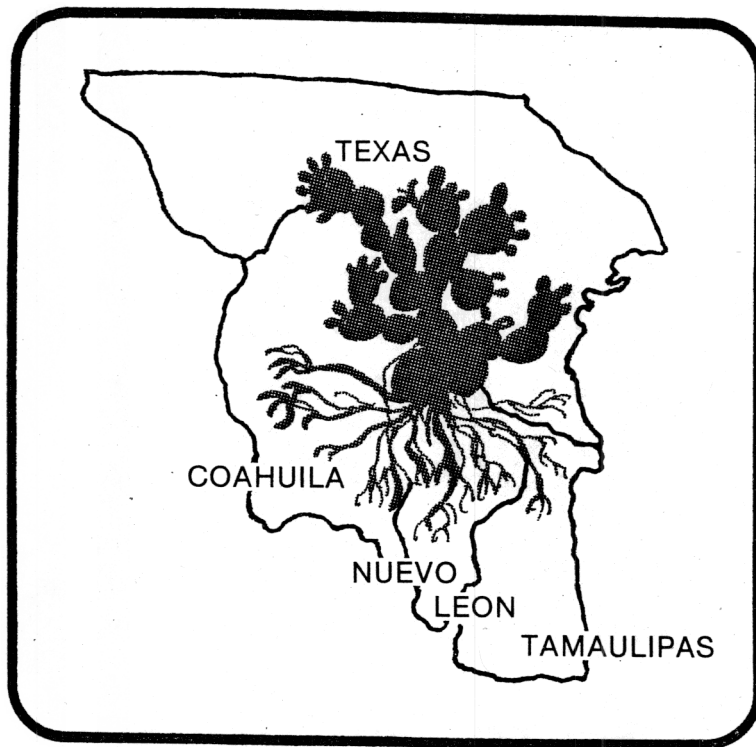


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OCCUPATIONAL ROLES AND THE PERCEPTION OF ALCOHOL
RELATED BEHAVIOR: DRUNKS, COPS, AND COUNSELORS

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Fiction and drama often illuminate significant areas of social behavior long before they become a focus for social science research. The case in point is no exception. In the 1957 operetta, West Side Story,¹ one vignette has the Jets gang members singing a song directed at officer Krupke. The song satirizes the profusion of attitudes and behaviors directed at juvenile delinquents as they interact with the criminal justice and social welfare systems. At each station in the journey through the system, the gang members encounter a change in vocabulary (especially the label they receive), a change in the attitude directed at them, and presumably, a change in the perception of the gang member held by the person in charge of that particular stop (parent, cop, judge, social worker, therapist, etc.). These changes in labels, attitudes and perceptions all have clear cut implications for the changes in behavior that the gang member encounters at each point. The gang member is described in a variety of ways ranging from "misunderstood" to "just no good" and treated accordingly.

The satire suggests⁵ explanations for the dysfunctions in the "rehabilitation system," revealing the

disparity where language and behavior are different enough to create a nonsystem rather than a "system." It points out that the "system" is actually a disparate collection of social scenes where language and behavior are different enough to create a non-system rather than a system. Calling a collection of social scenes that have few common cognitive dimensions "a system," cannot make them into one. In the Krupke case, the behaviors expected in one scene are so dissimilar from those expected in the others that they do not allow enough carry over of behavior from one to the next to assure consistent social interaction without considerable resocialization or enculturation at each stop. The case presented here, while it deals with alcoholics rather than juvenile delinquents, parallels the Sergeant Krupke example closely enough that the satire is equally viable for the present situation, and the implications for the fate of the alcohol abuser who comes in contact with the "rehabilitation system" are equally germane.

The author was invited by the Texas Commission on Alcoholism (TCA), and the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, the local Council of Governments (COG), to present a special forty-hour program² on alcohol and alcoholism to a mixed group of law enforcement personnel and civilians. The peace officers

were members of local police forces in Cameron and Hidalgo counties in Texas. The civilians were individuals from the same counties who engaged in some recognized form of counseling services. Some were volunteer counselors with Alcoholics Anonymous, some with local mental health clinic alcoholism units, and some were counselors for a regional program to prevent youths from dropping out of school.

