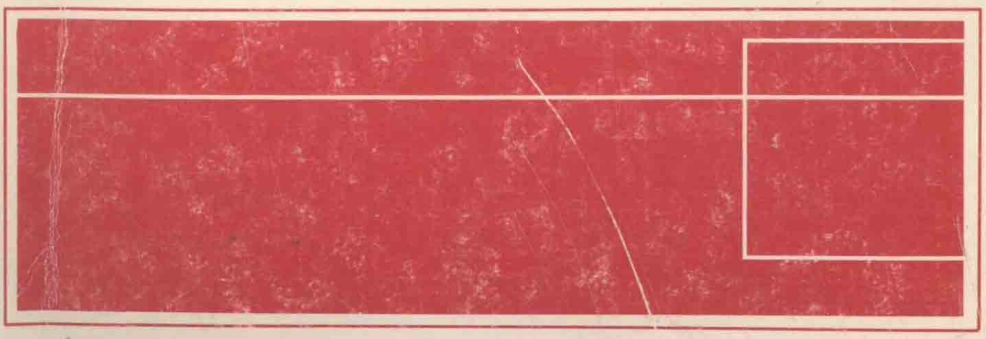
CHARLES W. LIDZ
and ANDREW L. WALKER

HEROIN, DEVIANCE and MORALITY

with the assistance of
Leroy C. Gould



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Volume 112
SAGE LIBRARY OF
SOCIAL RESEARCH

SAGE PUBLICATIONS Beverly Hills London

For information address:

SAGE Publications, Inc.
275 South Beverly Drive
Beverly Hills, California 90212

SAGE Publications Ltd
28 Banner Street
London EC1Y 8QE, England

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Lidz, Charles W.
Heroin, deviance and morality.

(Sage library of social research ; v. 112)
Bibliography: p.
1. Drug-abuse–United States. 2. United States–Moral conditions. 3. Deviant behavior. I. Walker, Andrew L., joint author. II. Gould, Leroy C. III. Title.
HV5825.L46 362.2'93'0973 80-23327
ISBN 0-8039-1549-7
ISBN 0-8039-1550-0 (pbk.)

FIRST PRINTING

This is dedicated to our
predecessors
and
successors

Clara Heard Wooddy
and
James and Heather Carwile

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The image of the ivory-tower scholar conjuring up solitary visions does not, of course, apply to us. This was a joint production. Almost equally important, however, are the contributions made by friends, colleagues, and informants.

As anyone who has ever done field work knows, one owes an enormous debt to those whom one is researching. Much of this volume is based on our field work in a city we call Riverdale. Without the aid and willing cooperation of these people, our field work could not have been done. We also owe a lot to members of our research staff who helped orient us to the addicts' world: Ernest Badger, Michael Figueroa, the Rev. E. Benjamin LaFrazier, Robert Logan, and especially Thomas Muskelley and the late Delores Outlaw. Barbara Clinton, a former methadone nurse, made a large contribution to our understanding of staff-patient relationships.

Mostly, however, this is a book of analysis and theory. As such, it developed out of almost endless discussions with our colleagues. Originally, this book was to have been written jointly with Leroy Gould, Steven H. Lewis, and Lansing E. Crane. Other tasks claimed them, but many of the original ideas were developed jointly with them. Leroy Gould persisted long enough to draft much of the early part of Chapter 2. Many of Steve Lewis's ideas are also contained in that chapter. Lanse Crane's ideas were the basis for Chapter 6. We owe them a heavy debt.

We also received good advice and counsel from a group we designated our Research Advisers: Albert Cohen, Abraham Goldstein, Stanislav Kasl, Stanton Wheeler, Gerald Klerman, Thomas Levin, and especially Egon Bittner and Kai Erikson. They provided guidance, wisdom, and encouragement during the darker periods of the research.

A large number of people have read this manuscript and have offered thoughts and suggestions that have helped. We particularly want to thank Mary Ashley, Rainer Baum, Joanne Brown, the late Jim Burkhart, Kai Erikson, Leroy Gould, Bennie Ruth Gilbert, Geoffrey Guest, Frank Hainer, Jane Isay, Christine Lidz, Lynn Lidz, Ken Magoon, Alan Meisel, John Nelson, Katie Walker, and Eviatar Zerubavel.

We must thank two teachers who influenced us jointly: the late Talcott Parsons and Howard Schwartz. Both supervised our work during the initial period of analysis and were extremely helpful.

We also owe an enormous debt to Florita Cohen, Betty Evans, and particularly Betty Brenneman for typing and sometimes editing seemingly endless drafts.

Thanks also is due Herbert Kleber for support of the project and the National Institute of Mental Health which, through Narcotic Addict Treatment Program Grant No. 1H17 MH16356, partially supported the data gathering and analysis contained in this book.

