

SKID ROW: A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

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CHAPTER I

NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The American industrial society harbors many conflicts in a social organization wracked with "growing pains." During early industrialization, the glitter of urban life seemed to lure thousands of people to the city in search of a better life. Those who left their rural roots came from varied soci-economic backgrounds. Many rural immigrants had imaginary dreams to pursue, cherished hopes to dare, and alien worlds to conquer. Although many were victorious in their ambitions, there were some whose dreams were left as visions. For one reason or another, these victims of circumstance failed to maintain a subsistent income. Consequently, one alternative was to congregate in economically depressed urban areas. Traditionally, these areas, the end of the social line, have acquired the handle of Skid Row.

Since the birth of Skid Row at the close of the Civil War, the label "Skid Row" has come to denote a district in the city, usually located near the Central Business District, where there is a concentration of substandard hotels and rooming houses charging very low rates and catering primarily to men with low incomes. These hotels are intermingled with numerous taverns and cheap liquor stores, inexpensive restaurants, pawnshops and second-hand stores, and missions.

In most housing on Skid Row, health conditions are poor. Many are overcrowded, rarely cleaned and there are many opportunities for disease contagion.

The characature of the contemporary Skid Rower still holds essentially true to the traditional form; throughout the years he has remained both destitute and single. For the most part he has or claims no kin. Often, these transients are elderly, disabled and retired men who were caught in the squeeze between spiraling postwar inflation and a fixed pension or welfare benefits. Outcast by accepted standards, degraded and facing an ever-widening gulf between himself and society, the Skid Rower has nevertheless managed to evolve on his own behalf a community of sorts, a community which shelters, befriends, clothes, and feeds him, and even keeps him supplied with drink.

As a specialized type of collecting place -- where the inhabitants are frequently alcoholics, Skid Row is subject to rather heavy surveillance by the police. Even though Skid Row men make up only a small percent of the total population of alcoholics in most cities, these shabby, often filthy men are usually the more visibly objectionable among the heavy drinkers' population. Thus, the police are as much of an element in the Skid Row environment as are their bottles of alcohol, flop houses, "greasy-spoon" restaurants, cheap liquor stores and missions.

Statement of the Problem

The central task of this study is to describe the socio-cultural dimensions of life on Skid Row. To accomplish this task, the

socio-cultural dimensions of Skid Row life are divided into three primary components. The first component is the Skid Row environment which includes a description of the physical structure, interviews with those people who own or operate Skid Row enterprises, and a description of the everyday street-life.

The second component is the urban nomad. The urban nomad is an umbrella term for such designated labels as winos, derelicts, transients, bums, and hoboes. The urban nomad component involves interviews with transients on Skid Row, in the city detention center, and statements from various people on Skid Row about the transients.

Finally, the third component is the peace-keeping efforts of the police on Skid Row. Interviews with patrolmen on the beat, police administrators, and judges probe the arrest, court, and incarceration procedures as they relate to urban nomads.

In conclusion, historically there have been many studies of Skid Row. These studies have characterized Skid Row in many ways. For example, Park and Burgess (1925) depicted Skid Row as a highly mobile and transient area of the city couched in a milieu of social disorganization. Other studies (cf. Spradley, 1970; Wallace, 1965; Wiseman, 1970) have primarily focused on the urban nomad in transition.

By describing Skid Row according to the three components previously discussed, the intent of this study is to illuminate the nature of the social organization or social disorganization of Skid Row.

Character of the Study

The investigation which follows is a descriptive analysis of the phenomena of Skid Row. The specific research techniques used are direct

observation and in-depth interviews. These methods are one manner in which an observer may gain partial insight into the perspectives of the target group. An experience which may accompany the research procedure is Max Weber's concept of "Verstehen." "Verstehen," in short, is the partial resocialization of the observer to the significant symbol of the target group. The observer, through direct observation and in-depth interviews, may become somewhat acculturated to the significant symbols of the target group, and thereby come to understand behaviours and statements from their point of view. In this study, the significant symbols of the various people on Skid Row are labeled "group perspectives."

The group perspectives of the people on the Skid Row are analyzed via Malinowski's (1966) concepts of needs, forms, and functions. According to Malinowski, people have certain basic needs which they attempt to satisfy through various forms of action. The relationship between perceived need and formal action Malinowski calls function. In this schemata, if the form of action satisfies the need, the action form is said to be functional. The degree to which the action form satisfies the perceived need is measured on a continuum from functional to dysfunctional.

Finally, the relationship among need, form, and function is labeled a vital sequence. Malinowski states that patterns of vital sequences are indicators of social organization. In this study, the data generated are viewed primarily as vital sequences which were catalogued on Skid Row.

In turn, the last stage of the research design is to assimilate the research findings (vital sequences) into a conceptual framework.

Organization of the Study

The first chapter generally orients the focus of the study of Skid Row in the introduction, character of the study, and statement of the problem. Chapter II reviews the body of knowledge concerning Skid Row. The research design is presented in Chapter III, including limitations of the study. Chapter IV describes the three components of the socio-cultural dimensions of Skid Row life -- the Skid Row environment, the urban nomad, and the peace-keeping efforts of the police. Chapter V is a portrait of an urban nomad. Finally, the summary and conclusions are in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER II

SKID ROW

Introduction

The review of the literature dates to the post Civil War era in American society. Most of the literature is descriptive in its approach to Skid Row. However, several sources analyze Skid Row and its inhabitants with theoretical consideration. The purpose of this chapter is to present background literature for the framework to be used in the analysis of Skid Row which focuses in four major areas:

- (1) The Etiology of Skid Row. An introduction to the etiology of Skid Row and the unattached male.
- (2) Skid Row. A discussion of the Skid Row area.
- (3) The Urban Nomad. A discussion of the vagrant and his reasons for inhabiting Skid Row.
- (4) Law Enforcement on Skid Row. A discussion of law enforcement agencies and their relationship to Skid Row.

The literature review in this chapter will represent an overall treatment of Skid Row with no preference given to type of research conducted or theoretical point-of-view taken.

The Etiology of Skid Row

During the post Civil War reconstruction period, many Americans were left without homes or farms to return to. The devastation of the War ripped the country internally, leaving the homeless to roam the countryside. Gradually, Wallace (1965) indicates, the homeless gathered in the less expensive sections of various towns across the country. In these sections of towns, relief kitchens were constructed to help feed the thousands of homeless. Because the Civil War involved most of the country at the time, the plight which affected the homeless was fairly standard in most towns.

In addition, there were several other conditions which led to the eventual formulation of Skid Row. First, the tide of immigration from Europe reached its peak in the latter 1800's. As many as a half million immigrants further saturated American cities and added to the burden of the homeless poor. Secondly, as Wallace (1965:15) states, the economy erupted:

Then, in 1873, panic, ushered in by Black September, hit the Nation. Mercantile failures soared and unemployment rose to encompass between thirty and forty percent of the population. Again there were bread lines, soup kitchens, shelters, and other means of emergency relief. Homelessness had turned into something just short of a national way of life -- a way of life which was to give birth to that soon familiar section in most American cities called Skid Row.

Although the stage was set for the creation of Skid Row, a catalyst was seemingly needed to finalize the procedure. Rostow (1960) indicates several stages which he thinks were necessary for the nation to become industrialized and were initiated by the development of adequate economic and technological institutions capable of catapulting

science into a progressive era. In American society, the institutions considered to be prerequisites for this technological expansion were developed around the turn of the century and the wheels of progress began to rotate. Moreover, this stage of industrialization was followed by a "take-off" stage -- when the economic growth of the society sensed the stimulation brought on by the systematic application of scientific technology. Rooney (1970) suggests that this period of industrialization was a period of rapid social change, with a change in emphasis from an agricultural to an industrial employment market. Rooney (1970:14) writes:

A critical resource for the initial industrial development of the frontier was the availability of large numbers of unskilled men without families. Logging, mining, and railroad construction industries required a labor force of unskilled males who were willing to take employment on a seasonal or irregular basis in widely separated and often isolated areas, to accept crude living conditions, and to labor long hours for low pay. The frontier work camps and their satellite institutions altered traditional systems of community relationships and social control through the aggregation and ecological separation of low-status, unattached males. For these men, occasional drinking sprees in nearby towns compensated for the bleak life of the work camps.

So, the "take off" phase of rapid social changes seems to have finalized the birth of Skid Row with entrance to the city of large numbers of unattached males.

The unattached male, a roving vagabond, has been considered a "social problem" for hundreds of years. Historically, this group of societal outcasts has been labeled with many terms including vagrant, hobo, tramp, beggar, drunk, alcoholic, loafer, and others. Historically, this group of men have been shunned from society as they did not continuously abide by conventional cultural values. Perhaps they were

feared and treated as outcasts. Wallace (1965) indicates that various societies have attempted many and countless punitive measures against the Skid Row vagrant to induce him to see the error of his ways. Ribton-Turner (1887:330-331) states:

The vagrant has been threatened with every species of punishment known to the law, and he has at different times been stocked, scourged, branded, imprisoned, and hanged, but he still survives with his old tricks as merrily as ever.

According to Levinson (1963) and Bahr (1970), there are different types of homeless men which account for the many labels which have identified them. However, there are two broad categories into which they place homeless men. First, there are those men who are grouped by their spatial or ecological residence. Secondly, homeless men are referred to (cf. Bahr, 1970) as vagrants who are isolated or unattached regardless of their socio-economic status or place of residence. This study will be primarily concerned with those men in the former group, i.e., those men who live on Skid Row. Bahr (1970:16) comments on the etiology of the term "Skid Row" as it applies to unattached men:

Becoming a conspicuous social entity in a distinctive urban ecological area, the unattached men were labeled members of 'hobohemia.' Later their neighborhood was dubbed 'skid road,' the term deriving from the logging camp road down which logs were skidded to a body of water for convenient transportation to a sawmill (Holbrook, 1938:163; Morgan, 1951:9). Via simultaneous diffusion over the country and phonetic drift ('road' became 'row') the urban areas containing unattached male outcasts acquired the name they now bear: 'skid row.'

Finally, the destruction of the Civil War, the economic conditions of American society, and the development of the unattached male were conditions which mingled in the melting pot of American culture, settled in depressed urban areas, and acquired the handle of Skid Row.

Skid Row

Many cities in the United States have a section of town which lends itself to the descriptive denotation of Skid Row. Bogue (1963:1) discusses the etiology of Skid Row:

The term 'Skid Row' (in the West it is called 'Skid Road') has come to denote a district in the city where there is a concentration of substandard hotels and rooming houses charging very low rates and catering primarily to men with low incomes.

In a slightly more graphic discussion, Wallace (1965:13) describes Skid Row as "that collection of saloons, pawn shops, cheap restaurants, second-hand shops, barber colleges, all-night movies, missions, flop houses, and dilapidated hotels which caters specifically to the needs of the down-and-out, the bum, the alcoholic and the drifter." Furthermore, Skid Row is usually located in or near the central business district of the city (cf. Park, et al., 1925). Bittner (1967:704) indicates a more romantic interpretation of Skid Row when he states "though it is located in the heart of civilization, it is viewed as containing aspects of the primordial jungle, calling for missionary activities and offering opportunities for exotic adventure." However, this melodramatic account of Skid Row is not shared by Harrington (1963:88) as he writes in an account of walking down a street in the Skid Row section of New York known as the Bowery:

Over the whole place there hung the smell of urine. The men lived out of doors when they didn't have the money for a flop. Sometimes, in the winter, they passed out in the snow or crawled into a doorway. In the summer the stench from some of the favorite haunts was all but overpowering.