The program the author presented was an alcohol education package designed with a modular learning format titled, "Systematic Preventive Intervention Resources for Alcoholism by Law Enforcement," (SPIRAL). It was developed for TCA by the Institute of Contemporary Corrections and the Behavioral Sciences (1973) to be used in the state wide continuing education programs that are available to peace officers through Law Enforcement Assistance Act (LEAA) programs funded through the local COGs.

The author's presentation of SPIRAL was considered to be experimental for two reasons. First, even though SPIRAL was developed in 1973, the author's presentation of the program in the summer of 1979 was the first time it had been offered to a class of police officers in the state. Because SPIRAL had not been tested under actual presentation conditions, it

was assumed that some modifications might have to be made in the program, if any of the modules were found to be weak. Second, the SPIRAL program marked the first attempt by the COG's law enforcement director to include both peace officers and civilians in an accredited training program; a step taken tentatively at the encouragement of TCA.

Under ordinary circumstances, law enforcement personnel are vehemently opposed to allowing civilians to participate in their training programs. They feel that public access to their techniques and standard operating procedures would make their task far more difficult and quite possibly more life threatening than it is already. This general attitude was present throughout the week and helped maintain boundaries and reduce communication between the two groups.

This condition of exclusivity on the part of the law enforcement group has important implications for the continued support of the rationale of putting groups together in the same training process in order to "open up channels of communication and understanding," to "improve the articulation of two important elements in the rehabilitation process for alcohol abusers." This rationale comes out of the counseling,

social welfare segments of the rehabilitation system; segments where communication and smooth social interaction have extremely high intrinsic values. Within these latter segments of the system one even might expect improved communication to produce improved services. However, the rationale not only ceases to function but may even cause a stiffening of negative reactions in parts of the system where exclusivity and secrecy are considered positive occupation adjuncts. Since exclusivity does not exist solely amongst peace officers, and since this is an area of study that has been largely ignored, this subject might yield some very productive results for the applied social sciences, if pursued. However, this area is not directly germane to this paper beyond a brief mention. It may have added to problems of communication between the groups, but it almost certainly did not create the differing viewpoints held by the two occupation groups; it merely reflected them.

As the program proceeded it became increasingly apparent that the two occupational groups possessed different views of alcohol abusers or "drunks." The label, "drunk," for the purposes of this paper, includes individuals who are temporarily inebriated,

as well as those who would be clinically identified as alcoholics.³ Although the term has serious pejorative connotations within the United States cultural system, it will be used in this work to denote a shared set of clients of both the law enforcement and the counseling systems. It is an "agreed upon" label for alcoholically impaired clients that is in use by each of the two groups. Thus, "drunks" was a shared label for alcohol abusers that produced at least the appearance of communication between the two groups, since both discussed amongst themselves and with members of the other group the problems of "dealing with drunks." Subsequently, it became apparent, as will be demonstrated in this paper, that an apparently shared label is not equivalent to a shared perception of the item being labeled. Although the two groups may appear on the surface to have overlapping concepts and an overlapping concern for dealing with identical populations, this seeming similarity of viewpoint disappears upon further investigation.

Research Population

The effect of occupational roles on the perception of drunks is especially interesting in this in-

stance, due to the composition of the groups studied. Both groups were nearly identical in their ethnic and sexual dimensions. In the police group there were nine active peace officers, two probation and parole officers with prior police experience, and a breathalyzer specialist. Ten members of the group participated in the exercise; the breathalyzer specialist did not. Nine of the participating group were male; while none were Mexican Americans and one was Anglo (not the female). There were fourteen people in the counseling group; however, three showed up for only one-half of one day and were eliminated from the study population. Of the remaining eleven, only nine of the counselor group participated in the exercise. The composition of the participating group consisted of seven males and two females, and of eight Mexican-Americans and one Anglo.

