement referred to the ambiguous group of "experts," who provided instant credibility to the argument that early intervention in the lives of "potential delinquents" was required. While it was a logical argument, how such "spotting" was performed was never explained in the article. Overall, the general focus of the statement on prevention, intervention and treatment was common across the 1960-65 sample.

1980's Sample

Unlike the 1960's, the overwhelming majority (61%) of the 1980-85 articles focused on negative sanctions as the response to deviance. Rehabilitation (11%) and prevention (6%) were rarely discussed in the sample. Such a dramatic shift in the

reported response to deviance reflected the ideological shift that took place during and after the 1970's "Get Tough" Era, which was known for focusing more on conviction and punishment of the juvenile, mimicking that of the criminal courts (Scott & Grisso, 1998; Shook, 2005).

The 1980's sample reflected the increased orientation toward punishment over treatment, as the socio-historical context suggests. For example, the *Los Angeles Times* reported:

The \$300,000 study proposes a fundamental shift in the way Juvenile Court judges view minors, suggesting that rather than incarcerating the most *dangerous young criminals* under the *guise* of rehabilitation, they *simply* be locked up as a *danger to society*. Under current law, a judge must find it '*in the best interests of the minor*' to justify taking a young criminal out of the home for rehabilitation [italics added] (Johnston, 1983).

This article was focused on research and policy but tapped into the core of reasoning behind the favoring of negative sanctions over rehabilitation within the 1980's sample. Referring to the approach of rehabilitation as a "guise" under which "dangerous young criminals" were incarcerated questioned its legitimacy as a valid and functional response. Further, the notion of "simply" incarcerating minors as "dangers to society" was clearly the preferred approach. The excerpt also constructed young offenders as "dangers to society" while discrediting any response that involved "the best interests of the minor." Such a shift in concern from the individual to society was also reflective of more punitive responses and the "Get Tough" era.

Punishment approach

Specific types of punishment and their coverage by media reflect society's view of young people, both deviant and conforming. Various types of punishment emerged from the data. Confinement, probation, treatment, fine, restitution and death were all types of punishment that appeared across the two samples. For example, discussing the sentencing of a youth to a detention center or jail would be a confinement approach, while discussing the requirement of community service or work would be a restitution approach.

1960's Sample

For the 1960-65 time period, the majority of the sample (78%) did not focus on a specific punishment type. Of punishments that were discussed, confinement (16%), which included prisons, jails and detention centers, was mentioned or discussed most frequently.

The lack of coverage regarding specific punishment types in the 1960's sample supported the benevolent approach towards juveniles taken during that time (Bartollas & Braswell, 1997; Sutton, 1988). The focus during the 1960's, according to researchers, was not on sanctions but the needs of the juvenile and his or her socialization (James & Jenks, 1996). A source from a *Los Angeles Times* article in 1961 epitomized this concept by stating, "The place to *stop crime* is not in the institutions of corrections but in the institutions of *our churches, our schools and our homes* [italics added]" (Barnes, 1961). By locating places in which to "stop crime" the reporter suggested that crime could be stopped, but only by the collective "Us." By employing the term "our" and naming

collective locations of churches, schools and homes, the burden of crime prevention was located in everyday institutions. Further, the author disregarded corrections as a credible solution. This newspaper excerpt exemplified a key theme found throughout the 1960's sample: the idea that preventative solutions to juvenile crime were preferable to punitive reactions to it, which was more characteristic of the 1980's.

1980's Sample

As for the 1980-85 period, specific punishment types were not discussed or mentioned in 32% of the sample. For the remainder of the sample, confinement (45%) was discussed as the punishment in almost half the articles during the 1980-85 period.

Confinement was often framed as a tool to protect both the juvenile and society. This was especially evident in an article from 1984 discussing preventative detention as a form of confinement. Such detention allowed states to hold juvenile defendants awaiting trial if the judge felt they were at "serious risk of committing a crime" (Barbash, 1984).

In the same preventative detention article, Supreme Court Justice William H. Rehnquist was quoted in support of the detention stating, "The law 'serves the legitimate *state objective*, held in common with every state in the country, of *protecting* both the juvenile and society from the *hazards of pretrial crime*' [italics added]" (Barbash, 1984).

The notions of "State objective," "protecting," and "hazards" stand out here.

Confinement was presented as a form of protection enacted by the State which controlled "hazards of pretrial crime" committed by juveniles. Discursive depictions of the benefits of juvenile confinement such as these created the sense that confinement was not only necessary, but was in some way helpful to society as a whole.

Not only was reporting of specific punishment types more frequent in the 1980's, confinement was the preferred punishment approach covered in the 1980's sample. While the 1960's sample was more suggestive of society based preventative techniques and more critical of the institution of corrections, the 1980's sample favored confinement and depicted it as beneficial to the protection of the juvenile and society. Again, this supported the documented ideological shift during and following the 1970's "Get Tough" era (Scott & Grisso, 1998; Shook, 2005).

Overall, from the 1960-65 to the 1980-85 sample there was a shift towards depiction of younger aged juveniles. The 1980's sample showed an increased preference for coverage of sanctions, specifically that of confinement. And while the pattern in this data reveals media coverage of increasingly younger "deviants," this shift was not supported by national crime trends in the two time periods. While these findings do reflected the ideological shifts as part of the "Get Tough" era, they also suggested that as the "deviant" got younger, harsher approaches were more necessary. The promotion of harsher sanctions as a result of misperceiving media coverage is a common tool used by the modern news media (Goidel, Freeman, & Procopio, 2006).

Infantilizing v. Adultifying

The 1960's were known for more lenient treatment of juveniles, in some ways infantilizing them as innocent and not responsible for their actions. Conversely, much of the 1970's "Get Tough" legislation, which the 1980's maintained, adultified young people and treated them similar to adults regardless of their age. To address how media dealt with such an ideological shift, any themes, patterns, categories, or rhetoric regarding

“innocence” or “danger” were noted and analyzed. Definitions of the child, youth, and/or juvenile delinquents, types and effects of predications, the use of discourses of innocence, danger and rights, and the role of direct categorizations were all found to be significant themes relating to the childlike or adult-like depiction of young offenders.

Definitions of child/youth/juvenile delinquents

Across both samples, the status of child, youth, and juvenile delinquent were defined in various ways. However, a pattern of defining them as a vulnerable population, susceptible to conditions around them, was common to both the 1960’s and 1980’s samples. In addition, the definitions provided within both time period samples situated the child, youth, and juvenile delinquent population as different from adults and acknowledged their youth as a factor. Specifically, the manner in which juvenile offenders were defined frequently rested on the social conditions in which they found themselves.

For instance, a source was quoted in the *New York Times* as stating that early identification of deviance was important for “youngsters” who, “through cultural influences and/or personal make-up *become vulnerable, exposed or susceptible* to a pattern of lawbreaking behavior [italics added]” (Cincinnati’s Plan Cuts Youth Crime, 1960). The idea of *becoming* “vulnerable, exposed or susceptible” to deviant behavior suggested that the “youngster” was not inherently bad but that other *cultural influences* acted as catalysts to provoke such unlawful behavioral responses.