As the descriptions of Skid Row indicate, there are wide variations in points-of-view among authors who write about Skid Row. Anderson (1963) and Spradley (1970) caution the social scientist to the dangers involved in social research. They indicate that various interpretations of Skid Row life can occur depending on the value orientation of the observer. That is, the degree of familiarity with the target group helps determine whether or not the observer is an insider or outsider. Znaniecki (1970) emphasizes that social relationships and significant symbols are valid primarily to those who interact in the relationships and use the symbols. Thus, if Skid Row is to be evaluated in terms of the symbols people use on Skid Row, a discussion of group perspectives on Skid Row designated in the literature may be of some value.

Skid Row is usually depicted as a haven for social outcasts who were not able to consistently conform to the value expectations of larger society. Bahr (1970:5) remarks:

Skid Row traditionally provided an oasis within the larger community where the subsistence cost of living was lower than anywhere else and the ordinary norms or urban behavior were suspended. The environment does not offer the homeless man comfort or safety or even freedom from interference, but it does permit him to live in a certain style, whose major components are isolations of one's time, and the absence of compulsory obligations toward others.

The recurring motif of a dysjunction between Skid Row values and the values of larger society is a major theme which pervades Skid Row literature. Moreover, both larger society and those on Skid Row appear to view the dysjunction as a dialectical condition of normal versus abnormal. Furthermore, the deviation of Skid Row values is usually labeled abnormal or nonconforming. The notion of abnormality is revealed by Bittner (1967:705):

Basically, however, Skid Row is perceived as the natural habitat of people who lack the capabilities and commitments to live 'normal' lives on a sustained basis. The presence of these people defines the nature of social reality in the area. In general, and especially in casual encounters, the presumption of incompetence and of the disinclination to be 'normal' is the leading theme for the interpretations of all actions and relations. Not only do people approach one another in this manner, but presumably they also expect to be approached in this way, and they conduct themselves accordingly.

In addition, Edwin H. Sutherland proposed a theory of "differential association" in which he argues that criminality is not a function of a biological deficiency or psychological disorder. Rather, criminality is viewed as socially created and therefore a special category of learned behavior. Sutherland's theory coincides with other theorists who maintain that criminality is socially created through the social process. Other theorists who agree with Sutherland include Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay, Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, William F. Whyte, Solomon Kobrin, Frederic Thrasher and Herbert Asbury.

An attempt to explain the failure of Skid Row residents to become socialized to values of larger society is the "under-socialization" argument taken by Strauss (1948). The rationale for his argument is that these men have failed to adapt to "normal" patterns of social life. Those on Skid Row have difficulty establishing social relationships which conform to the values of larger society. Strauss (1948:145) depicts the conditions of those who appear to lack adjustment to the shared expectations of larger society:

Deficiently socialized or desocialized persons are usually deprived of the opportunity of sharing experiences with others -- of belonging to social groups and participating in social activities. They are also deprived of such important personal needs as affection, prestige, the feeling of security, and the rewarding aspects of identifying with others. The satisfaction

of these needs is usually achieved only through the association with other people. Because they have not learned the ways of society, undersocialized persons are insecure, and acts of sharing become distasteful, difficult, and even dangerous for them. For this reason they generally choose a way of life in which they can avoid associations of sharing.

There are other explanations of Skid Row which contradict the "undersocialization" hypothesis. Strauss (1948) maintains that although Skid Row bums seem inadequate in the social arena of larger society and are thus fleeing from interpersonal contacts; social interactions do in fact take place on Skid Row. For example, the activity of wine-drinking predominantly occurs within groups which are made up of webs of social relations. The formation of "bottle-gangs" (cf. Docter, 1967; Peterson, et al., 1958; Rubington, 1968; Spradley, 1970) includes predetermined actions which structure social contacts and organize social expectation. Rooney (1961:448) argues this idea:

Men of Skid Row clearly do not participate in social relations in a manner which characterizes the other classes of American society. Close examination reveals, however, that even the most acculturated groups of Skid Row drinkers manifest consistent efforts to structure situations so as to involve interpersonal contact and emotional reinforcement.

Wallace (1965:182) also comments on the social relations of Skid Row bums:

To be completely acculturated in skid row subculture is to be drunk -- since skid rowers place strong emphasis on group drinking and the acculturated person is by definition a conformist. The drunk has rejected every single one of society's established values and wholly conformed to the basic values of skid row subculture. Food, shelter, employment, appearance, health and all other considerations are subordinated by the drunk to the group's need for alcohol. This group constitutes the drunk's total social world and it in turn bestows upon him any status, acceptance, or security he may possess.

A further argument is declared by Jackson and Connor (1953). They feel that men drift to Skid Row for emotional support and successful interpersonal relations which they do not find in larger society. They conclude that a feeling of acceptance and understanding exists on Skid Row that is not present in society-at-large. Thus, Skid Row bums satisfy their needs on Skid Row more adequately than they could elsewhere. Jackson and Connor (1953:472-473) also conclude:

There is a common definition among the alcoholics that Skid Row is a refuge, that is, that it meets their emotional needs. From his group, the alcoholic receives unquestioning acceptance, and only those demands are made upon him which he is willing and able to meet. The group's unqualified acceptance, as compared to acceptance in a non-Skid Row group and its functions in enabling the alcoholic to escape feelings of inadequacy for a time, are recognized by some alcoholics. On Skid Row, his failures, his successes, and the other criteria for acceptance in the larger society becomes irrelevant.

This perspective lends itself to yet a further interpretation of Skid Row acculturation. Wallace (1965) suggests the Skid Row "recruit" must be gradually socialized into the ways of the area, while at the same time being gradually isolated from contact with the "outside world." Eventually, he becomes socialized to Skid Row society and becomes unfit to live elsewhere. As the Skid Rower withdraws from society-at-large, his chances for resocialization, rehabilitation and treatment lessen. Bogue (1963:406) states it this way: "Skid Row contains the only institutions that continue to care and hope for the individual when all other resources have been exhausted."

The Urban Nomad

At any time of the day, Skid Row is permeated with men who may be gathered in groups, sitting on the curb, or passed out on the sidewalk.

Anderson (1923:215) gives this account:

Most of them spend their leisure time shuffling along the street reading the menu cards in the cheap restaurants, or in other forms of "window shopping." The homeless man as he meanders along the street, is looking for something to break the monotony.

Wallace (1965:144) also comments:

The Skid Rower does not bathe, eat regularly, dress respectably, marry or raise children, attend school, vote, own property, or regularly live in the same place. He does little work of any kind. He does not even steal. The Skid Rower does nothing, he just is. He is everything that all the rest of us try not to be.

Although Wallace gives a stagnant view of Skid Row life, vagrants innovate their surroundings to their comfort during inclement seasons in many ways. Morgan (1951:225) testifies to the ingenuity of the vagrant:

One residence was two stories tall: the others followed the contour of the tideflats. In a few of the shacks the only furnishings were bedclothes: a heap of gunny sacks, three old overcoats, a pair of mattresses, one to be slept on, the other over. The sociologist was startled to find that one man has made a bed out of a coffin. Another slept under a verdant strip of artificial lawn stolen from a window display.

Several other versions characterize life in the Skid Row area. A synthesis of several authors is presented by Wiseman (1970:9):

Many studies of the Skid Row regulars reflect a similar theme: the alcoholic ambles through the day, alone a great deal of the time, sleeping in a cheap hotel, drinking in a tavern if he can afford it, or with a bottle gang if he is short on funds. He eats in a "greasy spoon" restaurant, watches television in the lobby of his hotel (if he is lucky enough to have one), and goes to a reading room to keep warm or drops in on a mission for soup and salvation.

Finally, Bogue (1963:117) yields an impression of the emotional life on Skid Row:

The major finding of this study is that Skid Row life is very different from what may be the popular impression. Instead of being a carefree, anarchistic seventh heaven, life for the typical Skid Row resident is boring, insecure, and often lonely. Fear of robbery, worry about where the next meal is coming from, alcoholic shakes from need of a drink, physical discomfort, despondency, and self-hate are daily feelings of these men.

Moreover, Wiseman (1970) and Anderson (1923) deal with the forces which lead the vagrant to Skid Row. Anderson (1923:61) summarizes the most popular theories:

From the records and observations of a great many men the reasons why men leave home to fall under several headings: (a) seasonal work and unemployment, (b) industrial inadequacy, (c) defects in the personality, (d) crises in the life of the person, (e) racial or national discrimination, and (f) wanderlust.

The first force refers to the problem of finding work. Many tramps find work which is seasonal, such as fruit picking. While this type of labor will provide a short-term financial income, there is a lack of steady employment. While others who have had employment for some time may experience periods of unemployment and be without a source of income. This latter condition was most significantly manifested during the Depression. Consequently, Skid Row had one of its largest populations during that time. The second force, industrial inadequacy, is somewhat related to the first. That is, industrial inadequacy includes those men who are feeble minded, physically handicapped, ill, old, or who are considered too unstable to maintain steady employment. These men lack the necessary mental or physical criteria for the labor force. Their limitations exclude them from the opportunity of sustaining a subsistent standard of living.

The first two forces, seasonal employment and industrial inadequacy, are grounded in an economic base. In either case, the

men who suffer from these maladies cannot maintain an income which will suffice by the standards of larger society. Thus, they must find a place to live which is consistent with what income they have.

Inevitably, they resort to the cheapest residence in the city, the Skid Row area. Bogue (1963:71) finds the economic motive at the heart of the problem:

According to the men themselves, their objective for moving to Skid Row were overwhelmingly economic. Almost 80 percent of all men interviewed claimed they first came to Skid Row under economics duress.

The third force put forth by Anderson (1923) concerns defects of the personality. Moreover, those men who are considered psychologically defective do not have the mental capacities to accomplish "normal" social relationships in larger society. A weakness with this argument, however, is its ambiguous verbage as to just what constitutes emotional instability or a personality defect. Bogue does not make this clear.

The fourth element in the schemata focuses on the occurrence of major crises in the lives of vagrants prior to their arrival on Skid Row. This force assumes that tragic incidents in some men's lives will cause them to leave their normal social relationships and emotional support systems in favor of isolation. In such cases, these men may see themselves as non-productive members of society and as failures to those with whom they sustain intimate social relationships. Consequently many men choose to lose themselves in the anonymity of Skid Row.

The fifth interpretation of social forces which lead to Skid Row is racial and national discrimination. In this instance, members of minority groups are discriminated against in areas such as employment and wages. National discrimination, however, is sometimes precipitated

by discriminatory housing practices and employment abuses. Strauss (1948:43) describes the representation of the Irish on Skid Row in the 1940's:

Sixty-five percent said that they were born as Catholics, the rest were either Protestant or non-denominational. The high incidence of Catholics is to be explained by the presence of a large number of Irish among the homeless.

Lastly, wanderlust is a mythical proposition thought by many romantics to be the etiology for the Skid Row bum. Wanderlust is seen as the desire for new experience. It typifies those who desire freedom for the moment and the lust for unique experience. Several writers (cf. London, 1926; Flynt, 1899; Minehan, 1941) have glorified the life of the tramp in prophetic verse. Feied (1964:54) summarized the life of the tramp:

He is a man in whom the wanderlust is the strongest lust; a reckless, perambulating soldier of fortune. Tramps are often called hoboes or bums, but although all three are migrants, they are not the same thing. Ben L. Reitman, who tramped a good deal himself, remarked that a hobo works and wanders, a tramp dreams and wanders, and a bum drinks and wanders.