The general ethnic dimensions of the two groups was not significantly different from that of the local population, which is approximately 80 percent Mexican American and 20 percent Anglo, with less than one-half of one percent Black (1970 Census of Population). Whether or not the sexual composition of the two groups was similar to the ratios found in the two occupational categories was impossible to de-

termine in this instance. Fortunately, the responses within each of the groups did not differ significantly by sex, ethnicity, or a combination of the two. Thus, the informants can be considered internally homogeneous in their labeling of drunks within the two occupational groups, unmodified, in this instance, by ethnic or sexual variables.

Due to circumstances related below, the author failed to collect some social data on participants that subsequently turned out to be of some potential interest. This information included age, length of time employed in current occupation, other occupations engaged in previously, and level of education. While these omissions do not jeopardize the argument put forth in this article, they would certainly have allowed some refinements to be built into it, that will now have to await subsequent research efforts. However, post hoc approximations of these characteristics are possible. The apparent age level of both populations could be characterized as young to mature adult. Ages ranged from approximately twenty-three to fifty; however, over 90% of the apparent ages clustered between twenty-five and forty. On an impressionistic level, the peace officer group contained few or no individuals who had been on the job for

two years or more. In the counselor group, occupational longevity varied much more and at least a couple of the participants had been working for less than a year. Again, on an impressionistic basis, educational levels within the two groups were comparable, and probably clustered around the "high school plus some college" level. The author formed no impressions whatsoever on the previous work histories of either of the two groups.

Research Methodology

By the morning of the second day of the SPIRAL program, two things had become evident. First, the SPIRAL educational modules were not as effective as had been hoped, and was necessary to improvise exercises that would make up for the deficiencies. Second, the conditions created by having both groups in the same program made the task of successfully modifying the program to fit the needs of two different audiences difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, the author created a series of exercises expected to increase the verbal participation of the two groups in the training program by providing common areas for discussion. In this way, useful information about the treatment of drunks by the criminal justice system could be dealt with in conjunction with the pre-

existing SPIRAL exercises. None of the author's exercises were totally successful in achieving these goals; however, one exercise did produce more discussion than the others and also provided the basic data for this article.

At the end of the session for the second day, the participants were asked to complete an exercise that evening and return the assignment in written form the following morning. They were requested to make a list and describe all of the different types of drunks that they encounter. The exercise was based on an article by Dworkin (1965), where a listing exercise of this type was used to elicit stereotypes about Anglos held by native-born and foreign-born-Mexican Americans. Although Dworkin's statistical treatment of the data was minimal, the technique was obviously valuable in developing an understanding of the views one group of people held about another group. The author's goals in using this exercise were to expose the stereotypes about alcohol abusers that existed in the two participant groups, to attempt to move each group's view of alcohol abusers to a more neutral and more clinically "sound" view of alcohol abuse, and to provide the groups with a chance to better understand each other's viewpoints and problems.

The latter goal was at least partially achieved during the subsequent discussion of the exercise on the third morning of the program. The first and second goals had to be modified because the expected stereotypes (i.e., skid row bums, moral degenerates, etc.) failed to appear. Instead, the labels and descriptions appeared to be related to the occupational orientation of the labeler. (Examples are provided below). This allowed the two groups to become aware of each other's perceptions, vis-a-vis drunks, and it produced a lively discussion of why the police were oriented toward a behavioral typology (violent drunks, passive drunks, etc.) while the counselors utilized a more descriptive typology (sipping drunks, beer drinking drunks, weekend drunks, etc.). After the discussion, the need to complete the other modules of SPIRAL caused the subject to be dropped except for occasional references to comments that illustrated later modules.