Another source was directly quoted regarding youth in juvenile detention centers:

We know why they're here, but people sometimes don't realize that *although they did something outside the norm, they're still children*. They're *still* kids. They should have the feeling that someone *still* cares about them and even if they've done something, there's *still* a chance [italics added] (Tolbert, 1980).

Repetition of the word “still” reflected the continuous idea that the young people remained the same no matter what their actions were. This source’s statement made an effort to establish the fact that young people within the detention center should have continued to be considered within the space of “childhood” and that their treatment by others should reflect that.

Young people during the 1960’s were considered to be inferior to adults and often were infantilized, which was not as characteristic of young people during the 1980’s (James & Jenks, 1996; James & Prout, 1990). However, such infantilizing definitions were found in both time periods.

Predication

Predication, as it was used in this study, was defined by John Richardson as, “the choice of words used to represent more directly the values and characteristics of social actors” (2007, p. 52). The strategy of predication is important because it’s a way of assigning positive or negative qualities to the identities of young people. Two types of predicates were found to be common in the depiction of young “deviants:” first, location and second, the “troubled,” “violent,” and “young” offender.

Location

First, predicates of location were common in both samples making up about one third (33%) of the 1960's sample and about one fifth (20%) of the 1980's sample. Locations ranging from general ones such as "neighborhood" or "slum" to specific places such as "Washington" or "Camden" were assigned to young people. Specific location predicates assigned young people to a specific place, suggesting that both they and their actions were restricted by boundaries.

For example a *Washington Post* article reported, "The seven *Washington juveniles* arrested here in a stolen convertible last Sunday ran into a 'get tough' policy towards juveniles..." [italics added] (Chapman, 1960). The predicate was applied to juveniles situating them and their actions as belonging to "*Washington,*" D.C. and not "*here,*" being the county in Virginia in which they were caught.

General location predicates assigned few if any boundaries on the individual(s) and their actions giving the impression that juvenile crime was anywhere and everywhere. The most frequent general location predicates found in the samples were "neighborhood," "local," "slum," and "Nation." Some researchers suggest that terms such as "neighborhood," "local," and "streets" invoke feelings of familiarity and intimacy since they are all part of the collective public (Simon, 2007). Referring to deviant young people as "neighborhood kids" characterizes them as capable of existing anywhere in the collective and frees them from confinement to specific areas.

For example, a *Washington Post* article from 1985 reported on two teenage boys who were charged in the rape and murder a 12 year old girl. It quoted a family member

as saying, “I would never have thought they’d [the youths charged] do something like this,” said one of Melissa Bushrod’s cousins. “They were just regular boys – *neighborhood kids*’ [italics added]” (Davis, 1985).

Normalizing of young people who were capable of violent acts such as rape and murder called into question common notions of “other people’s children” and young people as a “dangerous population.” The idea of “regular boys” challenged what most thought of as specific conditions and warning signs that lead to such violence. Therefore, general location predicates supported the “it-could-happen-anywhere” idea that is often portrayed in news coverage of crime and that contributes to widespread fear of young people.

“Troubled,” “Violent” and “Young” Deviants

The second type of predication significant to the depiction of young deviants was that of “troubled,” “violent,” and “young” offenders of the 1980’s. These specific predicates differed from one time period to the next. While there were a few predicates that attributed negative characteristics, such as “delinquent,” “unruly,” and “aggressive,” to young people within the 1960’s sample, none were repetitively used. However, within the 1980’s sample the words “troubled,” “violent,” and “young” were consistently used as predicates. The repetition of phrases, such as “violent juvenile offenders,” “young criminals,” and “troubled youths”, continually depicted the young deviants being covered as problematic.

For example, a 1984 *New York Times* article was focused on a “youthful offenders” program that was to be established in Camden, New Jersey. A source was

indirectly quoted as stating, “the program was intended to speed up the prosecution of *violent young criminals* involved in robberies, sex offenses, aggravated assaults, first-degree burglaries, and homicides [italics added]” (Associated Press, 1984). To clarify, the beginning of the article stated that juvenile offenders were the target population for the program. Here we see juvenile offenders referred to as “violent young criminals” which encompasses all negative characteristics. Not only were the young people being discussed considered to be violent but referring to them as “criminals” suggested a level of adulthood.

A strength of predication is that once it has been chosen and especially repeated, the values and characteristics it assigns are difficult to separate from the individual. Predications of location, both specific and generic, were found to be significant in the depiction of young “deviants” because of their ability to either restrict or normalize specific actions of young people. Additionally, not only the use but the repetition of negative predicates, as was found overwhelmingly in the 1980’s sample, depicted “deviants” as especially problematic.

“Innocence” v. “Danger”

As the point of contention in negotiating between childhood and deviance, the concepts and discourse of innocence and danger have been used during different times towards different groups of young people. Discourse of innocence allows for negative aspects of young people to be overlooked or explained away. Conversely, those who deviate from the norm are sometimes displaced from “childhood” and labeled as a “threat” or “danger” to society (Grossberg, 2005; James & Prout, 1990). For these

reasons, the type of discourse employed in the articles regarding young people in the samples was examined. The dominant discourses of interest were those of innocence, danger/threat/evil, and rights.

For 1960-65, discourse of danger, threat or evil (51%) dominated the sample, but a discourse of innocence (42%) was also commonly employed. Rights discourse (11%) was less common in the sample. For 1980-85, discourse of danger, threat, or evil (64%) dominated the sample. Discourse of innocence (37%) in the 1980-85 period was employed less than it was in the 1960's sample. Rights discourse (19%) in the 1980's sample was somewhat more visible than in the 1960-65 period.

Discourse of danger/threat/evil was more frequent during the 1980's period than in the 1960's. This finding is in conjunction with what could be considered to be a side effect of the "Get Tough" era, a fear of young people. The depiction of young people as deserving of fear was exemplified by such statements as, "...many *young criminals* are now starting at the age of 13 to injure their victims and are *harming them more seriously than in previous decades* [italics added]" (Boffey, 1982).

The phrase "injure their victims" placed a 13 year old in the position of a violent offender who was "more seriously" harming victims than ever before. Concepts such as "injuring victims" and "harming them seriously" are ones that conjure up fear as a response, especially if the perpetrator of such violence is only 13 years old. Further, equating "young criminals" with 13 year olds suggested the need to question previously held assumptions regarding what actions children were capable of.

As another example, a 1982 *Washington Post* article covered the trial and sentencing of a youth who committed repeated crimes at ages 16 and 17. The article stated:

Assistant U.S. Attorney Williams Bowman urged Wagner to ensure that Jagers ‘*never again* will be free to *stalk the streets* of the District of Columbia looking for a new home to *burglarize*, a new victim to *rob* or an *innocent citizen* to *beat or kill*’ [italics added] (Kamen, 1982).

This excerpt was one of the harshest examples of discourse of danger. The order for the youth to “never again” be free stressed a heightened level of danger and threat. The multiple criminal activities named (i.e., “burglarize,” “rob,” “beat or kill”) established the youth as a threat in several ways and seemingly as capable of anything. Lastly, describing the youth as *stalking* the streets looking for “innocent citizens” created a feeling of unpredictability which suggested another level of danger.

Overall, discourse of danger, threat or evil regarding young deviants was common in both samples, but more frequent in the 1980’s. Naming types of crimes, suggesting violent actions, and calling into question notions of childhood by referring to younger ages were some of the ways discourse of danger depicted “deviants” in excessively negative ways.