Finally, Robert Merton's "modes of adaptation" may also apply to the etiology of Skid Row bums. Merton states that social and cultural structures define legitimate goals and they determine and regulate acceptable modes of reaching these goals. Merton proposes five modes of adaption for people who accept success goals and attempt prescribed means to achieve them. First, people who accept cultural goals and attempt institutional means to attain the goals are conformists according to Merton. Second, those who accept cultural goals but do not attempt institutional means to attain the goals are said to be innovators by Merton. Third, a ritualistic adaption is accomplished by people who attempt institutional means but do not accept cultural

goals. Fourth, retreatism is a type of adaptation in which people do not accept cultural goals or attempt the institutional means to attain them. Skid Row men may fit best into this type of adaptation. Lastly, rebellionists both accept and reject cultural goals and institutional means. They wish to set up a new society with new cultural goals and new institutional means to attain them.

Law Enforcement on Skid Row

In American cities, the task of social containment is essentially deferred to law enforcement agencies. Bittner (1967:704) states:

The specific task of containment has been left to the police. That this task pressed upon the police some rather special duties has never come under explicit consideration, either from the government that expects control or the police departments that implement it. Instead, the prevailing method of carrying out the task is to assign patrolmen to the area on a fairly permanent basis and to allow them to work out their own ways of running things.

Several sociologists indicate that the peace-keeping task of the police is especially difficult on Skid Row. First, the rate of recidivism is extremely high among the vagrant population (cf. Pittman and Gordon, 1958; Spradley, 1970; Wallace, 1965; Wiseman, 1970). Secondly, Bittner (1967:705) points out that Skid Row bums have little future orientation or commitment to long-term goals.

Just as the past is seen by the policeman as having only the most attenuated relevance to the present, so the future implications of present situations are said to be generally devoid of prospective coherence. No venture, especially no joint venture, can be said to have a strongly predictable future in line with its initial objectives. It is a matter of adventitious circumstance whether or not matters go as anticipated. That which is not within the grasp of momentary control is outside of practical social reality.

In addition, Merton's (1957) idea of anticipatory socialization may of some value. Merton states that people who want to become members of non-membership groups, they may go through a type of anticipatory socialization in which they assume the values of the non-membership groups to which they aspire. Furthermore, Merton writes that those who undergo anticipatory socialization are usually more readily accepted to the group and make an easier adjustment to it. It appears to Merton that anticipatory socialization is functional to the individual only within a relatively open social structure in terms of mobility. In such structures, attitudinal shifts of value orientations would be matched by actual changes in social status. In a relatively closed social structure, however, anticipatory socialization can be dysfunctional. That is, if members of one group take as a positive frame of reference the values of another group from which they are excluded, the excluded persons may fall victim to aspirations they cannot achieve and hopes they cannot satisfy.

The third difficulty in keeping the peace relates to the covert task of interpreting the complicated system of laws which define the tolerance limits on Skid Row activities. According to Wallace (1965: 89), there are more than thirty definitions of the statute on vagrancy. Those persons who qualify for arrest include:

the common law vagrant, the healthy beggar, the night walker, the dissolute misspender of time who habitually misspends his time by frequenting disreputable places, e.g., bars, gambling houses, houses of prostitution, the common drunkard, the charlatan, the common brawler, and the expelled non-resident.

Wallace further discloses the ambiguity of the law as it pertains to drunkenness. Arrests for public drunkenness are made under three loosely defined situations. First, drunks are arrested if they are making

spectacles of themselves. This criterion varies considerably from situation to situation. Secondly, drunks may be arrested when patrolmen feel that they constitute a "danger" to themselves. Perceived dangers to personal health include "passing out" on the railroad tracks, in the street, or in any setting where there is the possibility of bodily injury. Finally, drunks are arrested when the police make group arrests while "cleaning up" the Skid Row area. In this case, group arrests are made with the "paddy wagon." Drunks are frequently arrested in groups prior to conventions, fairs, or large celebrations.

In conclusion, there are four primary areas of literature review germane to this study. First, the etiology of Skid Row lays the historical groundwork for the introduction to Skid Row. The second area is Skid Row as others have seen it. The third area is a profile of the Urban Nomad including the lifestyle of the vagrant and his reasons for inhabiting Skid Row. Lastly, a discussion of Skid Row literature would not be complete without the topic of law enforcement on Skid Row. Thus the intent of this chapter is to set the theoretical stage for a study of Skid Row.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Problem

The task of this chapter is to delineate the research design to be used in describing and interpreting socio-cultural dimensions of life on Skid Row. Existing literature and my own personal experience indicate that a meaningful way to confront the phenomena presented by Skid Row is to focus on three major components - - the Skid Row environment, the urban nomads, and the involvement of the police on Skid Row - - and the interrelationships among these components.

Research Design

Becker and Geer (1960) suggest that descriptive studies can be organized into three methodological operations: (1) the selection and definition of the phenomena, germane concepts, and indices, (2) the analysis of the frequency and distribution of the phenomena, and (3) the assimilation of the research findings into an organized whole.

Selection and Definition of the Phenomena, Germane Concepts, and Indices

The phenomena which are chosen for this study are socio-cultural dimensions of life on Skid Row. The socio-cultural dimensions of Skid Row life are conceptualized into three components: the Skid Row

environment, urban nomads, and the police on Skid Row. These three components are considered to be the essential aspects of this study. Further elaboration and definition of these components will appear later in this chapter.

In order to study these phenomena, germane concepts serve as guidelines to view life on Skid Row. First, in the course of sociological study, when researchers encounter people who use significant symbols foreign to the socio-cultural backgrounds of the researchers, they are acting as "outsiders" to the interaction and behavior which they observe. Murray Wax (1967: 325) states "the student begins 'outside' the interaction, confronting behaviors he finds bewildering and inexplicable: the actors are oriented to a world of meanings that the observer does not grasp." Thus, interpretations by researchers of the observed behavior may contain imputed meanings, symbols, and values, different from the understood meanings, symbols, and values of those people engaged in the interaction and behavior. In these cases, research findings are primarily generated from the minds of the researchers rather than from the data of the study. As a partial precaution to this dilemma, Murray Wax (1967) critiques Weber's (1947) concept of *Verstehen*. Its primary meaning includes the idea of the observation and theoretical interpretation of the subjective states of mind of actors. Weber (1947) writes:

Sociology is a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a casual understanding of its course and effects. In action is included all human behaviour when and in so far as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it.

Weber seems to be including the relationship between subjective meaning and social action. *Verstehen*, according to Wax, is an experience in which the researcher becomes partially acculturated into the environment

of the people under study through participant observation, depth-interviews, and other methodological operations. Wax (1967:327) indicates that:

...secondary socialization does not supply the field worker with the same authority as the native. In participating as he observes, the field worker undergoes a secondary socialization (or resocialization) which allows him to perceive the major categories of objects of the culture and to understand the major types of relationships and interactions. Thus, he gains something of an "insiders" view that is extremely difficult to acquire with such secondary devices as structured questionnaires.

In using Verstehen, the researcher uses several techniques to try to gain insight into the data from the perspective of the participants and interviews with informants. Furthermore, Verstehen is the experience which the researcher has as he gradually becomes acculturated into the environment of his study (cf. Wax, 1967).

A concept which is closely related to Verstehen is the idea of "group perspective." Moreover, the objective of the observer is to ascertain and perceive, as closely as possible, the perspectives of the groups under study. Becker and Geer (1960:280) state their interpretation of group perspective:

We use the term "perspective" to describe a set of ideas and actions used by a group in solving collective problems. The content of a group's perspective includes a definition of the environment and the problems it presents as seen by group members, an expression of what members expect to derive from the environment, and the ideas and actions group members employ in dealing with the problem situation.

In order to gain the perspective of a particular group, Wiseman (1970: 270) suggests that the researcher follow this guide:

1. He observes everyday action and attempts to reconstruct the definition of the situation on which "natives" appear to base their activities.
2. He asks questions of the "natives" to find out "what is going on" and what sort of action is expected to ensue as a result.

3. He finds special informants. These are people who, by virtue of some official capacity in the world under study, or because of some marginal status that makes them unusually sensitive to everyday expectations, can give the researcher a great deal of insight (the real "low down") about some society.

In summary, a relationship exists among the concepts of Verstehen and group perspective. That is, as a researcher employs various research methods in a sociological study, and if he becomes acculturated to the meanings, symbols, and values of the target group he will have the experience of Verstehen in which the interactions and behavior are viewed from the perspective of the participating groups. Hence, interpretations and research findings of the researcher will be a description which approaches the way insiders define their own identity, environment, and lifestyle.

Although the researcher attempts to define the socio-cultural environment from the perspectives of the groups which are a part of the study, he also employs several indices to illuminate the three components of this study. The indices are not adopted to force the research data into a preconceived mold. Rather, they are used as tools to approach the study from a sociological perspective. The first concern is to identify Skid Row itself. Two geographical theories of city provide guidance. The first is the Concentric Zone theory of Park and Burgess (1925). Park and Burgess posit the theory that cities grow and expand according to concentric zones. The inner-most zone contains the central business district. The second zone is called the "zone of transition." According to the concentric zone schemata, zone 2 is a transition area of the city between the central business district and the inner-most battery of residence housing. Zone 2 is said to contain high mobility, social disorder, low-cost housing, industry and Skid Row.

Secondly, is Hoyt's Sector Theory (1943). It is Hoyt's thesis that cities can best be described by a series of sectors. Within this theory, the primary structural characteristics of the city are ecological barriers which serve to differentiate various sectors. Hoyt believes that cities expand in sectors which are bounded by ecological barriers rather than concentric zones. Thus, as the city expands, transitory areas of the city occur nearest the inner parts of the outward expansion. Therefore, the Skid Row area would be near the inner city and contained in a sector bounded by ecological barriers. These two geographical theories will be instrumental in identifying the physical and structural characteristics of Skid Row.

While the Concentric Zone and Sector theories outline the geographical dimensions of life on Skid Row, other indices are necessary to "ferret out" data regarding the socio-cultural dimensions of the Skid Row environment. Three such indices are needs, forms, and functions (cf. Malinowski, 1944). Malinowski (1944:75) states that people have certain basic needs imperative to their survival, "We can define the concept of basic needs as the environmental and biological conditions which must be fulfilled for the survival of the individual and the group." Malinowski further states that people initiate forms of behavior designed to satiate their needs. Thus, the forms of behavior in which people engage are functional in terms of satiating basic needs. Malinowski labels the integral relationship between needs, forms, and functions a vital sequence. Patterns of vital sequences, in turn, are indicators of social organization. An example may help to clarify Malinowski's concept of vital sequence. From his perspective, one aspect of the definition of the wino would include a need for alcohol.

The need may originate from physical, psychological, or social factors; or from any combination of these factors. In any case, the forms of behavior in which the wino engages such as going to the liquor store, purchasing a bottle, and drinking its contents, would be seen as attempts by the wino to temporarily satiate his need. Hence, the forms of behavior in which the wino engages are interpreted as being functional to the satiation of the need. Malinowski labels this integral relationship among needs, forms, and functions a vital sequence.

Further, Malinowski suggests that vital sequences are indicators of social organization. To illustrate how vital sequences mold together into a social organization, a liquor store on Skid Row will be used. From Malinowski's perspective, the liquor store owner has a need for a livelihood. In turn, the store owner's efforts are also viewed as functional to the wino's need for alcohol. Finally, the wino's need for alcohol is viewed as functional to the liquor store owner's livelihood. This integration or mutual interdependence of vital sequences is an example of the nature of a social organization which is based on needs, forms, and functions. Therefore, as the researcher employs the indices of needs, forms, and functions to the socio-cultural dimensions of life on Skid Row, the identification of vital sequences is one framework which may shed light upon the social organization of Skid Row.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions will help the reader understand the concepts and indices previously discussed in this chapter.