Finally, Chuck Lidz wants to thank the Department of Psychiatry of the University of Pittsburgh, and particularly its chairman, Thomas Detre, and Loren Roth, Director of the Law and Psychiatry Program, for support and encouragement in the production of this volume. A special debt of gratitude is owed to Victor Lidz, brother and colleague, whose advice and support were indispensable.

PREFACE

The late 1960s and early 1970s were years of great turmoil in the United States. They were years of black power and hippies, of riots and draft evasions, of war and drugs—things that most Americans have by now forgotten, just as one day they will also forget about Watergate, the oil embargo, Iran, and the other crises that have occurred since then. As the public forgets, however, sociologists and historians should not, for there are lessons to be learned from these hectic years that have relevance for both sociological and historical theories of deviance, morality, and social change.

This book, in the first instance, is about crises—in particular, the Drug Crisis of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the second instance, however, it is also a book about the activities of drug addicts and social control agents. In traditional sociological parlance, it would be called a book about culture conflict, deviance, and social control, subjects that the authors refer to more colorfully, and perhaps more descriptively, as "doing morality" and "using morality."

The origins of the book trace to the year 1969, when I became research director for a drug treatment clinic that had opened the previous year as part of a new, federally sponsored, national effort to stem what appeared then to be a rapidly rising tide of drug abuse. Lidz and Walker, fresh out of graduate school, joined me the following year. Like most researchers who were then being sucked into the drug world, we knew little about drugs or drug users and even less about drug treatment or

drug law enforcement. What we did know, moreover, came almost exclusively from the literature then extant on drugs (e.g. Lindesmith, 1947; Schur, 1962; Becker, 1963; Chein et al., 1964) or on deviance and social control more generally (e.g. Merton,1968; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Matza, 1964). Nevertheless, we assumed that we would have little difficulty getting to know drug users and that writing an account of drugs would involve little more than establishing what kinds of data would be theoretically relevant, generating data sets, and applying traditional forms of data analysis and interpretation. We were particularly hopeful that the then emerging "labeling" theory of deviance and social control (cf. Lemert, 1967; Becker, 1963) would serve as a sufficient paradigm for explaining the drug phenomenon.

We discovered quickly, however, that "labeling theory," as well as other more traditional theories of deviance and control, could not answer several questions that pressed themselves upon us. Why, for example, was drug use apparently increasing so rapidly? Why had society suddenly become so concerned about drugs? Why did the United States resurrect a program of medical intervention abandoned a half-century earlier to supplement law-enforcement efforts?

Since traditional theories did not give answers to these questions, we began to explore the idea that drug use and control in "crisis" times might be different from what it is in other times. This idea was reinforced as we reread Lindesmith's (1947 and 1965), Schur's (1962) and Becker's (1963) accounts of the rhetoric and activities that led to the Harrison Act of 1914 that controled opiates and the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937 that outlawed marijuana. What became clear, and was later reinforced by Musto (1973), was that these eras had more in common with the late 1960s and early 1970s than they did with any of the intervening years.

We were aware of only two sociologists who had discussed such "epidemics" of deviance and social control. Durkheim, in a few almost parenthetical comments in *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1964) and *The Division of Labor in Society* (1933),

differentiated between "normal" and "pathological" deviance, and Erikson (1966) described and analyzed three "crime waves" in seventeenth-century Massachusetts. Both authors agreed that deviance can take crisis forms and that these crises probably have more to do with the state of the society at the time than with individual deviants. Since Durkheim and Erikson provided no guide to doing nonhistorical research on deviants and control agents caught up in a "crime wave," however, we were left with something of a dilemma. Traditional theories, which were designed to explain deviance and control in "normal" times, gave us no guide as to how to study the Drug Crisis from society's perspective, yet theories of social "crises" gave us no guide as to how to study the behavior of deviants and control agents during a "crisis."

Our solution to this dilemma was decidedly pragmatic. First, we divided into three teams to construct ethnographic accounts of the core activities. Walker led a team that studied the perspective of drug users. Lidz led a team that studied drug-law enforcement as understood by policemen, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and other members of the criminal justice community. Gould led a team that studied drug control from the perspective of those who were responsible for drug treatment. *Connections: Notes from the Heroin World* (1974) contains an account of this effort.

During this phase of our research we worked on the assumption that no one would be in a better position to understand the Drug Crisis at its micro level than those who were intimately involved in the day-to-day activities that made up what was then commonly called the "drug scene." We did not assume, however, that these actors—doctors, lawyers, junkies, cops—were in a privileged position to describe the phenomenon at its macro or societal level. To grasp the phenomenon at this level, we had to analyze the kinds of second-hand accounts that were then readily available to citizens and policy makers. Thus we subscribed to a clipping service that gave us a compilation of local newspaper articles dealing with drugs or their control and gathered data from national sources on the number and content

of articles dealing with the crisis that appeared in popular magazines and professional journals. We monitored the number of drug arrests, both local and national, and charted trends in local and federal support to law enforcement and treatment agencies. Like everyone else, we also watched television and listened attentively to politicians and other pundits as they described the horrors of drugs and the demise of our honored way of life.

