

The Medical Messiahs makes clear that the Pure Food and Drug Act did not succeed in either ending or controlling medical quackery. One of the important reasons for this failure was the way in which the law was administered. In the very first case brought by the Food and Drug Administration, against a nostrum called Cureforhedake Brane Fude, neither scientific testimony nor the intervention of a President of the United States proved sufficient to win a case that essentially had been ill prepared. In the years that followed, government officials were often hampered in prosecuting malefactors by lack of funds or of personnel. As one example, Young notes that it took the Food and Drug Administration a decade of litigation to clean up the labeling of a horse liniment which was being sold as a tuberculosis cure. At other times, the courts interpreted the law so conservatively as to deny various government agencies the power to extend effective control over the purveyors of quack cures and nostrums. Thus the Post Office Department, which was a key agency in fighting health promoters who

used the mails to defraud, was unable to bring a notorious faith healer to book because it could not prove the extent to which mental influence could affect the physical condition of the body. The decision, known as the McAnnulty Doctrine, later served as a signal to ingenious quacks that they could operate with impunity in those areas where medicine or science had not yet spoken authoritatively or definitively.

For Young, reasons for the persistence of quackery are to be found not only in the failure of the administration of regulatory statutes and the seemingly unending procession of unscrupulous quacks and willing victims, but also in a congeries of factors including changing disease patterns, the state of medical care, the development of science and technology, and above all the extraordinary adeptness of the leaders of a billion-dollar business at using modern advertising to get something for nothing. One of the important features of *The Medical Messiahs* is Young's analysis of the role of modern advertising arts in the growth of medical quackery. Another is the fascinating collection

Young has put together of case histories of modern medical quacks. They are a band of cutthroat entrepreneurs who make the legendary robber barons of American business history seem like boy scouts.

In the end, *The Medical Messiahs* stands as an indictment of a nation that has proved itself unable to translate scientific knowledge into effective legislative control in matters that affect the health and personal welfare of the entire population. It is an indictment of a nation that prides itself on its educational standards, but whose population can read only well enough to savor, not well enough to evaluate, the promises of advertising copy. It is an indictment of a nation that so fears the passage of time that it searches eternally for youth and the qualities of youth, conditioned by a vast advertising and communications industry to a belief in miracles and the imminent arrival of telegrams from heaven. It is superb social history.

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Accusation and the Accused

Controlling Delinquents. Edited by STANTON WHEELER, with the assistance of HELEN MACGILL HUGHES. Wiley, New York, 1968. xx + 332 pp., illus. \$8.50.

The Social Organization of Juvenile Justice. AARON V. CICOUREL. Wiley, New York, 1968. xiv + 345 pp. \$8.95.

In the great division of topics of study among the social sciences, sociology, as an academic latecomer, inherited the grimmest and least prestigious ones: slums, immigration, poverty, and the other ills of a rapidly urbanizing society. Laymen wanted to know what could be done about the mess in our cities, and sociologists found their place in the scientific sun by trying to tell them. One of the problems they undertook to illuminate was that of the delinquent child. Vocal reformers had just begun to call attention to the children who played truant from school, stole, and seemed headed for careers in crime; and while the reformers were

at no loss for immediate steps to take, they wanted to know why children did such things. Etiological theories were necessary so that programs of reform might be effectively planned.

Sociologists argued with psychologists and others who thought the causes of delinquency lay in the dynamics of the child's personality instead of the external variables of neighborhood and family. Until relatively recently, however, sociologists shared with their opponents the assumption that the phenomenon to be explained was unproblematic. Everybody knows a bad kid when he sees one; a delinquent is a delinquent.

Recent developments in the sociology of deviance, however, have not only questioned that assumption but have made its revision the basis of a new approach to questions of cause. Explanations depend on what is to be explained, and these newer theories propose that, before asking why peo-

ple commit deviant acts, we first ask how the act came to be classified as deviant and how it happened that the particular actor came to be accused of having committed it. Accusation itself becomes problematic. Labeling theory, as it has come to be called, emphasizes the empirical and analytic independence of behavior and of the qualities that are imputed to it in accusations. Mistaken accusations, empirically common, show us the necessity of distinguishing between things we do and the reputations we achieve when it is thought we have done them. Unless we make the distinction, we may search for the causes of events that have never occurred while ignoring the causes of those that have.

Concretely, a child who is labeled a juvenile delinquent may never have committed any remotely criminal act, while children who have committed many such acts may go unlabeled. How many such errors occur is not known precisely, but Cicourel's careful analysis of official records discloses the tremendous ambiguities that surround a juvenile's assignment to delinquent status and our consequent inability to know what official delinquency statistics really measure. All this suggests

that if we want to understand delinquency what we most need to study is the causes of the behavior of labelers and the consequences for children of being labeled. Not the crime, but the person who calls it a crime; not the criminal, but the results of being called one.