1. Perspective - a set of ideas and actions used by a group in solving collective problems.

2. Verstehen - an experience which accompanies the inter-actional process between "natives" of an environment and an "outsider" in which the outsider becomes partially acculturated to the significant symbols of the "natives" and begins to perceive the environment of the "natives" in the same way as the "natives" perceive their environment.
3. Social Disorganization - when there are inadequacies or failures in the arrangement and operation of interrelated roles and statuses within a society.
4. Function - satisfaction of a need by an activity in which human being cooperate, use artifacts, and consume goods.
5. Needs - the environmental and/or biological conditions which must be fulfilled for the survival of the individual and the group.
6. Form - the performance of an act taken by an individual or a group to satisfy a need.
7. Vital sequence - a sequence in which an individual or a group performs an activity designed to satisfy a perceived need.

The Analysis of the Frequency and Distribution of the Problem

In this study, the primary criteria for choosing a target city requires that the city selected include a Skid Row area in the city structure. Specifically, the Concentric Zone theory and the Sector theory sensitizes the researcher to look for particular aspects of the

city structure which are characteristics of a Skid Row area. According to the Concentric Zone theory, the city should appear to expand in concentric circles. The target city should have, at its core, a central business district. The central business district, in turn, should be surrounded by a transition band of low-cost housing, multiple dwelling units, and industry. Next, from the transition band, the city should expand into circles of suburban housing. The Skid Row area should be located in the second concentric circle or the zone of transition. Skid Row should contain a number of urban nomads: transient men, tramps, winos, derelicts, hoboes, and bums. Furthermore, within the Skid Row area should be situated the typical establishments which cater to urban nomads: cheap hotels, beer joints, liquor stores, pawn shops, vacant buildings, and rescue missions. Lastly, there should be a fairly high frequency of police patrols through the area. In addition, the Sector theory indicates that Skid Row areas are often contained in a sector of the city bounded by various ecological barriers, rather than in a circular zone. Therefore, the researcher, by being aware of the ecology of the city structure, would seek out the central business district and look for a sector with the identifying characteristics of Skid Row as mentioned in the Concentric Zone theory.

For the purpose of this study, the target city chosen will be known as Midwest, U.S.A. Midwest was selected because there is an area of the city structure which reflects the characteristics of Skid Row as outlined by the Concentric Zone and Sector theories to be elaborated on in a later chapter. In addition, the researcher was born and raised in Midwest and therefore had some inside knowledge into the environment of Skid Row.

There are two primary data gathering techniques used in this study: (1) direct observation which included the use of photography, and (2) interviews which were tape recorded. The camera and tape recorder were of advantage to the researcher in capturing aspects of the study for later reference. The researcher did not want to rely on memory and note-taking as the primary means of recording the data. The researcher was aware that during the study data were selectively perceived by the researcher. Thus, during the study, bits of data were ignored, missed, and/or forgotten. Moreover, the camera and tape recorder captured much of the study in such a way that the researcher was able to scrutinize the data in more detail at a later time. Hence, vital pieces of data were recognized upon review of the film and tape recordings. Although the introduction of the recording equipment into the study possibly biased the data in some way, the researcher thought that the advantage of a permanent record of most of the interview proceedings for later reference would outweigh the possible bias factor. The researcher also found that the subjects interviewed did not object to the use of the recording equipment.

The methods of direct observation and interviews were taken from current research on Skid Row (cf. Spradley, 1970; Wiseman, 1970). In this way, the researcher attempted to induce the experience of *Verstehen* and thereby approach the group perspectives represented on Skid Row. These methods were employed by a three-man research team led by the writer of this study. The research team collected the data by involving themselves in the everyday activities of Skid Row, Skid Row bums, patrolmen on the beat, police administrators, judges, and jailers. Furthermore, the research team canvassed local businesses, pawn shops,

liquor stores, flop houses, a rescue mission, the court house, the city jail, and the city detention center. Interviews and methods of observation were not planned or pre-arranged. This method was used because it insured a degree of informality and reduced the bias of pre-structured situations. The task was to try to encounter life as it was being formulated by the interrelationships of those on Skid Row.

Although the situations were not pre-structured, a set of guideline questions was designed to elicit data concerning the principle concepts of the study. The questions were intended not only to orient the interviews around the foci of the study, but also to generate a degree of rapport with the informants. For this reason, the questions were vague and general. Becker and Geer (1960:286) note that general questions were also of use to them in their study. One of their questions was "What's happening?" which they report was productive of important preliminary information.

Consequently, the guideline questions were written primarily for two different target groups. However, in the final analysis, most of the same questions and the same topics were asked and discussed by the majority of those interviewed. The guideline questions, although not necessarily in the order used, for the urban nomads were:

1. What are you doing today?
2. How long have you been here?
3. How long do you think you will stay here?
4. Who makes the decisions around here?
5. How do you feel life has treated you?
6. How do you spend most of your time?
7. How do you like it around here?

8. What do you see yourself doing in ten years?
9. Who are your friends?

The guideline questions for others involved in some manner on Skid Row were:

1. How has Urban Renewal affected Skid Row?
2. What educational backgrounds do the nomads have?
3. What do you think about the nomads in terms of:
 - a. social power
 - b. personal meaning
 - c. social identity
4. Are the nomads future oriented?
5. Is there much crime on Skid Row? What kinds and how much?
6. Are the nomads employed?

The guideline questions were asked at different times during the course of the interviews as the evolution of the conversation seemed appropriate. The interviews were not so rigidly structured, however, that the guideline questions could not be abandoned in favor of more profitable lines of conversation. Therefore, the emphasis of the guideline questions dealt more with general topics rather than the specific questions.

The data collection procedure lasted approximately five days scattered over a month's period of time. On a research day, the research team would drive near the Skid Row section of town, park the car, and walk into the area. Furthermore, the research team would arrive at Skid Row in the early morning and stay until well after dark. The task was to mingle with the inhabitants of Skid Row as informally as possible. Interviews and observations were gathered with

the pastor of a rescue mission, a pawn shop owner, a hotel owner, several policemen on the beat, a businessman, and a businesswoman. These interviews provided insights into the life on Skid Row as perceived by those who operate businesses in the area. Interviews were also attempted with Skid Row bums. However, this method of interviewing was not entirely satisfactory because several bums were too "crocked" to carry on a coherent conversation. Moreover, additional interviews with Skid Row bums were accomplished in the city detention center. In the center, the men were sober, clean, and able to communicate in a manner intelligent and coherent to the researchers. Lastly, the research team interviewed a police administrator who organizes many of the police patrols and a judge who officiates the drunk court. The process of arrest, prosecution, and incarceration was observed in the city court house and in the city detention center.

Assimilation of Research Findings into an Organized Whole

Park and Burgess (1925) indicate that the zone of transition, and therefore Skid Row, is a highly transient and fluid area of the city structure. They further assert that because of the transient nature of the area, Skid Row is a milieu of social disorganization. Consequently, a purpose of this study is to examine the organizational structure of the Skid Row environment. In order to accomplish this purpose, life on Skid Row has been defined in terms of three components: the Skid Row environment, the urban nomad, and the police on Skid Row. Furthermore, the research procedures of direct observation and interviewing should enable the researcher to become partially

acculturated to the perspectives of the target group. During the research process, the experience of Verstehen should allow the researcher to become partially acculturated to the perspectives of the target group. During the research process, the experience of Verstehen should allow the researcher to gain insight into the perspectives of the groups represented on Skid Row. Lastly, the research data are oriented around needs, forms, and functions and attempts will be made to see if they integrate into vital sequences. Thus, the foci of vital sequences may indicate the degree to which Skid Row is organized or disorganized.

Limitations of the Study

This study relies primarily on subjective judgements of observed behavior. Consequently, validity becomes an issue. Moreover, Wiseman (1970:280) depicts the issue as "whether or not the investigator has represented the social world of the actor as the actor himself sees it." According to Wiseman, the central theme of validity involves the degree to which the organized whole as designed by the observer correlates with the social world of the people in the study. Wiseman (1970:280) poses two questions toward the issue of validity:

1. Do the social actors in question build the concepts and constructs of their daily social reality out of the same data that the investigator has gathered and with the same general forms emerging?
2. How valid are the conclusions the investigator draws from the constructs he is using to depict this special social world he has selected to study?

The first question Wiseman raises concerns the validity of the data which the researcher collects. The researcher, during the investigation, orders the perceived meaning of the social interaction

in the study in at least two ways. During the process of direct observation, the environmental stimuli are selectively perceived according to the mental set of the researcher. Thus, certain aspects of the environment are possibly filtered out of the data collected. Also, the environmental stimuli of primary interest to the study are emphasized over other stimuli which may not be of primary interest to the researcher, but may carry particular significance to the target group of the study. Consequently, the data may be selectively skewed toward the objectives of the study.

The second question Wiseman considers the validity of the conclusions drawn from the data of the study by the researcher. After the data has been analyzed, the conclusions are organized into a conceptual framework. Becker and Geer (1960:276-277) state:

The final state of analysis in the field consists of incorporating individual findings into a generalized model of the social system or organization under study or some part of the organization. The kind of participant observation discussed here is related directly to this concept, explaining particular social facts by explicit reference to their involvement in a complex of interconnected variables that the observer constructs as a theoretical model of the organization. In this final stage, the observer designs a descriptive model which best explains the data he has assembled.

This aspect of validity focuses on the final relationship between the conceptual framework of the study and the social interrelationships among the people under study. How accurately the conceptual framework mirrors the perceived meanings and social relationships in the target group is the issue here. The conceptual framework utilized for this research was eclectically selected from existing literature according to how accurately the researcher thought they were capable of describing the assembled data. The selection of particular concepts

sensitizes the researcher more to some kinds of data and does not preclude the justification of other concepts which might describe the data more accurately from other points of view.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

Skid Row presents a blend of striking contrasts. It is situated in an old part of town which has been left behind by the outward growth of the suburban migration. It is buttressed by old buildings which stand on creaking foundations. These shabby monarchs once were the center of an infant city. Today, they house large numbers of transient men who spend most of their time coping with reality through alcohol. Moreover, Skid Row is an arena where panhandlers and businessmen often relate informally to discuss financial transactions -- where the most common business venture of the wino is the acquisition of another bottle. Consequently, the purpose of this discussion of the Skid Row environment is to describe the characteristics of an area which may, for example, house a successful pawn shop owner, as well as a drunken and jobless wino.

The Skid Row Environment

The first day of study was devoted to familiarizing the research team with the general make-up of Skid Row. Several hours were spent slowly driving around Skid Row photographing and cataloging the people and buildings. Specifically, the city structure and organization

lends itself to both the Concentric Zone and Sector theories. With regard to the Concentric Zone theory, the city appears to expand in concentric circles. Midwest has at its core a central business district. The central business district, in turn, is surrounded by a transition band of low-cost housing, multiple dwelling units, various businesses and enterprises, and industry. Next, from the transition band, the city appears to expand into circles of suburban housing. The Skid Row area in Midwest is located on the north side of the central business district. It is approximately three square blocks in size. Within its limits are situated typical establishments which cater to urban nomads: cheap hotels, beer joints, liquor stores, pawn shops, vacant buildings, a railroad yard, and a rescue mission. (See Figure 1). Furthermore, the city can also be described by the Sector theory. Skid Row is contained in a sector bounded by a railroad on the north and west sides; and bounded by a river on the south. The sector outlined by these ecological barriers depicts essentially the same Skid Row area of the city as the zone of transition. (See Figure 2).

While driving in the Skid Row area, a partially burned building was noted. A city newspaper, a few days prior to this study, had included a story about the burning incident. The newspaper account indicated that several winos had attempted to avert the cold weather by making a fire in the vacant building. The fire burned out of control and had partially destroyed the building before the fire department quelled the blaze.