Early in 1971, I noticed the first evidence that the Drug Crisis, at least locally, might have reached its peak. The evidence was so slim, consisting only of a three-month drop in the number of drug arrests, that the other members of my research staff were unwilling to believe that it was anything more than a random statistical fluctuation. Nevertheless, I warned the clinic for which we worked that a decline in drug activity might be in the offing. The suggestion was roundly dismissed. Not until the next year, when admissions also began to drop (see figure 5), did the clinical staff take cognizance of my hypothesis and even then few were willing to accord it any validity. My research staff, on the other hand, had by then become more or less convinced, as arrest rates had continued to decline throughout the year.

The ebbing of the crisis had several ramifications, not the least of which was the potential erosion of the treatment clinic's economic foundations. Like any threatened organization, it fought back. "Everyone knows," the clinic's director told the press and a Senate hearing, "that drug use is increasing. The decline in drug arrests is just a sign that law enforcement agencies are not doing their proper job." Local arrests for drugs (marijuana and other nonopiate drugs, but not heroin) increased the following year, and admissions to the clinic went up the year following that. Both resumed their decline in subsequent years.

This and similar episodes made it clear that the macro and micro elements of the Drug Crisis indeed did affect each other. Without the activities of drug users and social control agents, the crisis would have had no empirical referent, yet without the

crisis atmosphere generated by society, drug users and control agents would not have had the extraordinary moral climate that came to define drug-related activities in those years. Because of this, Lidz and Walker have concluded that the key to understanding crises of this kind lies in a dynamic concept of morality – that is, in the socially based schema operating at the time that determines the rightness and wrongness of acts, actors, interactions, and settings.

Since Durkheim's decisive analysis of social solidarity (1933), sociologists have been aware that shared morality is a critical foundation for social integration. Nevertheless, twentieth-century sociology transformed Durkheim's generative concept of morality into the more static concepts of culture, norms, folkways, and mores, concepts which are not nearly as satisfactory as Durkheim's for explaining solidarity, particularly the solidarity of highly differentiated social systems.

This volume begins, then, with Durkheim's thesis that morality provides points of common orientation that make sustained interaction possible, particularly interaction between people whose socially recognized "self-interests" are divergent. It is the same view that Erikson takes when he suggests (1977: 82) that the term "culture" be applied, "not only to the customary ways in which people induce conformity in behavior and outlook but also to the customary ways in which they organize diversity."

So stated, however, an immense question remains: how are new moral schemes developed, tested, and maintained? To answer this, Lidz and Walker follow a path similar to that taken by Erikson in his further remarks about the inherent "*axis of variation* that cuts through the center of a culture's space and draws attention to the diversities arrayed along it" (1977: 82).

> The forms of contrast experienced by a particular people are one of the identifying motifs of their culture, and if one wants to understand how any given culture works, one should inquire into its characteristic counterpoints as well as its central values. The axes of variation cutting across a culture are not only sources of tension but gradients along which responses to social change are likely to take place. When individual persons or groups of people undergo what

> appear to be dramatic shifts in character, skidding across the entire spectrum of human experience from one extreme to the other, it is only reasonable to suspect that the potential had been there all along—hidden away in the folds of the culture, perhaps, but an intensive element of the larger pattern nonetheless. Such shifts do not represent a drastic change of heart, not a total reversal of form, but a simple slide along one of the axes of variation characteristic of that social setting [1977: 83-84].

Within this context, I am inclined to view the 1960s and 1970s not as rents in the fabric of society but as a temporary unfolding of its moral garments. Black militants and Flower Children, Green Berets and draft resisters, ghetto rioters and drug addicts are seen thus not as aberrant cultural forms but as temporary outposts on the axes of variation that have always defined American cultural space.

The social climate today is less hectic than it was ten years ago and probably looks to most people to have more in common with 1960 than with 1970. I do not share this view, contending instead that all three eras had more continuity than is apparent on the surface. The continuity was that moral core, in all its dimensions and complexity, that defines American culture. What appeared to be diversity was simply a particular epoch during which underlying moral schemes were exposed and iterated. Whether or not the moral core itself changed in subtle ways during these years is not so clear. I suspect, however, that it may have, making possible what now appear to be several rather permanent social changes: changes in the status of blacks, women, and other minorities; changes in sex roles and the composition of families; and changes also, perhaps, in the concern Americans show for their bodies and their physical environment.

These, however, are speculations that go well beyond this volume, which is addressed more modestly to but one of the "crises" that occured in the turbulent years of the late 1960s and early 1970s. By analyzing this crisis within a dynamic concept of morality, the authors show that the drugs were not an orthogonal event brought on by a sudden and mysterious