A subsequent evaluation of SPIRAL brought the written exercise to the author's attention once again and the more the labels were analyzed, the clearer it became that they could be viewed as indicators of occupationally developed paradigms of alcohol abusers. It also became apparent that the exercise

was amenable to formal analysis. The fact that it was originally created as an educational exercise caused the omission in collecting the potentially interesting variables described above, and probably others as well. However, the success of the analysis of the available variables also clearly points out that data supporting general anthropological research themes can be derived from unsuspected and nontraditional sources.

Data and Procedures

The data collected in the exercise consisted of lists of primary labels, ⁴ with or without accompanying modifiers or explanations attached to the label. There were nineteen lists containing from four to fifty labels each. The lists organized into two groups of ten and nine lists respectively, by assigning lister to the ~~piece~~^{peace} officer or the counselor ~~group~~. There were a total of 240 labels produced by the exercise; 64 in the peace officer group (mean of 6.4/lister) and 176 in the counselor group (mean of 19.6/lister).

An analysis of the variance in the numbers of labels (presumably separate categories of drunks) established by each lister was calculated on the data

(contained in Table 1), using the ~~the~~ t Test as a measure of the significance of the variance in the two populations.⁵

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF LABELS PER SUBJECT BY GROUP

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
Peace officers	6	2	-	-	-	4	6	-	-	2
Counselors	4	4	18	28	29	50	18	18	7	-

N = 240 17 degree of freedom t = 2.7

The t Test indicated that there is a significant difference ($P < .02$) between the two groups in the number of primary labels they create to identify drunks. There is a tendency for the peace officers to use fewer labels to describe the total universe of drunks they encounter, compared to the primary labels used by the counselors. Where peace officers only distinguish (or label) "passive drunks," the counselor group differentiates between "depressed drunks, confused drunks, melancholy drunks, and sad drunks." Where the law enforcement group labels "alcoholics," the counselor group subdivides alcoholics with polyaddictions (alcohol and other drugs simultaneously), and between male and female alcoholics." In

nearly all cases, a single label by the peace officers could be equated with a group of labels used by the counselor group. This condition has some important implications for the existence of a cultural paradigm of drunks, which will be discussed in a subsequent section.

The labeling of the two groups could also be distinguished by the relative importance members of the groups placed on the behavior of the drunks they encounter. One of the key concerns the peace officers expressed during their discussion of the exercise was their need to be able to predict the level of physical threat that drunk presented to the safety of the apprehending officer. Probably due to this concern, the most conspicuous primary labels used by the group were those describing the drunks' interactional characteristics (e.g. violent drunks, aggressive drunks, unpredictable drunks, and passive drunks). No such easily identifiable pattern was evident in the responses of the counselors, although interactional labels did occur, along with many others. Therefore, a chi-squared test was performed to determine whether or not the groups differed significantly in the proportion of interactional labels they used, relative to the noninteractional labels they used. To compute the statistic, each of the 240

Labels was assigned to one of two groups; labels which indicated an assessment of a potential or lack of potential for aggressive behavior (interactional labels), and labels that did not assess either a potential or lack of potential for aggressive (noninteractional label). The results are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2

A COMPARISON OF LABELS WHICH DO OR DO NOT INDICATE THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL FOR AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

	Interactional Labels	Noninteractional Labels
Peace Officers	40	24
Counselors	60	116

N= 240 I degree of freedom $\chi^2 = 10.96$

The chi-squared statistic calculated for this data, ($\chi^2 = 10.96$ -with 1 degree of freedom), indicates that the two groups are significantly different ($p < .001$) in their tendency to use interactional labels of drunks. This strongly supports the qualitative data collected during the discussion session. This tendency is further strengthened by the fact that only primary labels were used to calculate the statistic, when in fact, fourteen out of a total of 26 (53.8 percent) of the primary labels in the peace officer group

that are listed in Table 2 as noninteractive have modifiers of explanations that are assessments of the aggressive potential of the type of drunk being labeled, whereas in the labels of the counselor group only two labels out of 110, ^{1.8}~~10.8~~ percent, of the noninteractional primary labels, are similarly modified. This difference in tendency is significant at well beyond the .001 level ($\chi^2 = 58.0$ with 1 degree of freedom) and further supports the importance of being able to judge a person's potential for aggressive behavior, if one is a police officer.