Approximately a block from the vacant building was a deserted train depot. The depot harbored broken windows, broken bottles, and other types of debris. The evidence suggested that the old depot was a

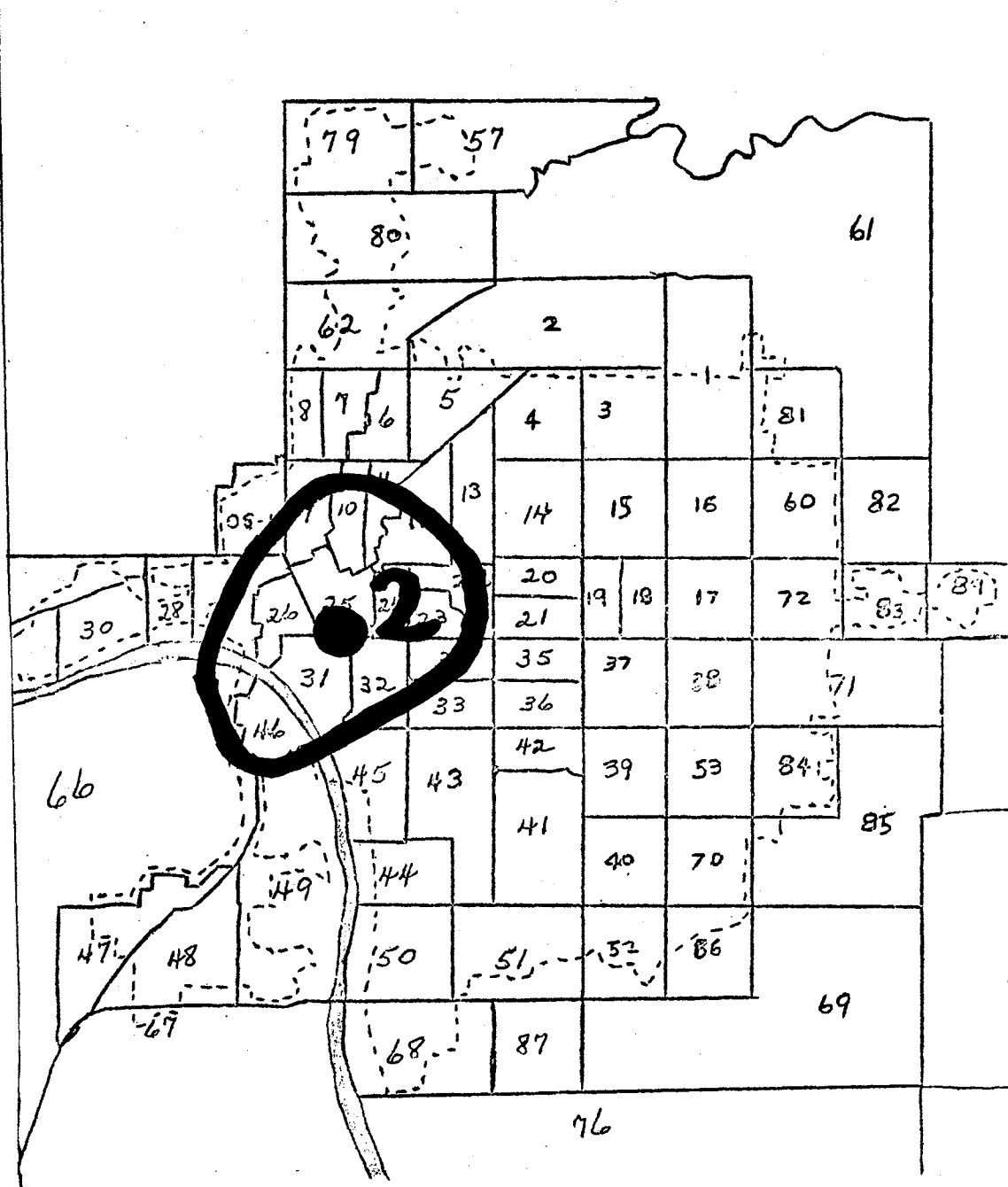


Figure 1. Concentric Zone Theory

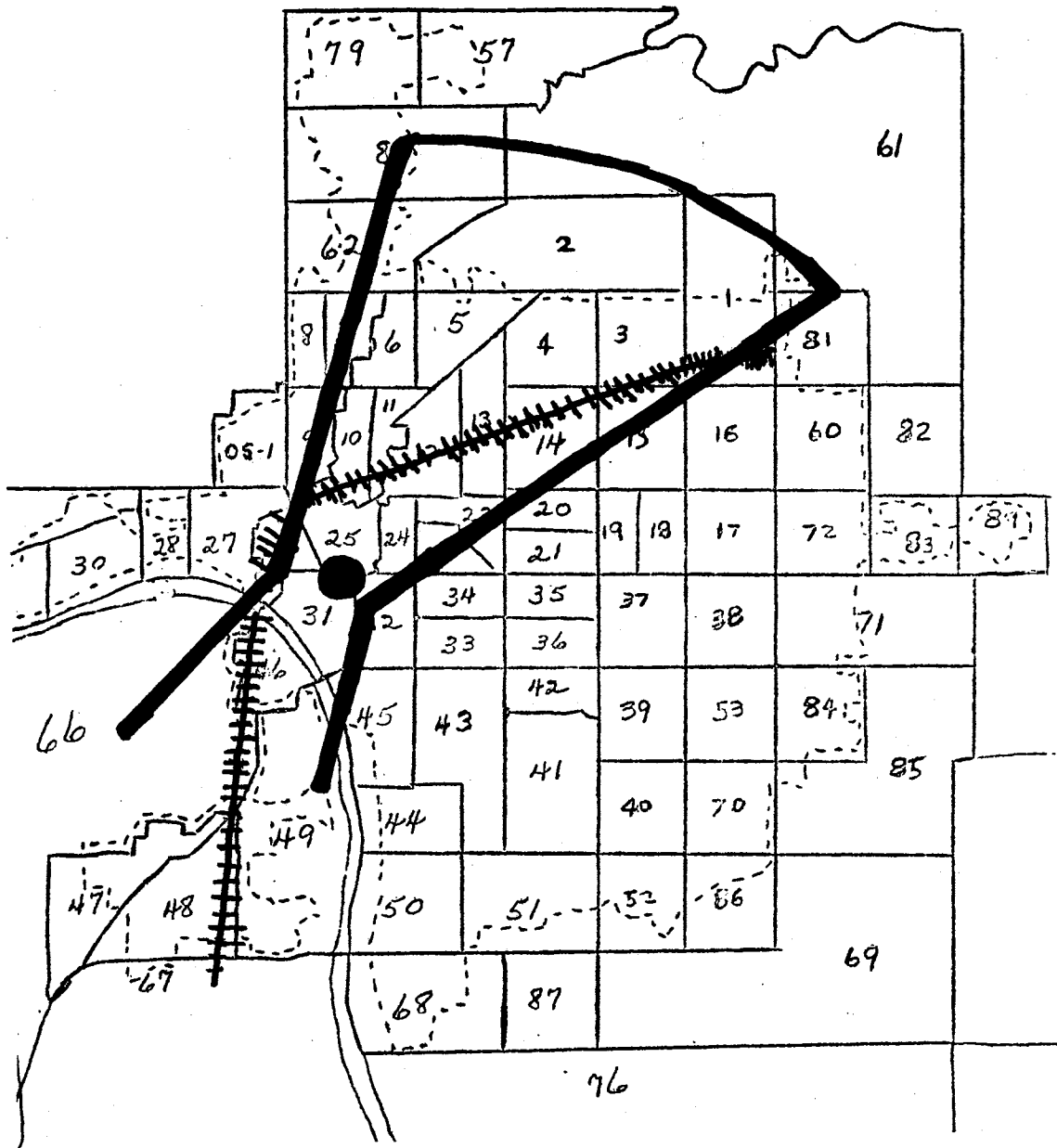


Figure 2. Sector Theory

frequent drinking spot for transients. Even in its pathetic condition, the depot seemed to radiate a majestic quality. The architecture of the stone building indicated that care had been taken to design and structure the old monarch. Historical evidence of Midwest records that at one time the depot was the "hub" of transportation in the city. Consequently, the people and supplies which traveled the depot's portals were probably instrumental in the growth and development of Midwest from a booming oil town to a fair-sized metropolis.

In other areas of Skid Row, many men were noted either sitting on the sidewalk or leaning up against the buildings. Moreover, most of the men were congregated around the doorways to bars. However, others huddled in small groups passing a bottle among them. Along the sidewalks outside of several hotels, several partially burned mattresses were observed. It was later learned that it is not an uncommon occurrence for transients, sleeping in mass in a hotel room to occasionally catch a mattress on fire while drinking and smoking. In such a case, the standard procedure is for the transients to throw the mattresses out of the windows and onto the sidewalks.

On several occasions, transients were seen "passed out" on the sidewalk, in an alley-way, or along the railroad tracks. Usually, the area surrounding these men was cluttered with broken bottles. The general impression of the scene indicated that the winos probably frequent regular places to drink their booze as evidenced by the discarded bottles.

During the morning and afternoon hours the streets were fairly quiet. The primary traffic consisted of vehicles associated with the business and industry of the area. However, during the rush hours

traffic swarmed through the Skid Row area as people came to and from work in the central business district. The peak rush hours were approximately from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., and 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. At these times, Skid Row appeared to possess the fluid nature as outlined by Park and Burgess (1925). But as soon as the rush hours were over, the fluid nature of the area transformed into the more quiet and somber atmosphere of a daily routine.

After becoming reasonably acquainted with the physical structure of Skid Row, the research team drove to the fringe area, parked the car, walked into Skid Row, and began the odyssey of this study. A primary concern was an ability to interview the "natives" without becoming conspicuous. However, the first encounter with a "native" dissipated the interviewing reservations. While walking down the street, a man stumbled forward, his arms outstretched, looking at one of the research team members, and yelling "Lenny, hey Lenny!" As the man came closer, it became apparent that he was in a drunken condition. The drunk proceeded to put his arms around the researcher who the drunk referred to as "Lenny." Before the interview was completed, all of the researchers had embraced the drunk in a sign of comradeship. After a short conversation concerning booze, the drunk stumbled away.

After this experience, the research team paused to reflect on the preceding events. First, it was evident that the inebriate thought that one of the researchers was a friend named "Lenny." Whether the drunk actually thought that one of the researchers was his friend, or whether he was simply trying to panhandle a drink was not determined. In any case, it was decided that a possible biasing factor in the study would emerge if the researchers were to take part in any sort of

drinking spree. Therefore, the research team decided to mix with the nomads on the street and not to actively join in drinking activities, especially since the aforementioned interview occurred at approximately mid-morning. A second item discussed by the researchers involved the inability of one of the researchers, Mr. Q, to facilitate an interview with a man in a drunken condition. Therefore, Mr. Q was assigned the responsibility of photographer for the study. While on the street, Mr. Q was to take pictures of the interviews which the other researchers arranged. In the final analysis, this division of labor proved satisfactory. Being free to take pictures, Mr. Q captured on film many unique and spontaneous events on Skid Row which he might not have been able to photograph had he been involved directly in the interview process. The interview process was established by Mr. F and the author of the study.

During the interview with the drunk, he was found to be polite and friendly. However, in his drunken condition, his range of subject matter was fairly specific. It was evident that his primary concern for the moment was that we proceed with him to the nearest tavern for a drink. Attempts by the research team to induce the informant to discuss other topics were futile. Perhaps the man heard the researchers' comments and ignored them, or he did not comprehend what the researchers were saying. This interview was the foreboding of a realization that the researchers would come to at a later date. Coherent discussions with winos on the street who had been drinking would be impossible. While on the street, the winos had one topic foremost in their thoughts, the acquisition of their next bottle.