Social Control

The concept of social control was found to exist within the discourse of danger and threat used toward young deviants in both the 1960’s and 1980’s samples. Social controls were presented as ways to reduce the assumed threat and danger presented by the

young population. Social control, as it was presented in the samples, was a policy driven attempt to deal with a suggested juvenile truancy or crime problem that needed attention. Policies such as school identification cards, a bill requesting funding for “control programs,” and even the threat of publishing names of young “deviants” were suggested social controls of the 1960-65 period. During the 1980-85 period, strategies such as curfews and establishing fingerprint and personal information databases were suggested as ways to restrict young people and curb juvenile crime.

A 1983 *New York Times* article reported on a youth curfew that was being enacted in Detroit, MI, restricting the activities of those 16 and under (Peterson, 1983). The article reported disputes that existed regarding the constitutionality and overall fairness of such a restriction. The curfew was suggested as a way to curb crime but a police lieutenant did directly acknowledge that it was unfair to target all youth for the actions of a few. He was quoted as stating, “I know it’s *not fair* to say that the young people are responsible for everything that happens...but you *have to take those measures* that you can to keep the number of crimes down [italics added]” (Peterson, 1983).

While he acknowledged the curfew’s inherent unfairness, he continued to state that such “measures” *had* to be taken. The law enforcement authorities were willing to sacrifice fairness for control, or at least the illusion of it. When a police authority depicts such social controls as “measures” that *have* to be taken to curb crime they seem legitimate and create a precedent for further controls to be implemented based on the same justification of “need.” Generalizing negative behaviors of young people to the entire population instead of the small minority has been found to be a common technique

used in media coverage of young people and crime (Thurlow, 2006; Wayne, Henderson, Murray, & Petley, 2008).

Coverage and discussion of social control policies were often found within an overall discourse of danger towards young “deviants.” Mention of such policies was found within both time period samples. Social controls were commonly reactive attempts at curbing deviant behavior of a minority of young people by controlling the behavior and monitoring the activities of the larger population of young people. Such blanket policies suggested that all young people needed to be controlled and monitored, further depicting the idea that all young people were in some way threatening and supporting the depiction of the entire youth population as a potential danger.

The presence of social controls as a pattern within both time period samples was notable because of the drastic differences regarding climate towards juvenile justice within each time period. The 1960’s period was better known for a focus on equal rights and benevolence towards juveniles (Bartollas & Braswell, 1997; Sutton, 1988). Conversely, the 1980’s juvenile justice period was defined by its tough approach and stricter social controls (Scott & Grisso, 1998; Shook, 2005). Such findings suggest that regardless of the climate towards juveniles and “deviants,” young “deviants” are continually viewed as needing to be controlled and managed.

Direct Categorizations

According to Gialdino (2007), categorizations are not fixed but are produced and are part of discursive practice to define situations and people. Similar to predications, although more restrictive, the act of categorization assigns certain qualities and behaviors

to people. For example, the category of “criminal” prescribes different qualities and behaviors than that of “student.” Direct categorizations were coded in each article based on what category(ies) the young people of interest were directly assigned to, such as “gang member” or “student.”

1960's Sample

Of the categories directly applied to deviant young people in the 1960-65 sample, 24% involved categories that were neutral or positive. For example, I defined categories such as “school aged,” “child,” or “youth” as positive or neutral categories. The majority of the 1960-65 sample (76%) directly applied negative categories to the deviant youth. Negative categorizations included “delinquents,” “offenders,” “punks,” “lawbreakers,” “have nots,” and “inmates.” I determined these to be categories that invoke negative thoughts regarding the young people to which they were assigned.

1980's Sample

The majority of the 1980-85 sample (60%) directly applied negative categories to the deviant youth of interest. Some negative categorizations used, such as “criminal,” “killer,” and “repeat offender,” differed from those used in the 1960's sample. The remaining 30% of the 1980-85 sample directly categorized the deviant youth in either neutral or positive ways, using categories such as “child,” “youth,” “kids,” and “students.”

Comparative Example

Analysis of the negative categories applied to the “deviant” young people in the two samples exposed a pattern that differed from the 1960-65 to the 1980-85 time period.

Categorizations of the 1980's were more reflective of the offenses committed by the young people, essentially defining them by their actions. The categorizations employed during the 1960's were often more generic such as "juveniles."

As a comparative example, an article from the 1960 *Washington Post* reported on a group of young people being indicted for two homicides who were directly categorized as "juveniles" (Five Juveniles Indicted in 2 Separate Homicides, 1960). In contrast, a 1981 *New York Times* article reported similarly on a youth who was being convicted of murder and was directly characterized as "murder suspect" (United Press International, 1981). The category of "juvenile" assigns very different qualities and behaviors to a young person than that of "murder suspect."

The category of "juvenile" typically suggests the young person has broken the law in some way; however, the category is not suggestive of any certain type of crime and is fairly generic. The category of murder suspect restricts the criminal activity to that of homicide, the most serious of violent crimes. When looking at the basic differences between the concepts of "juvenile" and "murder suspect," the latter was obviously a more negative category and had more serious implications regarding perceptions and consequences.

While it was no surprise that negative categorizations of deviant young people accounted for the majority of both the samples, it was worth notice that the 1980's categorizations more consistently reflected specific deviant acts, causing the young persons to be defined by their actions. Common negative categorizations used in the 1960's sample were of a more generic type that typically had less serious implications.

Institutions and Jargon

“Jargon” was defined as language reflective of specific institutions. John Richardson (2007) suggests that the style in which journalists choose to report to an audience is ideological within itself. Tracking jargon used by the media was an important way to indirectly examine ideological shifts in perceptions of young deviants. The various types of jargon used in the samples were police, judicial, policy, social, institutional (prison, jail, detention center), political, and research jargon. For example, police jargon included discussion of crime statistics such as arrests, crime scenes, police investigations and initiatives. It was common for more than one type of jargon to be used within a single article; all were coded.

1960's Sample

Social jargon was most common in the 1960's sample, being employed in 35% of the sample. Social jargon was defined as language throughout the article reflective of the neighborhood, community, city or state regarding happenings in society such as social programs, family life, poverty, wealth, etc. For example, a 1964 *New York Times* article employing social jargon discussed the role a youth activities program played in the local reduction of juvenile crime (Sheehan, 1964). The majority of the article discussed characteristics of the athletic program that potentially counterbalanced juvenile crime and the program's benefits to the community. Judicial jargon was used in 31% of the sample while police jargon was used in 27% of the sample.

1980's Sample

In the 1980's, the majority of the sample (54%) employed judicial jargon. Judicial jargon included the use of terms such as defendants, convictions, discussion of trial procedures, and sentencing. An example of judicial jargon was found in a 1985 *New York Times* article that reported on the trial of a six year old trial defendant who was accused of hitting another girl with a stick. Style of language such as, "At a juvenile adjudication hearing Tuesday, Judge Green rejected a motion to dismiss charges on Mr. Wilhite's contention that a 6 year old lacks the cognitive ability to commit a crime," (Associated Press, 1982) was considered to be judicial jargon. Policy jargon was used in 25% of the sample, while police jargon was used in 19% of the sample. Policy jargon was defined as language that discussed changing laws or policies, such as those regarding curfews or lowering of the juvenile age.