Drawing on a variety of studies of delinquents and the people who deal with them in Boston, Wheeler and his colleagues produce some surprising findings. Sharp reversals of common-sense expectations appear, for instance, in the relations between professional ideologies about delinquency and professional practice. Hard-bitten old cops take a tough line toward delinquents, but they do not arrest as many as do the young officers who have acquired a more lenient ideology, and judges with "treatment" perspectives commit more boys to reform school than old-fashioned judges. Every professional group that processes delinquents responds to them in ways dictated by its power position, espousing that ideology and taking those actions that increase their control over the conditions of their own work, no matter what the effect on the delinquents.

Aaron Cicourel's book considers similar matters in much finer detail, showing how police and probation officers turn particular children into delinquents or fail to do so as they go through their daily routines. Detailed analyses of interviews and documentary records show how the police balance the constraints of their jobs against the opportunities afforded by each case for personal and occupational aggrandizement. "Obvious" social facts, such as criminal and school records, dissolve into fragile social constructions which officials manipulate and on whose manipulation children's fates depend. Reality, in the form of crimes and criminals whose causes we are to discover, turns into a cooperative social enterprise to present the appearance of reality. Explanation is traded in for detailed description. Simple studies of why young people become delinquent are no longer possible.

Most people will find the Wheeler volume easier to follow, for it relies on established conventions of social science research. Each conclusion rests on a base of quantified evidence, careful measurements of attitudes, behavior, or both. Cicourel, in contrast, calls into question most ordinary assumptions used to process information in social science and thus makes it very difficult

to use relatively easily gathered numerical material. As an alternative, he goes through lengthy interview protocols statement by statement, showing that the researcher must use the same common-sense rules of interpretation laymen do in order to make sense of what people say. No quantified data look quite the same, or half so trustworthy, after this demonstration.

In the end, careful readers will have equal difficulties with both books. The trust that Wheeler and his colleagues place in quantification and precision turns out to be misplaced, for the various studies they report produce conclusions as tentative and lacking in a solid evidential foundation as the most impressionistic studies whose faults they are designed to avoid. Based on extremely indirect indicators (that can be measured) of complicated processes (whose relationship to those indicators is questionable), these studies do not produce the firm assertions of causal connections we might expect from such rigorous procedures. Except for the few papers in the book that rely on more detailed and intimate observation *à la* Cicourel, the standard language of the conclusions is "it seems that" or "it may be," hardly a fitting reward for so much effort.

The Cicourel book disappoints in another way, by failing to make systematic use of the knowledge it contains about the organization of juvenile jus-

tice. Real analysis of the social structure which produces juvenile delinquency as a social fact goes by the board while Cicourel makes and remakes the point that delinquency is a socially produced fact. Unless you are more interested than most readers are likely to be in that technical argument, you rapidly lose interest in a book on social organization all of whose conclusions on organization take the form of casual glosses on an interview protocol.

Each book contains a great deal more information than I have summarized here, on the police, court personnel, mental health professionals, families, politicians, and even on youthful offenders. Yet their most important feature is not the information they contain, but rather the evidence they give of a radical reorientation in delinquency studies, no matter what their technical bias. Each adds to the weight of evidence arguing that crime, delinquency, and other forms of deviance have no meaning apart from the social processes by which they are defined as having that particular meaning. Any theory of the etiology of deviance proposed in the future must take account of that general proposition and of the specific problems that flow from it, as these volumes have done.

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A Very Large Number of Independent Variables

Politics and Social Science. W. J. M. MACKENZIE. Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1967. 424 pp. Paper, \$1.95.

In the last 20 years the social sciences have been extraordinarily active. More work has been done since World War II than in all the preceding generations. New technologies for the collection and processing of data have opened vistas few conceived of before. Although more studies are conducted in the United States than in the rest of the world put together, those who can afford to read only one book about what is going on in the social sciences would do well to choose this one by a British political scientist. In 413 packed pages, Mackenzie offers an encompassing, well-written, and judicious overview of these new activities. He focuses his survey on the study of political life, but the book also provides considerable

insight into the operations and limitations of social sciences in general.

There obviously are many more activities than results; hence Mackenzie has chosen to focus on "approaches" rather than on findings. (A good inventory of social science findings is already available in B. Berelson and G. Steiner, *Human Behavior*, 1964.) To summarize a book that summarizes the work of such a varied and complex field is a task beyond this reviewer; instead I shall draw upon Mackenzie's keen analysis of many studies to illustrate the difficulties social science faces in its attempt to be both rigorous and relevant.

The various contending approaches to the study of society have one feature in common: they all produce more heat than light. It is easy for the adherents of any one school, theory, or method to point to gaping holes in the logic and