The Rescue Mission

The first business canvassed on Skid Row was the Rescue Mission. A conspicuous sight, the Rescue Mission looms five stories over the horizon of Skid Row. It was learned that the old building was once a warehouse. Prior to that time it housed the offices of a Midwest newspaper. Presently, the entire building is devoted to the activities of the Rescue Mission.

The main door to the Mission is made of glass with the instructions painted on it for transients to use the entrance on the side of the building. Inside the Mission, several members of the staff were interviewed. These men were once down-and-outers who have been converted to Christianity. The men clean the Mission, cook the meals, and attend the Mission director. One particular staff member had an office-residence on the dormitory floor of the Mission. His job was to supervise the dormitory by policing the transients who slept there and to change the bed linen. The title of the staff member, "Transient Supervisor," was painted on the door of his office-residence. Although it appeared that the staff had much work to do, they spent many hours standing or sitting around the lobby of the Mission. Their general appearance seemed low-key. In the interviews, the men did not respond readily to questions and did not seem spontaneous with dialogue. In general, it was difficult to converse with them in a free and open manner giving one the impression that they were guarded in their remarks.

The Rescue Mission director is Pastor Smith. He is a tall, heavy-set man with silver hair who spent many years prior to his

directorship in the Midwest Police Department patrolling Skid Row. As a cop, he was known as "tree-top" -- a name which characterized his huge size and rugged features. After exchanging polite courtesies, Pastor Smith led a tour of the Mission's facilities. As the tour commenced, Pastor Smith commented on his past:

I used to arrest these people, I used to didn't have any use for them actually. They were just drunks, dope-heads and prostitutes to me. I didn't care whether they lived or died actually -- until after the Lord came into my life. I used to walk these streets with a pistol. I walk it with a Bible now.

Pastor Smith went on to mention the etiology of the expression "Skid Row:"

Now the reason that Skid Row is called Skid Row is because in the old logging camps -- when they skidded a log down -- when it got to the end -- cause that was as far as it would go -- that was the end of the skids. And that's why they call it Skid Row.

In the interview at the Rescue Mission, Pastor Smith indicated that the purpose of the Mission is to cater to the spiritual and biological needs of the down-and-outer. First, Pastor Smith noted that people who "end-up" on Skid Row are usually lost souls who need to restore themselves with the spiritual tonic of Jesus Christ. The Rescue Mission is thus designed to fulfill the spiritual needs of the derelicts as outlined for them by Pastor Smith. Pastor Smith requires that lodgers attend the worship services while residing at the Mission. During the worship services in a small chapel in the Mission, Pastor Smith offers those in attendance a new way of life to satiate their spiritual needs.

Pastor Smith further stressed the importance of providing for the derelicts' biological needs. The Rescue Mission houses a kitchen,

dining room, and a smaller dining area for the Pastor and his guests. In addition, the Mission includes an infirmary which is visited by physicians who volunteer their time several times a week. The third floor of the Mission is a large, open room filled with beds. One end of the room houses a fumigating chamber. Nightly, the lodgers are required to have their clothes fumigated and they must take a shower. Specific instructions for this procedure are painted in large letters on a dormitory wall emphasizing that lodgers wash their heads when showering; and to refrain from fighting, yelling or using profanity. Thus, by frequenting the Mission periodically, Skid Row bums can obtain a well-balanced meal, free medical attention, a warm nights lodging and a sermon from Pastor Smith.

The budget of the Mission is supplied through the interdenominational efforts of several churches in Midwest. Pastor Smith commented on the religious doctrine of the Rescue Mission.

We're undenominational. We don't have no doctrine. I think that's what's the matter with a lot of the churches today; and I think that's why we are not winning a lot of souls to Christ. You see, I preach in all denominations. I just preach strictly Bible. I don't write them (the sermons) -- I take a chapter -- you see, every chapter in the Bible is a sermon if we would only preach them. Now we're preaching too much sociology and stuff like that and not enough Christ.

The interview with Pastor Smith included discussions of many topics. The topics previously mentioned in this chapter deal specifically with the structure and organization of the Rescue Mission. Further comments by Pastor Smith related to other topics are mentioned in later sections of this chapter.

After completing the interview with Pastor Smith, several business owners on Skid Row were interviewed. One such business owner is Mr.

Prater. Mr. Prater owns several hotels and a liquor store on Skid Row. Mr. Prater seemed to enjoy discussing his businesses and life on Skid Row as he had seen it for many years. A particular question focused on his opinion of the function of the activities of the Rescue Mission relative to the needs of the transients who sought refuge at the Mission. Mr. Prater's response was:

Well, I think if those kinds of institutions satisfy someone's ego to take care of humanity then they're serving a purpose. Because they can always get takers to take whatever they'll give them. If they want to give them a meal -- why sure -- they can find someone to feed. If they want to give them a bed -- why sure they can find someone to give a bed to. So, if someone's ego is satisfied then that's well and good.

The research team noticed a degree of sarcasm in Mr. Prater's conversation concerning the Rescue Mission. Further, as evidenced by the word choice and the voice tone of Mr. Prater's response, his general impression of the Rescue Mission seemed to radiate a negative connotation. The research team, after reviewing the response, formulated the following analysis. A substantial part of Mr. Prater's financial income is generated from his hotels and his liquor store. Therefore, transients who are the constituents of the hotels and the liquor store are a primary source of income for Mr. Prater. Consequently, the activities of the Rescue Mission are in competition with the success of Mr. Prater's business concerns. That is, the more success Pastor Smith enjoys at the Rescue Mission, the less profit Mr. Prater enjoys at his Skid Row businesses. Thus, it seems logical to assume that Mr. Prater may not be particularly fond of Pastor Smith and might tend to be negativistic in his response concerning the

function of the Mission. In conclusion, the preceding analysis is strictly supposition and is not supported through interviews in the study.

Finally, Midwest's Assistant Chief of Police Hayes also offered his comments on the function of the Rescue Mission:

I think it's helping in the sense that it provides food, shelter, and clothing. But, if we're talking about rehabilitation, I doubt it for the hard core wino.

Chief Hayes implied in the interview that he thought the Mission offered the transient little in the form of social-psychological rehabilitation. For the majority of transients, it was Chief Hayes' opinion that the Mission functioned as a temporary retreat from the harsh realities of Skid Row life.

The Transient Nature of Skid Row

A major focus of the study involves the perceptions of the Skid Row business owners concerning the transient nature of Skid Row. That is, does the majority of the Skid Row population consist of men who are temporary residents? Further, is there a high turnover rate among the Skid Row population? To obtain insight into these questions, the subject of the Skid Row population was discussed with the business owners. Pastor Smith had an interesting comment not only about the transient of the Skid Row population, but also about his perception of the reason for the phenomenon of "wanderlust:"

All over the world. We have them from England and everywhere else. Now they's a few that come through here that have been raised around close to this territory; but the majority of men have been traveling from all over the country. The average runs around forty to fifty-five years of age. Now, the reason for that is that this is the menopause stage of a man. You know, we talk about

women in the menopause. But, men also go through a menopause. There's a lot of cases when a man just get up and walked off and left his family and things of that sort.

Regarding the response of Pastor Smith, an interesting aspect was the "male menopause" explanation for the concept of "wanderlust."

According to Pastor Smith, between the approximate age of forty to fifty-five, the average male undergoes a "menopause" stage of development. During this time, men undergo biological, psychological and social changes which often precipitate frustration, tension, and anxiety. Pastor Smith noted that many men adjust to the "menopause" or "change of life." Others, however, may feel "in a rut" and trapped by their responsibilities. In addition, these men may feel that life is "passing them by" and that they will not realize many of their dreams and cherished hopes. Ultimately, those who feel caught in a web of despair may seek escape. Rather than adjusting to the realities of middle-age, these men may attempt to flee the situation by abandoning their responsibilities, their families, and their homes. Some men may find new lives elsewhere. A few may end up on Skid Row.

Returning to the discussion of the transient nature of Skid Row, Mr. Prater, a Skid Row landlord, also perceived Skid Row as a transient area:

It's quite a bit of fluctuation. It's quite a bit of transient. But on the same token, you've still got a percentage of your regulars that have been here for years. But, I'd say -- if you want to say percentage-wise, twenty to twenty-five percent is transient.

Mr. Prater was also asked if most of the hotels that he owns contain the same people who have lived on Skid Row for some time. Mr. Prater replied: "Well, no not exactly. You have quite a bit of high transient turnover or turnover in transient in that respect too." Thus, Mr.

Prater and Pastor Smith indicated that there is a high degree of "transient turnover" in both of their respective businesses.

In conclusion, there appears to be a contrast between the transient nature of the Skid Row population and the stability of the Skid Row business owners. Pastor Smith stated that he had been the director of the Rescue Mission for six years. In addition, Mr. Prater indicated that he had been in business on Skid Row as a landlord and liquor store owner said that he had been in business for more than twenty years. Therefore, it seems that although there is a high mobility rate among the Skid Row population, the businesses comprising the physical structure of Skid Row and the owners or operators of the businesses have been established on Skid Row some time. Thus, the relationship between Skid Row businesses and the Skid Row population can be characterized in this way. Although the Skid Row population is a diverse and transient group, their needs appear to be fairly homogenous. That is, the primary needs of the Skid Rowers discussed thus far in this chapter have been presented as cheap housing, easy access to taverns and liquor stores, access to free medical care and an occasional well-balanced meal. The businesses of the Rescue Mission, liquor stores, cheap hotels, taverns, and pawn shops appear to be fairly permanent enterprises which cater to these needs of the transients. The forms of behavior in which the businessmen engage appear to be functional to the needs of the transients as evidenced by the longevity of many of the businesses. Hence, it seems that a possible conclusion from this study is that a relatively permanent structure of businesses engage in forms of action which are at least temporarily functional to the immediate needs of a transient population.

The Future of Skid Row

The last section of this topic dealing with the Skid Row environment probes the question of the future of Skid Row and its inhabitants. In response to this line of inquiry, Assistant Chief of Police Hayes recalled a study concerning the future of Skid Row. The study maintained that Skid Row was primarily a product of the Depression era. That is, Skid Row developed in response to the needs of a small population of men who probably lost their fortunes during the economic chaos of the Depression. Thus, the missions, liquor stores, taverns, flop houses, and pawn shops arose to cater to the needs of the small population of men who needed cheap housing, alcohol, salvation, and "quick" money. The study hypothesized that Skid Row will disappear as the population of men gradually dies off. Moreover, Chief Hayes stated that he "pretty much" agreed with the thesis that Skid Row would gradually disappear as the population of men who supplied its economic base declined.

According to the conceptual framework of this study, an interpretation of Chief Hayes' remarks might indicate that Skid Row is a social phenomena which developed in response to the perceived needs of an economically "poor" population of men. Thus, Skid Row could be viewed by the Skid Row business owners as a potential source of income. Therefore, if that is the case, then the Skid Row population is functional to the livelihood of the business owners. Conversely, if the Skid Row population gradually dies off, the economic base of the business owners will dissipate thereby causing the owners to "sell out." In turn, the physical structure of Skid Row will then give rise to other forms of business.

A second comment on the future of Skid Row was given by Mrs.

Liggins, an antique store owner:

I've always said why don't they build a little suburban area outside of town for them and they could have a little town of their own -- and put some of them to work -- and that might occupy their mind and maybe keep them from being entirely drunk. And put them in a place where they could be away from others -- ah -- you know -- all by themselves, all together. One might teach the other something.

Mrs. Liggins offered what could be described as a "separatist" plan for transient housing. That is, it was her opinion that the transients should be housed in a community located outside of town and "away from others." Furthermore, the responsibility of work might enable the transients to improve their self-concepts through the accomplishment of socially approved tasks. Evidently, Mrs. Liggins considers work a therapy for unoccupied minds. With their minds engaged in work, Mrs. Liggins believes that the Skid Row men might not get drunk as often as they do now. In this way, the transients might help each other help themselves.