The use of judicial jargon increased significantly from the 1960's sample to the 1980's while social jargon decreased to only be used in 10% of the 1980's sample. This shift appropriately reflected the socio-historical ideological shift from social concerns to those of the judicial system such as convictions and sentencing.

Reconciling "Childhood" with Deviance

The overarching question this research aimed to examine was how the concepts of deviance and "childhood" were reconciled by the print media. Specifically, my study explored the interaction between notions of childhood and the creation of young "deviants." Two main concepts emerged from analysis of the samples. The concept of

responsibility for deviance and implications of workforce involvement were found to be key to reconciliation between the “child” and the “deviant.”

Responsibility

An often defining characteristic of children is that they are inherently not responsible for their actions. In contrast, the fundamental purpose of the criminal and juvenile justice systems is to hold those who break the law accountable for their actions. The forms that accountability have taken have varied over time. Through an examination of the samples, the handling of white collar delinquency was found to impact how childhood and deviance were reconciled.

1960's Sample

In the 1960's sample, the majority of the articles (68%) held the individual young people directly responsible for their actions. For the 1960's sample, society (32%), including neighborhood and community, and the family (23%) were also presented as culpable for the “deviant” actions covered.

These findings were somewhat supported by the sociohistorical context of the time period. Media depictions of society's responsibility during the 1960-65 time period were somewhat contradictory to the historical context provided by some researchers. Young people during the Progressive era were viewed as “belonging to the Nation” and any deviance was considered to be the fault of society's failure to properly socialize them (James & Prout, 1990). However, researchers also argue that during the 1960's, the family was the core of “proper” socialization and consequently was held responsible for the child's conforming or deviant behavior (Feld, 1999).

As an example of society being held accountable, a 1963 *Washington Post* article focused on findings from a report that was studying a specific neighborhood area where young offenders were living. The lead sentence of the article stated, “America may get to the moon before it gets around to *saving the boys* in the Second Precinct – six blocks from the White House [italics added]” (Lardner Jr., 1963).

This example epitomizes the common 1960’s placement of responsibility on society. In this quote, the idea that “America” as a whole was expected to “save” the “boys” clearly attributed the responsibility for their lack of conforming and resulting deviance to the nation as a whole. The term “save” suggested the notion that the young people’s actions were out of their control. Further, referring to the young people of interest as “boys” provoked a more childlike concept than terms such as “juveniles” or “youths” would have. Here it can be seen how the terminology used regarding young people supported ideas being depicted within the text.

The article went on to quote directly from the report being discussed, stating, “The interviewers found, ‘*conditions perfectly designed* as if by a diabolical genius *to breed crime and delinquency*’ [italics added]” (Lardner Jr., 1963). In addition to placing blame and responsibility on the nation as a whole, this statement suggested that the surrounding community was also responsible for *breeding* crime and delinquency. The idea created here also implied that there were certain “conditions” that were necessary for deviance to occur. It was through such subtle implications that responsibility was placed on society.

1980's Sample

The majority of the 1980's sample (84%) held the individual young people directly responsible for their actions. Family (21%) was the next most common location to place blame in the 1980's sample. Society's (9%) role as a responsible party decreased dramatically from the 1960's to the 1980's sample.

The decreased role of society as a responsible party in the 1980-85 sample accurately reflected the sociohistorical context of the 1980's. Scholars have argued that as a result of newer practices, such as both parents working, the space of childhood moved outside of the family which shifted responsibility from the family to the individual youth (Grossberg, 2005; James & Jenks, 1996).

As for the 1980's increased focus on individual responsibility, a 1985 article discussing a 17 year old sentenced to California Youth Authority facility for bank robbery illustrated the placement of responsibility on an individual youth. The article reported on the judge's decision to sentence the youth to confinement despite his family's pleas to sentence them to family counseling. The article reported, "But Katz [the judge] said the California Youth Authority sentence would *force* Berman to be '*more accountable' for his act* [italics added]" (Rae-Dupree, 1985). This quote reflected the typical 1980's perspective towards young "deviants." Reporting the judge's emphasis on individual "accountability" over family responsibility illustrated the notion that the youth should have been held responsible for his own actions.

A clear responsibility shift took place from society to family from the 1960's period and the 1980's period. A 1982 *New York Times* article well illustrated

accountability placed on the family through policy. The article reported on new policies that were implemented in New Jersey as a way to curb juvenile crime stating:

A package of bills designed to deal more strictly with violent juvenile offenders and allow *monitoring of their home life...require cooperation* by parents and guardians and other family members in *solving problems* of youthful offenders [italics added] (Sullivan, 1982).

The article went on to state that the new policies would “also try to *stabilize* the family environment [italics added]” (Sullivan, 1982). Beginning with the block quote, “monitoring of their home life” was based on the assumption that home life was a source of problems for the juvenile. This assumption was further reinforced when the author stated that “cooperation” was required in “solving problems” of the youth. Such a statement suggested that a lack of cooperation within the family could have been a potential cause of the juvenile’s behavior. Further, proposing to “stabilize the family environment” implied that the family environments of juvenile offenders were unstable, again possibly causing the “deviant” behavior.

Individual(s) young people were more frequently held responsible in the 1980’s than in the 1960’s. The increase in individual responsibility and virtual drop off of societal responsibility reflected the individualizing of society from the 1960’s to the 1980’s. That family responsibility stayed consistent across both time periods suggests its importance regardless of cultural shifts.

Suburban and Urban

The existence and prevalence of suburban delinquency was a recurring topic within both the 1960-65 and 1980-85 time periods. It was discussed in 7% (11 articles)

of the total sample. However, I have situated it within the theme of responsibility to. Suburban delinquency was most often compared and contrasted with delinquency that occurred in the “slums.” One of the comparative points was the notion of the family or “home” as being the source of the young person’s troubles. This was acknowledged to be the case in both suburban as well as urban homes. While the sources or reasons for troubled homes were different, the attention was paid to the fact that they both lead to similar outcomes among young people. One article stated, “Out in the suburbs, the troubled youngster comes from a troubled home as surely as does his counterpart in the worst slum” (Carmody, 1965). Contrasting points between suburban delinquency and that which took place in urban, lower income areas were best characterized as a binary theme of senseless versus expected delinquency.

Senseless versus Expected Delinquency The contrast of senseless, suburban delinquency against expected delinquency from the urban “slum” areas emerged from the data. The idea that suburban delinquents lacked a valid “excuse” for deviance as compared to those young people in worse conditions, was central in the differentiation of the two areas. The *Los Angeles Times* reported:

...the delinquents from ‘white collar’ families ‘lack the *excuse of poverty*, a poor home, the confinement and high compression of big city slum life...we now have a *group of youngsters who cannot be accounted for in this way*’...The broken home and unemployed and socially handicapped type of youth can *no longer be solely blamed for juvenile crime* [italics added] (United Press International, 1961).