Another overall differential in labeling characteristics that distinguishes the groups from one another should be noted, in conjunction with the above. Peace officers were far more likely to modify the primary labels they gave drunks, than were the counselors. Out of 64 primary labels 38 (59.4 percent) were modified or explained in some way by the peace officers. In the counselor group, only 23 out of 116 (13.1 percent) of the primary labels received any modification. This difference in behavior is significant at well beyond the .001 level of confidence ($\chi^2=463.4$ with one degree of freedom). As noted above, many of the peace officers' phrases dealt with a drunk's potential for violence. One informant listed "elderly drunks," as a primary label and modified it by writing,

"elderly intoxicated persons are nonviolent and respect authority. However, most of them do become very loud and belligerent." Another peace officer listed a "don't give a shit attitude drunk," and modified it by saying, "this guy you know you are going to fight." At the time, the peace officers also used descriptive labels that did not reflect any direct assessment of aggression. One informant listed "alcoholic," and modified it by "drinks every day, not very responsible, will not admit his problem." Examples of both types of modifiers were found in lists by single informants. As stated above, only two of the modifiers used by counselors related to potential for aggression in clients and both were found in the same list. The two labels were "Holiday drunks: gets drunk on holidays only, usually rambunctious," and "Respectable Drunk: usually a professional-type person, well dressed, drinks in high-class bars and clubs - reserved." Examples of other modified primary labels listed by counselors includes "Change of Language Drunks" changes language Spanish to English or visa versa (sic), drinks for fun, common alcoholic," and Youth: 15-22 years of age-usually polyaddicated or chemically dependant - filled with resentment and confusion for it doesn't hit their friends the way it's hitting them. Consequently, loads of denial. I estimate 10-15% of alcoholics I encounter are this group."

The differences in the labeling of drunks, explored above for these two occupational groups, leads to an eventual question as to whether or not there is a common cultural paradigm of drunks that shapes the labeling behavior of both groups. Preliminary evidence for such a paradigm is present in the data collected. During the discussion of the exercise, participants in both occupational categories tended to lump groups of labels into larger classifications. Although it is possible that the author missed one or more of these categories, the most common are presented here as a constructed typological classification of drunks containing five categories. Type B labels that classify drunks according to some form of behavior⁶ (e.g. happy, sad, loud, boisterous, passive, hell raiser, melancholy, daring, risky, violent, and calm drunks). Type S labels are primary labels that indicate something about the individual's socio-cultural characteristics, including sex, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (e.g. male or female drunks, youth drunks, chicano drunks, regular alcoholics, gay drunks, cowboy drunks, rich drunks, etc.). Type P labels of drunks are labels that identify drunks according to the place where they are encountered (e.g. barroom drunk, street drunk, drunk driver, or party drinker). Type L drunks are those who are identified according to the type of alcoholic beverages

they consume (e.g. beer only drunks, hard liquor drunks, winos, pill popping drunks-poyintoxication or polyaddiction, etc.). A fifth type of drunk is suggested by the labels themselves, which will be called Type D labels, since they indicate the drinking or consumption behavior of the drunk (e.g. sipping drunks, chug-a-lug drunks, and guzzling drunks exclusively). Only four of these labels occurred out of a total of 240, and all were found in the lists of two counselor informants. Categorizing the informant's labels according to the criteria of the above typology produced the results summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3
A COMPARISON OF PEACE OFFICER AND COUNSELOR LABELS OF DRUNKS IN RELATION TO A COMMON TYPOLOGY

	Type B	Type S	Type P	Type L	Type D
Peace Officers	26	29	4	5	0
Counselors	64	68	16	24	4