Finally, a third perspective on the future of Skid Row is embodied in the city government's remodeling program for the inner-city -- Urban Renewal. During the last several years, Skid Row has appeared to change rapidly. Urban Renewal has rennovated a dilapidated community of banished derelicts. Acres and acres of parking lots now occupy the grounds where tarnished flop houses once stood. Mr. Prater, a Skid Row landlord, responds to the question of the effect of Urban Renewal on the Skid Row environment:

It is a hard question when you bring it down to the point of trying to come up with a logical answer for it. My opinion by in large is that it is very little bit that anybody can come up and help as a superfluent way of helping. My experience with most anything in that category is after awhile it will eventually turn over and do something else

corresponding to your construction -- commercial, residential or whatever. And, as far as the effects that Urban Renewal will have on its own is a very hard question to answer.

Moreover, Mr. Prater believes that it will be hard to predict the result of the impact of Urban Renewal on the Skid Row environment. That is, according to his observations, the growth of Skid Row reflects a history of "natural ecology" or "evolution." During the period of time Mr. Prater has been involved in the economic structure of Skid Row, he has observed Skid Row evolve as a function of the rise and fall of businesses in the area. However, Mr. Prater purports that Urban Renewal has disrupted the "natural ecology" of Skid Row evolution through government intervention and manipulation. In this way, the future of Skid Row is now a function of the city government rather than a function of the "natural" growth of business enterprise. Mr. Prater commented further on the involvement of the city government in the ecology of Skid Row:

I think perhaps one thing. A lot of these places has been condemned. A lot of your rooming houses and apartment houses have been condemned. This is the forerunner of Urban Renewal. To get back to the politic issue of it -- they started over here in west [Midwest] years ago with this same type of operation. A person trying to get in there to open up a business or buy a piece of property -- it had to go before the board that controls that kind of stuff up here. Well, they always said no you can't do it. Well, this was over a matter of from four to six years. When they got ready to go in there and wipe it out they bought it for fifty percent on the dollar of what it was four or five years before that. And, this is the same issue they got going down here. You can walk down the street here and you can see that quite a bit of the buildings is condemned. For the simple reason that the regulations that they passed on that they had to be in this kind of repair -- that they had to have this kind of heating system -- and they had to have this kind of toilets in it. And, these old kind of buildings up here -- you just can't spend that kind of money because the return is not there. So the property owners just lock their doors.

Mr. Prater thought that the city government could determine the evolution of sections of Midwest by granting or refusing various legal sanctions to potential developers. Mr. Prater also contended that the city government had refused growth of the Skid Row area several years in advance of the Urban Renewal program. Furthermore, Mr. Prater's tone of voice in the interview and his word selection in describing his opinions indicated that he was not in favor of the Urban Renewal program and the involvement of city government in Skid Row development.

On the other side of the issue, Mr. Carnation, a local pawn shop owner, thought highly of Urban Renewal:

It definitely appears that the Urban Renewal project is improving the city. In the long time range it might be that the Urban Renewal project will be the saviour of the downtown section of [Midwest] and other similar cities. Now what this is costing in taxes is considerable. But, even so, it may be the only way in which the downtown section of many cities could be saved at all. Now like right here in [Midwest] the city was just going -- in the next twenty or thirty years -- it was just absolutely going to decay and go to the dogs in the downtown area. The new buildings that are being put up are bound to have a good effect and will have a good effect. Just like in the worst part of town, as you probably know, there is now being a 200 million dollar rehabilitation and building project by the [Wilkerson Company] and the [Midwest National Bank] which is going to cover several square blocks. And it's going to have brand new buildings. And, it's going to have many new stores and offices available. And, it's just going to be marvelous -- just marvelous! It's going to take in an area which is on its last legs and was deteriorating into a slum. It's going to be great cause it looks like it can and it will save the downtown area of [Midwest] in good shape.

Finally, the expressed opinions of Mr. Prater and Mr. Carnation represent two perspectives of Urban Renewal and its influence on the Skid Row environment. Mr. Prater believed that Urban Renewal was dysfunctional to the business owners on Skid Row. Mr. Carnation, on the other hand, suggested that Urban Renewal was functional to the overall

growth and prosperity of Midwest. In light of these comments, the question was asked concerning the function of Urban Renewal to the urban nomad. Mr. Carnation stated:

Nearly all of the Skid Row hotels have been demolished and the people have moved away from the hard core Skid Row area to nearby adjoining areas. Most of the riff-raff stayed as close to the Skid Row area as they could.

In addition, Mrs. Liggins agreed that the urban nomads were seeking lodging in hotels near the Skid Row area. However, Officer Jacobs, a policeman patrolling Skid Row, commented:

The Urban Renewal project has relocated them and dislocated them. Some of the old hotels they used to stay in are gone -- no longer here. A lot of them are still staying here. They are just reducing the population. I don't know where they are going. A lot of them are leaving town.

Lastly, although there are several perspectives depicting the effect of Urban Renewal on the urban nomad, to the researcher it appears that the Urban Renewal program is dysfunctional to the urban nomad in terms of housing. That is, the urban nomads are gradually losing their "residences" to parking lots. And, Urban Renewal does not include alternate facilities for the people who are displaced from their "homes." Therefore, urban nomads are apparently forced to continue their migration among low-income housing areas either in Midwest or in other cities. Hence, the "wandering nature" of the urban nomad is evidently reinforced by the Midwest governmental programs.

The Urban Nomad

On the street, the urban nomad blends into the local colour of the Skid Row environment. The visual impression of the urban nomad is echoed in the old and dilapidated buildings which line Skid Row. Many

of the men observed sat on the sidewalk -- a few of them huddled in groups. However, most of the social activity seems to be limited to the entrances of taverns and hotels. Furthermore, most of the men appeared to be middle-aged or older. And, although many of the men were Caucasian, there was a substantial number of Native Americans represented in the population. Also, there were a few Black Americans among the people on Skid Row.

Many of the urban nomads on Skid Row were inebriated when interviewed. Thus, their conversation did not seem to be coherent. From the perspective of the study, the Skid Row bums were viewed as a resource for data in a sociological study. Hence, information was needed from the bums concerning many facets of their lives. When the bums encountered on Skid Row were found drunk, the needed information could not be successfully gleaned from them and the interviews were not entirely functional to the study. On the other hand, the Skid Row bums probably viewed the researchers as a resource for financing more alcoholic beverage. Thus, since the interviews did not satisfy the financial aspirations of the bums, the interviews were not entirely functional to them.

The "typical" Skid Row bum often appears unshaven, unkempt, disheveled, wearing a suit (or a sportcoat and slacks), sportshirt, and hat. Frequently he has not bathed for days. Furthermore, on Skid Row, he is usually drunk and smells of alcohol. He appears to be a lonely or perhaps "thirsty" man and will talk freely with practically any passerby. However, his subject matter is extremely limited in terms of purchasing his next bottle. For example, an interview with one such man produced the following comments: "I had my -- I had my room

paid up for a month, but my rents up today. Well, I suppose if somebody would give me a dime -- I started to go over to this little cafeteria to get a cup of coffee."

Through numerous interviews and observations, many urban nomads seem to be alcoholics in varied degrees. Some men get drunk several times a year -- some several times a month -- some are seldom sober. The American Medical Association labels alcoholism a disease, but Pastor Smith expressed his own thoughts on drunkenness:

It's up to the individual himself. It's up to the individual whether he wants to be a drunkard or whether he wants to be a Christian. It's up to the individual whether he wants to go to Heaven or whether he wants to go to Hell. Now, he has a choice, and he has a choice because Christ died on the Cross -- gave us that choice. It's up to the individual whether he wants to become a prostitute or a dope-addict. There's no one forcing them -- ties them down. I can't find a man, woman, or child on this street in 47 years that had their arm twisted or anyone beat them in the head to make them drink. They drink because they want to. We call it a disease. It's a sin-sick disease brought on by yourself. There's no temperature. A disease has temperature. There's no temperature. It's just like standing out there on the corner. You can say, 'I want to have the pneumonia.' You can stand there for a month and you'll never get the pneumonia. But you can stand there with a jug, say, 'I want to get drunk' and, drink it, and you'll get drunk. See the difference? It's brought on. It's not something that we catch. Lord knows we have enough diseases without bringing something on.

Pastor Smith stated that he considered alcoholism a "sin-sick" disease which is brought on by the alcoholic. He was also emphatic in saying that he perceived men to have "free will" and individual choice because Christ died on the Cross for the sins of humanity. Therefore, Pastor Smith concluded that every man has the individual freedom and choice whether to be an alcoholic or not. Pastor Smith argued that alcoholism is a disease of the spirit rather than a disease of the

body. Therefore, he perceives the needs of the alcoholic to be spiritual rather than biological. Consequently, Pastor Smith attempts to cater to the spiritual needs of the derelicts. He further commented on the success rate of his ministry and the efforts he felt an alcoholic must make before he could be "cured" of his spiritual disease:

I'd be safe in saying that fifteen out of one hundred. That's a good average. Our churches don't even have that good of average. I mean who fully and wholly accept Christ and overcome this. Now there's a lot of them that have an experience with the Lord. But they haven't fully accepted Him. You see, the thing that I'm getting at -- when a man accepts Christ and goes right out and gets drunk -- he hasn't ever -- He says you come out from among them. You change. You see, I used to drink on Saturday nights. I drank because I liked the taste of it -- not to get drunk. I cursed every breath. Smoked a fourth pack of cigarettes a day. I quit all that overnight. Now it wasn't a miracle. It was just something that helped me. Now to knowingly go out here and crawl in some motel with some girl -- I couldn't do it. Because I know that I have been saved. I just couldn't carry the Cross of Christ in there.

Pastor Smith's comment indicates that he feels strongly about the power of Christ to deliver men from sin. He suggests that men must have a spiritual revival in terms of Christ as a "cure" for alcoholism.

Alcoholism appears to involve many psychological and sociological variables. Pastor Smith commented on one aspect of alcoholism particular to Skid Row men:

The main problem down here, and the main problem with any of us, is loneliness. Loneliness sends more people to Skid Row than anything else. Now it causes some to get drunk once in a while, occasionally, but most of them standing around who come to the Mission who I come into contact with are very much lonely people. In fact, it's loneliness that brings them down here.

Pastor Smith was asked if the bums wanted to talk about their loneliness:

No, that is a problem. Me, as a minister, sometimes it takes me two or three weeks or maybe a month to break through this barrier that they set up. Most of it is

caused by broken homes. We can accept or reject anything in life. They have rejected life itself, actually, because of the things that have happened to them. It's understandable why they wind up on the jug because this is the only time they can blank out a few moments or an hour or two or a day. But then, the next day they've got bigger problems than they ever had.

Although Pastor Smith states that alcoholism is a disease of the spirit, he indicates that the main problem of the urban nomad is loneliness. The loneliness, according to Pastor Smith, is primarily attributed to broken homes. Moreover, it is his contention that Skid Row bums have chosen to reject life because of the tribulations that they have encountered. Furthermore, he believes that the bums reinforce their rejection through intoxication. Pastor Smith's advise to the bums is to accept Christ as their Savior which will give them the spiritual strength to accept life and refrain from getting drunk.

In addition, Pastor Smith discussed the self-concepts of many Skid Row men:

... broken homes and bastards. Now a lot of men come in here that are forty years old that are bastards. This has been a stigma upon them just like an ex-convict. He gets out of the penitentiary. We have a floor set aside for ex-convicts. I help them when they get out of the penitentiary. He gets out of the pen and walks up town and you may never notice him. He can be clean, dressed-up; look just as nice as anybody. You'll never notice him. But inside he knows I'm an ex-convict. Inside that stigma is there. It's crying out to him all the time. And, then you may see another. He's lonely. You can be among a thousand people and he's the loneliest person in the world.