Here the differentiation between the suburban and urban delinquent was exemplified. The white collar delinquent was established as a new category of juvenile that previously had not existed and the urban youth was recognized as the expected delinquent. Stating that the urban youth could *no longer* be solely blamed suggested that up to the time the article was written they were the sole category of juvenile delinquents. This quote further created a sense of victimization to associate with “the broken home and unemployed and socially handicapped type” of urban youth because of the predictability of their actions based on their conditions. Suburban juveniles were more associated with danger because of their lack of “excuse” and the senselessness of their crimes, which suggested that they were more unpredictable.

Another article from 1964 reported on the “affluent delinquent:” “It is the apparent *pointlessness* of most teen-age delinquency in the suburbs that *perplexes parents and the police* [italics added]” (Lelyveld, 1964). This example directly labeled suburban delinquency as “pointless” and “perplexing” to those around the young people. Additionally, suburban delinquency was often presented as an anomaly in contrast, again, to that which was presented as expected from urban areas.

The idea that delinquency was expected from the urban areas and unexpected and senseless from more affluent areas demonstrated the notion of “other people’s children” (Finn, 2001). This concept encompassed those young people to whom the ideal household and childhood were not available. The notion of “other people’s children” suggested that those lacking a “middle class value system” were expected to be deviant (Finn, 2001).

Workforce Involvement

Labor and involvement in the workforce are concepts that most often define adults in U.S. society. Employment and work, as related to the issue of juvenile deviance, made appearances in about 14% (22 articles) of the total sample in both the 1960-65 and 1980-85 time periods. While not a majority of the sample, I felt it was significant enough to warrant discussion. Work was often used, in both time periods, as a discourse about discipline, positive habits, and making “deviant” young people “respectable” and “functional” members of society. Overall, work discourse in newspaper stories conveyed a sense that personal improvement was the result of employment. One article discussing a job training program for youths stated:

...provision of *legitimate paid work* opportunities for 16-21 year olds who *never knew* how to get a dollar except by *robbing stores or slugging cab drivers*...Many of these youth *never had a reason to get up* in the morning before. They used to sleep until noon, stay out until 3 or 4 a.m. and *get into trouble*. Now they tell workers they *no longer feel like bums* [italics added] (Edstrom, 1963).

In this example, the youth participating in the job training program were depicted as having more of a purpose in life and were becoming responsible citizens. Use of the phrase “never had a reason to get up in the morning” excluded “deviants” from the category of “functional” members of society. Stating that because of the “legitimate” work opportunities the youth had been given they “no longer feel like bums” suggested that work was entirely transformative. The term “bum” was negatively defined throughout the statement as sleeping until noon, staying out late, and getting into trouble.

The report successfully portrayed work as an alternative to being a “bum,” which promoted the idea of youth employment as a means of personal improvement.

This emphasis on “work as a treatment for juvenile offenders” was potentially a result of Esman’s (1990) discussion of modern child labor laws. Aaron Esman (1990) argued that the withdrawal of youth from the workforce through child labor laws excluded them from a central part of society. This exclusion, he argued, along with their already restricted rights, marginalized them as a population and often led to “deviant” behaviors (Esman, 1990). This workforce discourse could have been reflecting the immediacy society felt toward getting young “deviants” to work as soon as they were legally able.

This workforce discourse suggested that juveniles legally old enough to work were held to adult expectations. Through the focus on employment, deviance was not reconciled with “childhood.” Instead, deviance could be “cured” by participating in adult-like activities. Two themes were found to exist in the relationship between work and delinquency, a romanticized concept of work and employment and a societal value perspective towards youth labor.

Romanticized

First, the romantic idea of work and its role in disciplining young people was often reported as important to preventing and solving the issue of deviance. In one article, the concept of work was referred to as the “*old fashioned* key ingredient” to solving delinquency because “youngsters were *too busy working* in the gas station [italics added]” (Eisenberg & Eisenberg, 1961). Referring to work as an “old fashioned” idea

provided a sense of romance to the theory that young people working was the way “it used to be,” nostalgically referencing a “better time.” Also, stating that working kept the youth “too busy” to get into trouble mimicked the common proverb, “idle minds are the devils workshop,” implying that work acted as a protection from oneself.

The issue of idleness and a general fear of idle youth was part of the romanticized notion of work. For example, in a 1983 *Los Angeles Times* article reporting on a youth curfew being implemented in Detroit, a source stated that the city needed to “*attack the idleness* of young people [italics added]” (Peterson, 1983). The article also went on to associate a high youth unemployment rate with an increased crime rate among juveniles. Here, idleness was an enemy in need of being “attacked”. This morality-war discourse generated fear toward young people who were ‘idle’ or unemployed.

Societal Value

In addition to romanticizing work, labor was frequently linked to an individual’s value in society. Specifically, an article reporting on summer city jobs that were held for ex-offending youth stated that it was, “...a worthwhile *demonstration* to show that young people who might otherwise get into trouble can be put to *useful work* [italics added]” (Broyhill Raps Plans for 300 Summer Jobs, 1963). The article focused on a city-wide argument about job allocation. Some argued that jobs should have been reserved for more “deserving” applicants. Much like the quoted example, throughout the remainder of the article, reports were made presenting jobs as a form of redemption. Further, the example highlighted the idea that value could be extracted from wayward youth as long as they were “put to useful work.” Connecting the “deviant” youth’s societal value to his

or her ability to provide “useful work” was another way that employment could have provided purpose to an otherwise wasted life.

The association of workforce involvement with juvenile deviance presented itself in a few different ways. Employment was often related to the idea of personal improvement and conformity. Secondly, employment was romanticized as a nostalgic reference back to a “better time” when youth worked in an efficient “old fashioned” system. Lastly, workforce involvement was equated with the societal value of young people: those with jobs were useful and those without jobs were not. Overall, the focus on employment among young people did not act to reconcile “deviance” and “childhood” but instead provided adult-like solutions to juvenile problems.

Results Summary

The first central guiding question of this study was whether age set the tone of the article and whether different ages provoked different responses. The age of the “deviant” was found to play a role in the depiction of young “deviants” within the samples studied. There was a distinct shift in focus across the two time periods from older juveniles to younger ones. The tone of the articles also shifted across the two samples. The 1960-65 period focused on the arbitrariness of the upper age limits placed on the juvenile court. The 1980-85 period shifted toward younger juveniles who were depicted as more dangerous but being handled leniently in the juvenile justice system. In addition, approaches to deviance and punishment were also examined to determine whether these shifted as the focus on age did. The focus on younger ages seemed to coincide with a greater focus on negative sanctions, specifically confinement.

The second research question guiding this research asked whether there were any overarching themes of “innocence” or “danger,” and specifically, whether young “deviants” were infantilized or adultified by the media. Definitions of children, youth, and juvenile delinquents, types and effects of predications, the type and effect of discourse, and the role of direct categorizations were all significant to the childlike or adultlike depiction of young “deviants.”

Young “deviants” in both the 1960’s and the 1980’s samples were commonly depicted as a vulnerable population, susceptible to negative influences. However, it should also be noted that the sources providing these definitions to newspaper reporters were, for the most part, actors involved with youth services. This was clearly a source bias.

Predications characterized the depiction of young “deviants” as well. Specific and general location predicates affected the portrayal of youth actions similarly in both the 1960-65 and 1980-85 periods. Specific location predicates restricted the youth’s actions to the place specified while non-specified location predicates tended to generalize the events by suggesting that deviance could “happen anywhere.” A sense of threat was embedded in the “it could happen anywhere” argument. The lack of specified geographical boundaries around the “deviant” behavior made it unpredictable.