N = 240 4 degrees of freedom $\chi^2 = 3.9$

The chi-squared values calculated for the responses of the two groups indicated that there was no significant differences between the two groups ($.75 < p > .50$) when their responses are compared according to the constructed typology. The differences in their responses could have been due to chance (sampling error) alone. Since none of the peace officers and only two of the counselors listed labels that could be classified as Type D, a second chi-squared calculation was made by eliminating Type D and placing those four responses in Type L, which they most closely resembled, of the other four groups. Collapsing the categories in this manner had no effect on the data ($.75 < p > .50$, $\chi^2 = 3.4$, with 3 degrees of freedom). While there is no way at present of determining whether or not the constructed typology is identical to the one operating in the broader cultural system of the region, the fact that no significant differences in responses are evident at this level of organization of the data, while clearly significant differences manifest at the other levels at least establishes the potential for such to be the case.

Summary and Conclusion

The data presented in this article suggests that, while a broad cultural paradigm of alcohol abusers may exist, in at least some cases occupational socialization may modify the paradigm in ways that produce significant differences in the labeling of shared clients, by two different occupational groups; in this instance, peace officers and counselors. It was shown that counselors tended to use far more labels of alcohol abusers (drunks), than did police officers, while the latter more likely to provide additional information about the labeled individuals than were the counselors. The peace officers appeared to be far more concerned about assessing the potential of a drunk for expressing aggressive behavior, than were the counselors.

If it follows that differences in labeling either produce or reflect (or both) differences in behavior towards clients or any other individuals, than as in the Officer Krupke examples presented in the introduction, the alcohol "rehabilitation system" may be a nonsystem. At the least, this study calls into question the viability of basing improvements in the functioning of a rehabilitation system on the rationale of "improving communications between parts of the system," when one of those parts contains exclusivity and secrecy as a part of its occupational

socialization. Second, this study points to the need for further exploration of the differences in generalized cultural paradigms that are produced by occupational socialization and to the need to research the intracultural, and presumably the cross-cultural effects of these differences on establishing and maintaining social programs.

Footnotes

1. West Side Story was first performed as a stage production at the Wintergarden in New York City, September 26, 1957. The movie was released in 1961. The book was by Arthur Laurents, based of a concept by Gerome Robbins, with music by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by Stephen Soundheim.
2. The program was designed to be presented eight hours a day, on five consecutive days. Its modular construction would have allowed its presentation to be changed to different time frameworks, but this was the one preferred by the law enforcement agencies that were supplying the officers for the program.
3. Group distinctions between temporary and long-term inebriants could normally, although not always, be inferred in conversations by contextual information, explanations or the labels themselves. For example, "Saturday night drunks" were distinguished from the "drunks who live under the bridge" in one conversation.

4. Primary labels are defined as words or word sequences that define a particular category of drunk. Examples of primary labels range from single words (e.g. alcoholic), to the word "drunk" accompanied by a modifier (e.g. social drunk, crying drunk, typical drunk), to phrases being used as descriptive labels (e.g. intoxicated individuals and pills drunk or the "let it all hang out drunk"). Some of the labels (61 out of 240) had modifiers following them that ranged from single words (e.g. violent, respectable, lonely), up to phrases and entire paragraphs of explanations.
5. The use of the t Test here is based on the assumption that each lister could have listed any number of labels, thus making the number of labels amenable to parametric statistics. The t Test is subject to a number of assumptions (see Cochran, 1947) that should not be violated. It is assumed that these conditions have been met; however, a small sample size such as the one used here is subject to some potential problems in heterogeneity of variance and non-normality. Nevertheless, even where these problems occur there is some strong evidence that the statistics remain significant (see Lindquist, 1953 and Boneau, 1960).
6. Type B labels are not necessarily synonymous with the interactional labels defined earlier. Since there are labels which indicate behavior but do not indicate a simultaneous assessment of the drunk's potential for aggression, the "interactional labels" should be considered a subset of Type B labels.

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