A second type of predication found in the 1980’s sample was the repetitive use of negative terms. Specifically the terms “troubled,” “violent,” and “young” were repetitively used as predicates, which assigned such characteristics to young “deviants” within the sample. This pattern displayed the impact that predicating terms could have

on the depiction of a specific population. In this case, it applied a sense of danger or threat to the population.

Regarding the types of discourse used throughout the samples, innocence, danger/threat/evil, and rights were ones that were specifically noticed and examined for their use and effect. In both the 1960's and 1980's samples, the discourse of danger dominated in the coverage of young "deviants." Such discourse depicted "deviants" in excessively negative ways and suggested that citizens should fear them. As a result, the concept of social control was found to play a role within a discourse of danger. Social control concepts were often covered as necessary reactions to deviant behavior by young people. The idea that young people needed to be closely monitored and controlled depicted the entire youth population as a potential danger regardless of the sociocultural climate towards juveniles.

Lastly, direct categorizations were found to impact the image of the young "deviant" differently across the two time periods. Categorizing of people assigns certain qualities and behaviors to them. Direct categorizations applied within the 1980-85 sample more consistently reflected specific deviant acts, causing young people to increasingly be defined by their actions. This was not the case in the 1960-65 sample where more generic categorizations were made that had less serious implications for the defining of young "deviants."

The next research question guiding this study was whether and how focusing on certain institutions and the use of jargon might have enacted forms of power. The employment of judicial jargon increased significantly from the 1960-65 sample to the

1980-85 sample. This increased focus and presence of the judicial system could have suggested its growing authority and important role in the topic of young “deviant” behavior.

The final overarching question guiding my research was how the concept of “childhood” reconciled with that of deviance. The concepts of responsibility and workforce involvement were evoked in that reconciliation. Responsibility was frequently employed in both time periods. Overall, in the 1960’s sample the use of responsibility was more suggestive of a childlike status, while in the 1980’s sample it was more suggestive of an adultlike status. Individual young people were more commonly held responsible for their own actions within the 1980-85 sample than in the 1960-65 sample. Society was commonly held responsible for the actions of young “deviants” in the 1960-65 sample but virtually disappeared within the 1980-85 sample. The theme of holding families responsible for deviant youth was consistent across both time periods.

Workforce involvement was another concept used to reconcile childhood and deviance. Workforce involvement was, in both time periods, commonly discussed as a way for the young people to become disciplined and useful. Employment was presented as a source of personal improvement, romanticized as a solution to the problem of idle youth, and discussed as a measure of a young person’s societal value. Generally, for those who were legally able to participate, workforce involvement was used in both samples by the media not as a way to reconcile “childhood” and deviance but as a source of reconciliation of adulthood and deviance.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to understand the role media play in shaping conceptions of juvenile deviance. Of specific interest was how media reconciled concepts of childhood with notions of deviance in their depictions of young offenders. In this chapter, I build of the results of this research to explore the role of power dynamics in those depictions and how they differed across sociocultural contexts. The work of Michel Foucault and CDA were particularly useful tools when attempting to uncover power dynamics that produce, reproduce and shape images of “deviant” youth. Historical and sociocultural context are also considered in my analysis of media depictions of young “deviants.”

My study covered two time periods, 1960-65 and 1980-85. Three national dailies: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, provided data for this research. A systematic sample drawn from these three papers for each time period yielded a total of 157 newspaper articles, ninety from the 1960-65 period and sixty seven from the 1980-85 period.

Dual methods of content analysis and CDA were utilized to analyze the data. CDA operated as both theory and method. Content analysis was used to uncover basic frequencies of coded concepts while CDA provided a more in-depth, critical analysis of the samples.

In this chapter, I present a more critical analysis and discussion of three central results that stood out as most relevant. First, I analyze the shifting focus on age, institutional responses and punishment approaches from the 1960's to the 1980's period. Second, I further explore the use of predication as it contributed to negative depictions of young "deviants." Third, I discuss the reconciliation of "childhood" and deviance as it was or wasn't accomplished through attribution of responsibility and workforce involvement. These three topics are analyzed through a lens of power and resistance. Michel Foucault's approach to power as well as James Scott's (1985) discussion of resistance in *Weapons of the Weak* guide the discussion.

Power, according to Foucault, is a practice that is not centralized but dispersed through networks of people, organizations, and institutions in society (Foucault, 2000; Mills, 2003). As one of those institutions, print media exercise power in what they write about and how they write it. In my research, it is how print media wrote about young "deviants" and the power exercised through those depictions that was of particular interest to me.

Foucault argues that where power is exercised, resistance is required (Mills, 2003). That resistance can come in various forms, but within my study, I argued that it took the form of individual acts of "deviance" or crime by young people. That "deviance" was a form of resistance not necessarily against the power exercised by media but against the overall power imposed on young people as a whole. Such resistance is what Foucault termed "anti-authority struggles" where the struggle or resistance isn't

against a specific institution or person but against a general “technique” of power (Mills, 2003).

Resistance, according to Scott (1985), begins with individuals acting in self-serving ways that deviate from the norms to meet basic needs. Scott (1985) argues that such individual acts are the basic forms of resistance through which struggles are identified and upon which revolutions or movements can be built. Crime and “deviant” acts in this study were looked at through this lens of individual resistance.

Age Effects and Redefining Childhood

Overall, the results have shown that age was differentially approached across the two time periods, where coverage of young “deviants” focused more on younger ages in the 1980’s than in the 1960’s. In addition to this differential approach and focus, these different age groups seemed to provoke differing institutional responses. The 1980’s younger “deviants” were more commonly covered in regards to sanctions, specifically confinement.

The shift in focus from ages 16-18 in the 1960-65 sample to those 15 and under in the 1980-85 sample reflects a redefining of the “deviant.” Redefinition, some researchers have argued, is a way to manage children deemed problematic (Moeller, 2002).

“Juvenile deviants” are conceptually inconsistent with prevailing ideas about “children,” most notably the idea of innocence. In order to deal with this conceptual dissonance, the parameters of the category of “child” were redefined to exclude juvenile delinquents from a protected sphere of innocence. Additionally, media coverage in the 1980’s suggested that “deviants” were getting younger while national arrest statistics revealed a different

reality. This misrepresentation by the news media could be viewed as criminalizing the “child,” where the redefining of childhood was based on mythical assumptions about juvenile delinquents.

Negative sanctions as the institutional response to deviance, specifically that of confinement, became more common as the “deviant” became increasingly younger and as childhood was redefined. The 1960’s institutional response to deviance was more equally divided between prevention, rehabilitation, and sanctions. This was reflective of the pre-1980’s rehabilitative penal policies that were willing to take a risk on an offender in hopes of rehabilitation, which would have required a multi-institutional approach (Simon, 2007). Such a multi-institutional response suggested that the “deviant” was able to change and deserved another chance. It also suggested an understanding that juvenile deviance had multiple causes.

The shift in the 1980’s to an overwhelming focus on negative sanctions and confinement was reflective of the post 1980’s focus on “harshly enforced, highly moralistic criminal law promising almost total protection against crime” (Simon, 2007). That institutional response suggested that the “deviant” no longer deserved a second chance and was possibly not capable of change. This was characteristic of the post-1970’s “Get Tough” era which endorsed harsher punitive policies as a way to overcome accusations of inefficiency and “soft” justice within the juvenile justice system.

It could be argued that the idea of punishment had been increasingly “governmentalized” from the 1960’s to the 1980’s period (Foucault, 2000). Governmentalizing of the power to punish suggests that it had become an increasingly

central part of the state apparatus and was socially perceived as a stronger, more institutionalized power, even though the exercise of power remained divided into the social network (Foucault, 2000). This is important to note because the governmentalization of power occurred as a response to criticism regarding the juvenile justice system. The State needed to reinforce its ability to correct and punish and the people needed to see that the State was in control of what was reported to be a growing problem.

During the 1960-65 period, the institutional responses were more similar to the actual network of power with community involvement as well as State participation in prevention and treatment programs. Such an approach wasn't received well by the public, who demanded a strong State response to take on the reportedly growing problem of youth crime.

Further, the promise of "almost total protection against crime" came in the form of physical confinement. Coverage of confinement during the 1980's time period was framed as protecting both the juvenile and society, suggesting a potential risk to both if the juvenile was not physically contained. The idea of physical confinement as the answer to the young "deviant's" actions is reminiscent of Foucault's (1977) idea of "docile bodies." This concept characterized the correctional institution as a place to control and retrain the bodies and minds of its inhabitants (Foucault, 1977). Reporting that young "deviants" were in need of confinement suggested that they essentially needed to be disciplined and retrained to "proper" childlike ways of behaving.

Evidence of retraining as the goal of confinement was found in a 1984 *Washington Post* article in which a 15 year old was convicted and sentenced to adult prison. The article stated, “Levin [the judge] said he would *reconsider* the youth’s sentence if he *progressed* well in prison [italics added]” (Youth Sentenced in Murder, 1984). The notion of reconsidering a sentence based on the youth’s “progress” clearly illustrated the idea of confinement as a way to discipline and retrain the young “deviant.” Framing such confinement as being in the interests of both the juvenile’s and public’s safety was common. Rather than being a true safety measure, such framing of confinement was most likely a way to garner support for discipline in general.

Foucault (1977) viewed punishment as a means to practice discipline. Power is exercised with the goal of controlling the actions and self perceptions of individuals. Discipline involves the individual making and practicing what has been deemed acceptable and appropriate a part of their subjectivity (Allan, 2006). This is how the network of power works. According to Foucault (Gordon, 1980), power is a practice so enmeshed throughout the social body that individuals take it to be ‘truth’ and embody what is considered “proper.” Foucault (1977) argued that through punishment, specifically confinement, individuals are forced to practice disciplining their bodies and minds. Using Foucault’s philosophy, the findings suggest that younger “deviants” were perceived as more resistant to power exercised over them, resulting in their need for more restrictive punishment conditions as a way to discipline and retrain their minds and bodies.

Predication, Conformity, and Individualization

Predication was found to be important to both normalizing and individualizing young “deviants” and their behaviors. Predication, as it was used in this study, was defined by John Richardson as, “the choice of words used to represent more directly the values and characteristics of social actors” (2007, p. 52). The strength in predication is that once it has been chosen and especially repeated, the values and characteristics it assigns are difficult to separate from the individual. The use of predication was found to contribute to negative depictions of young people but it did so while maintaining a focus on their position as young people rather than adultifying them.

General location predicates normalized the actions of the “deviants,” making all young people seem capable of them. Foucault (1977, p. 184) argued that normalization is “one of the greatest instruments of power,” where homogeneity is the goal. Based on this thought, it could be argued that general location predications attempted to normalize the actions of a few to the entire population. The inclusion of the “deviants” in the “normal” population could result in more effective disciplining of both them and their actions. Foucault in his discussion of disciplinary penalty, stated that “non-conforming is punishable,” supporting the idea that placing the “deviant” youth within the “normal” population draws more attention to their non-conformity and proposes disciplinary measures to deal with it (1977, pp. 178-9). Such discipline could come in the form of natural discipline from peers or family or formal discipline types which are deemed appropriate for children.

Individualization of young “deviants” was achieved through the use of both specific location and the repetitive predicates of “violent,” “young,” and “troubled.” Specific location predicates directly individualized the “deviants” by restricting their actions to specific geographical boundaries. For instance, referring to juveniles as “Washington youths” restricted their connection with a murder to the Washington, D.C. area (Trial Opens for 3 in Ellison Slaying, 1964). The repetitive predication of “violent,” “young,” and “troubled” negatively impacted the depiction of young “deviants” and indirectly individualized them. For example, within a single article young ‘deviants’ were referred to as “young criminals,” “troubled youths,” and “incarcerated youths” (Johnston, 1983). While it did allow the young people to remain a part of the young population, the repetition of such negative terms in association with “deviant” youth created another class of young person who embodied all that was feared. This class of “deviant other” individualized them within the larger population of mainstream young people.

Foucault discussed individualization within the disciplinary regime, stating, “individualization is ‘descending’: as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualized” (1977, p. 193). Using such thinking I would argue that the shift towards such individualization and specification of what “type” of young “deviants” were being targeted indicates the more “functional” presence of the media’s power that was in place and directed towards young ‘deviants’ in the 1980-85 period.

Overall, the common use of predication by media was found to contribute to negative depictions of “deviant” young people. Attempting to both normalize and individualize those considered “deviant,” the need for discipline and conformity was highlighted.

Reconciling “Childhood” and Deviance

A central question of this research was the way in which media reconciled notions of childhood with depictions of young “deviants.” Attribution of responsibility and workforce involvement were themes that related to the reconciliation of childhood and deviance.

Responsibility and Reconciliation

The attribution of responsibility was one way in which reconciliation between “childhood” and deviance was attempted. To whom responsibility for the deviance of young people was attributed differed across the two time periods. While the individual was most commonly depicted as responsible for his or her actions in both samples, this was more the case in the 1980’s sample. Family and society were commonly portrayed as responsible parties within the 1960’s sample, while society’s role in deviance was virtually non-existent in the 1980’s sample. The family’s culpability remained consistent from the 1960’s to the 1980’s time period.

The consistent suggestion that the young “deviant’s” family was in some way responsible for his or her actions supported a childlike perception of the “deviant.” Simon (2007) argued that families are considered to be the “enablers” of crime committed by young people. The family’s responsibility for monitoring the behavior of

young people is a form of power imposed on them by other institutions. The family then is expected to exercise that power and act as a repressive force against “deviant” behaviors. The notion of “other people’s children” acts as an exemplar of unacceptable behavior which has not been properly dealt with.

The increase in individual responsibility from the 1960’s to the 1980’s sample reflected what some researchers acknowledge as part of the 1980’s view of crime and deviance. This view emphasized the need for personal responsibility in an individualized society portrayed as dangerous (Simon, 2007).

Social Location and Expectations

A pattern that emerged across both time periods within the attribution of responsibility was a differential approach based on the social location of the “deviant.” Deviance was depicted as “expected” from urban young people, and depicted as “senseless” when committed by suburban young people. Suburban juveniles were portrayed as lacking an “excuse” for their deviance; they were held personally responsible and their deviance was depicted as senseless and unnecessary. Those from urban areas were held less responsible for their actions because their environmental conditions were presented as an “excuse” and cause for expected delinquency. In a sense, suburban young people were being adultified through the individualization of responsibility whereas urban youth were being infantilized through the “excusing” of responsibility from them. However, the adultification of suburban young people did not result in any harsher sanctions than those applied to the more infantilized urban youth.

The differential expectations and culpability presented based on social class can also be examined through Scott's (1985) discussion of the distribution of wealth. He states, "The rich, by and large, possess what is worth taking, while the poor have the greatest incentive to take it" (Scott, 1985, p. 267). This is a common argument used to describe motivation for crime, within which actual occurrences of crime do not fit since urban and suburban crime most often occur within their respective communities. However, this notion suggests that those of a higher class are considered to have what they need and what is desired by others, giving them seemingly no motive to act in a "deviant" way. This statement assumes that the core motivation for all deviance is the acquisition of possessions. Such an argument and depiction also assume that urban deviance is purely driven by the desire to possess certain objects and that the only way to obtain those objects is through crime.

Employment and Discipline

As one of the ways media reconciled "deviance" with adulthood, emphasis on workforce involvement was used as a romanticized concept and as a way to gauge a young person's societal value, similar to adults in society. There was a frequent association between the lack of employment and deviance as well as the notion that employment is the solution to deviance. Through the emphasis on employment, young people's societal value was measured by their economic and labor contributions to the community. An informal cost-benefit analysis was often used to determine whether "deviants" were a burden or could be redeemed through employment solutions.

Further, the requirements for maintaining employment were considered to be lacking among the “deviant” young people covered in the articles. Scott (1985) acknowledged that a certain level of deference and compliance is required to protect and maintain a person’s livelihood, i.e. a job. Young people who didn’t work but were legally able seemed to have no use for such compliance or deference and often turned to “deviant” behavior as a means of expression. This was reflective of Esman’s (1990) discussion of child labor laws, which excluded young people from a central part of society, the workforce. This exclusion, in addition to their already restricted rights, marginalized them as a population and, he argued, often led to “deviant” behavior (Esman, 1990).

As reflected in the sample, however, for those “deviant” young people who were legally able to work, employment was felt to be an immediate necessity as a way to escape their behavior and move on to adulthood. It could be argued that work or employment was being used as an attempt to discipline “deviant” young people, requiring them to employ a “self protecting compliance” or deference. Work was a way to normalize young “deviants,” rendering them subjects rather than individuals capable of self-governance. Further, for those “deviant” young people who were legally of age but for whom work was unavailable, unemployment could be viewed as a form of “natural” penalty resulting from their non-conformity (Foucault, 1977).

Summary and Conclusion

Overall, young ‘deviants’ were generally negatively depicted but were maintained in the category of childhood. Deviance and childhood were most often reconciled

through the suggestions that conformity, discipline, and self governance were necessary to return the “deviant” to the ‘proper’ place of childhood. The role of power was to highlight the child’s need for discipline and conformity rather than to displace him or her to adulthood. Power was used to impose judgments and order on the young “deviants” who may or may not have desired either. Such depictions were achieved by the print media using three mechanisms.

First, by focusing on certain ages of “deviants” and relating them to certain institutional responses and punishment approaches, “deviants” were redefined and portrayed as needing more institutional control. Second, the use of predications, which individualized and normalized the “deviants” and their actions, highlighted the need for conformity and discipline. Lastly by the attribution of “responsibility,” the power of the family and social class were highlighted. Deviance and adulthood were reconciled through the emphasis on workforce involvement, in which the young “deviant” was measured by their societal contribution and determined to be a burden to the community. As a result, they were held to adultlike standards of self discipline and employment.

Due to the qualitative nature of this research, there were some limitations to my study. As I stated in chapter three, this type of analysis invited a subjective researcher bias. However, I believe the use of content analysis as a dual method helped to ensure that common patterns were recognized and discussed. Another limitation of my study was the use of only one coder. Typically, two coders are considered appropriate as a way to ensure reliability; however, because of limited resources and time constraints this was not possible.

While there were some limitations, overall my study provoked some interesting questions that could be addressed by future research. Future researchers might seek to replicate these results with television and internet media.

It is extremely important for researchers to be critical consumers of narratives provided by media. The exclusion of young people from governance renders them powerless in the political sphere. Narratives about young people, then, may manifest as real consequences in their lives. Careful analysis of depictions of young people may go a long way in the advocacy for young people, whether conforming or “deviant.”

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Appendix: Coding Worksheet

DA CODING WORKSHEET

Date: Date of article

Newspaper Title: Publication title

Page(s)/Section(s) of article

Main Headline

Subheadline

Author

Location (geographical if provided)

Continued Headline (if continued to another page)

Photos – Number of photos, Photographer name, Photo caption

Target location or scope: ? Neighborhood, city, state, nationwide?

Institutional level (police, courts, policy, research, etc): At what level is the article mainly focused?

Social languages or Jargon present: Jargon such as police, judicial, political, etc. Different styles of language used in the enactment of the differing identities.

Sources cited: Who is cited as a source of information? Name, title, etc.

Type of speech reported from the source: [insert reported speech types here]

Discourse type: In need of protection/threat/rights

Age of youth(s) of interest:

Race/ethnicity of youth(s) of interest:

Gender of youth(s) of interest:

Other details of youth given/focused on: tattoos, size, weight, clothing, etc.

Membership Categorization of offender used? Direct or Indirect categorization? To what category:

Predication used with youth of interest: [insert Richardson def of predication here]

Age specific terms used: boy, child, youngster, youth, delinquent, offender, etc.

Child-like variables mentioned (playground, toys, mommy/daddy, etc.): What is mentioned that is associated with childhood and children?

Adult-like variables mentioned (employment, etc.): What is mentioned that is associated with adulthood?

Type of deviant activity focused on: drug use, murder, theft, etc.

Type of charge(s): juvenile or criminal court, charged delinquent or undisciplined? Etc. 1st degree murder, misdemeanor

Weapons mentioned:

Punishment approach (jail, restitution, work camp):

General approach to deviance (prevention/intervention/treatment/sanction):

Responsibility for deviance assigned to whom/what? Society, family, mental health, schools, etc?

Directly and/or Indirectly:

Hyperboles (extreme exaggeration): exaggerated figure of speech (These books weigh a ton. I almost died I was laughing so hard.)

Types of metaphors used: War metaphor, disease metaphor, natural disaster metaphor, etc.,

Quotes of metaphors:

Ingroup/Outgroup designators used: 'Us,' 'Our,' 'They,' 'Them,' etc., Direct quote(s) examples:

Dialectics established (oppositional/binary relationships established): Example of "Decency or Delinquency", suggesting that those who are classified as 'delinquent' cannot be decent. Set up as opposites almost.

Direct quote(s) example:

Predictions/Warnings, etc.: Crime will increase/decrease, certain groups will continue, etc.

Statistics referenced? Type of statistics used:

Increase or decrease reported?

Reason(s) attributing to inc/dec?

Miscellaneous comments, etc.