In this passage, Pastor Smith reveals the psycho-social mechanism, stigma, which he believes is at the core of the Skid Row men's inability to function adequately in society. One possible interpretation of these remarks includes the idea that during some period of time prior to their arrival on Skid Row, the Skid Row men may have incorporated

into their self concept "negative" interpretations of self stemming from an inability to function adequately in society due to an overindulgence with alcohol.

Fater Abbot, a Catholic priest, occasionally ministers to Skid Row men during his work with the poor. Father Abbot commented on the stigma which winos encounter because of their dependence on alcohol:

Most of them suffer very very severely from a lack of slef-appreciation. Everytime they've turned around they've had this thrown back in their face. Every where they go. When they go make a job application they have to lie or they don't get a job. How do you take some of these men and rehab them when society doesn't want them rehabed? They want them back in the institution.

Father Abbot contended that society punishes people via the social sanction of stigma. According to Father Abbot, the stigma reinforces the winos in a vicious circle. That is, because of the stigma of alcoholic, Skid Row bum, transient or whatever, Skid Row men have great difficulty getting a job which would allow them the chance to erase their stigma through the work performance of a job. Father Abbot emphasized the idea that he considers work a major contributing agent toward the rehabilitation of Skid Row men in that work enables winos to achieve a sense of achievement and self-satisfaction. Through the stigma, however, Father Abbot believes that society prohibits Skid Rowers the opportunity to self-actualize themselves through socially approved forms of behavior. Moreover, Father Abbot maintains that society would rather confine the bums to Skid Row or a penal institution.

Educational Experience of the Urban Nomad

An interesting topic which cropped up occasionally in the interviews with various respondents focused on the educational experience of the

Skid Row derelict. For example, there were those who thought that there were many well-educated professional men who had migrated to Skid Row during the Depression of the 1930's. Several informers had heard of professional men on Skid Row. Therefore, a line of inquiry directed at Pastor Smith and Assistant Chief of Police Hayes revealed two opposing perspectives from men who were considered to be "experts" on the subject of Skid Row. First, Pastor Smith discussed the educational level of the Skid Row men with whom he had worked:

We've had them with Master's degrees. We had them with Doctor's. We've had attorneys. We've had medical doctors right here converted. And, of course they've lost their practice, but they can go back into other businesses.

Chief Hayes, on the other hand, had a different perspective:

I knew one man that I used to arrest all the time that was an electrician. But he was the only one that I knew that even had a skill of any kind. I don't know of any lawyers or doctors that have ended up on Skid Row. There are legendary stories. I remember one four or five years ago that made the headlines all over the country. Some lawyer they found in Chicago. A judge tried to help him, but he ended up back down on Skid Row. But I've not known of any one like this in my career.

Data collected from the men on Skid Row and at the detention center did not reveal any educational experience other than that which accompanies a skilled trade. None of the Skid Row men interviewed had a college degree. Most were unskilled manual laborers. Consequently, the sample of winos interviewed indicated that while there may occasionally be a professional person on Skid Row, the majority of Skid Row men are unskilled to skilled laborers.

Role of the Woman

In this study, a recurrent theme pervading many of the interviews concerned the role of the woman on Skid Row. Generally, evidence

indicates there are few women on Skid Row. Several respondents had comments on the topic. Pastor Smith of the Rescue Mission related his experience with women on Skid Row:

We have women winos. Of course, they become prostitutes. But now the reason we speak of women becoming prostitutes, they are prone to selling themselves before they will come to a mission. You see what I mean? They're giving themselves away. The only actual answer to it is to get these women before they come down here, cause after they come down here and after they throw their life away, they go from man to man. I've seen a woman with fourteen men. I've never stood and watched it, but I've got there when the thing was over with. A girl with fourteen men one right after another like a dog. Which is pitiful because she had a knockout pill and they just took advantage of her. A lot of times this is what happens to a lot of our young girls. It could happen to your sister or my daughter or anyone else. A lot of people say it could not happen in [Midwest], but it does. Now you have gigolos -- you have men who goes around in a cadillac with their hair slicked back and the waves all shined and some little gal comes out a country town and they spot her. They see she's a stranger right off cause she don't know her way around. They're slick. They've got a good line. They've got good English and flashy clothes and things and they talk to her and she says no I don't drink -- I come from a Christian home. Well, drink a coke with me. Well, she drinks a coke with some knockout drops or something. They get her in the car -- take her up to a room -- keep her pumped full of dope for a week and then they hustle for her. You see what I mean? Now you don't read about it, but it happens. The reason I know is that I've helped girls overcome. Even when I was a police officer I've known men that would hustle for them.

In this passage, Pastor Smith stated that there are women winos on Skid Row. He further indicated that many of them become prostitutes. Pastor Smith gives a "typical" example of a type of prostitution with which he has had indirect experience. Moreover, Pastor Smith's remarks raise several questions. In the account, he did not reveal any of the motivations why girls who had been involved in this type of prostitution would continue to do so over a long period of time. Did their abductors keep them drugged for months or years? Furthermore, in

Pastor Smith's account of prostitution, alcohol was not an important aspect. Thus, how can Pastor Smith link women winos with the type of prostitution he conveyed? In response to these questions, from Pastor Smith's remarks in general, it appeared that he often used stereotypic statements to describe a point he was trying to make. That is, Pastor Smith seemed to describe a point he was making in terms of events which might have occurred once or possibly several times. Consequently, he would depict aspects of Skid Row in terms of stereotypes which he had constructed based on unusual or bizarre events that might actually seldom occur. In addition, additional data gathered from other informed sources concerning the role of the woman and other features of Skid Row presented later in this chapter differ markedly from Pastor Smith's comments.

Finally, Assistant Chief of Police Hayes had an opinion on the role of the woman:

There have been historically very few women compared to the number of men on Skid Row. Looking back on my career I can think of probably a maximum of five or six women that we think of as hard core Skid Row drunks. I certainly don't think they would be above prostitution although they can't very well prostitute themselves in the condition they are in. Most of them are all old and run-down. They have a hard time finding customers. The women -- I just don't know much about them. I've never talked to them when they were sober. We don't even incarcerate females in our jail. Now they're handled up at the county jail so we don't have any dealing with them when they are sober at all.

The data gathered during the observations on Skid Row indicated that Chief Hayes is probably accurate in his description of the Skid Row woman. There were only a few women observed on Skid Row. These women were old and it appeared as though they would have a hard time soliciting any paying customers.

Creativity Among Urban Nomads

Skid Row is not without its more colorful moments. Skid Row winos do not have a stable lifestyle; i.e., permanent employment, permanent residence, and they are ingenious in their attempts to find a financial income, a place to sleep, and a bottle of booze.

Without many material possessions, not much wealth, and little, if any, skill or education, Skid Row bums must primarily rely on their "witts" to earn a living. A popular method of "work" is the art of panhandling -- a term which means to accost on the street and beg from. Moreover, panhandling literally means "the extended forearm." Panhandlers are usually "con" men. They accost people; i.e., businesspeople and shoppers, in the fringe area of the central business district and attempt to talk these people out of some small change; i.e., nickles, dimes and quarters. The Skid Row bums try to "sell" their blighted condition to potential customers through the technique of a "panhandling line."

Several interviews with Skid Row bums indicated that there appear to be primarily three patterns of "panhandling lines." Basically, one approach usually includes the idea that the bum's hotel room rent will expire in the near future. Therefore, the bum needs money to refinance his room. Secondly, another approach involves the notion that the panhandler has a job which will begin in a few days. However, he needs money to subsist until his job begins. Lastly, the panhandler might indicate that he hasn't eaten for days and would like some money for food. In most cases, however, the panhandler does not actually want the money for food, but will use any money received for the purchase of booze.

Finally, as evidenced by panhandling, Skid Row bums participate in an activity which can be viewed as a type of "work." That is, in their line of "work," Skid Row bums are salesmen who peddle a "sob story" to a clientele of customers accosted on the streets of the central business district. Consequently, the following relationship appears to exist -- salesmanship, a form of behavior, is a functional commodity to the needs of Skid Row bums; and, the better the salesman, the higher the income from sales. In this schemata, the Skid Row bums play the role of panhandler which seems to be very much like the role of a company salesman. However, because the panhandlers' overhead of clothes, room and booze is paid directly from sales profits, panhandlers credit the total amount of cash received while company salesmen take a percentage or commission from sales profits, panhandlers credit the total amount of cash received while company salesmen take a percentage or commission from sales profits. Therefore, Skid Row bums in the role of panhandler can be viewed as self-employed men.

Skid Row winos are also ingenious in getting alcohol to drink. It was reported that winos will drink most any type of liquid with an alcoholic content. For example, occasionally winos will find bottles of alcohol or hair tonic. In order to drink these liquids, the winos will strain the liquids through bread to remove harmful toxins to the body. "Vitalis," a brand of hair tonic, seemed to be a particular favorite of the winos. Lastly, the researchers did not substantiate the chemical relationship between various alcoholic liquids and bread-straining, but simply took the word of the winos.

In addition, several interviews with the winos revealed that newspaper is functional to the needs of the winos. Newspaper can be

used by winos in various ways including bedding, supplemental clothing, source of heat, and reading material. Consequently, winos sometimes hoard newspaper in caches at various locations on Skid Row.

Quite often, winos will pool their funds, buy a bottle, and share it among the contributing members. Such a group of winos is referred to as a "bottle-gang." Several bottle gangs were observed in alleyways and in doorways to vacant buildings sharing their bottles. Apparently, the "bottle-gang" functions to meet several of the wino's needs. First, while one or two men may not have enough money between them to buy a bottle, the group can accomplish by pooling their resources what the individual cannot. Secondly, the "bottle-gang" seems to allow the men to experience a sense of fraternity in which several men participate in a task-oriented group. To some degree, the "bottle-gang" seemed to give the winos a sense of accomplishment and brotherhood. These impressions came from interviews with winos in the detention center (See Chapter Five).

William Johnston, a local businessman in the Skid Row area related an incident concerning the daily problems of the Skid Row wino:

Well, one I recall -- they used to keep an old boxcar sitting out in this spur behind us. We were looking out the back window one day. It was real cold -- boy, just freezing outside. This old rummy was trying to find a place to get warm. I guess he was stoned. So, the car door was empty and if you've ever seen a boxcar they're fairly high. You really have to -- they hit you right about here. It's pretty hard to get in it from the ground. And he was attempting this. And his britches were oversized, hand-me-downs, I guess. Everytime he'd try to vault up in the boxcar he'd overtax this rope and it would pop and down his pants would come. He'd tug them up again -- tie it -- make another sashe -- I guess he was out there thirty minutes attempting to get up in the car.

From Mr. Johnston's interview, it was learned that boxcars are another functional commodity to Skid Row men. Boxcars serve as temporary residences and places to sleep.

A final account concerns a somewhat legendary wino in Midwest who has gained his reputation by defending himself in court for charges of public intoxication to petty larceny. The Midwest newspapers have reported the escapades of the old wino called "Tangle-eye" many times over the past twenty or thirty years. Assistant Chief of Police Hayes related one story of the courtroom drama of Tangle-eye, a poor man's Perry Mason, who defends his cases with the poise and voracity of a Harvard Law School graduate:

He's a funny old man. I guess he must be close to seventy years old. He's a smart man -- no education -- he's really brilliant. He's a fantastic talker. If you can find him down there some place and talk to him; I understand he's out now. He's very interesting to talk to. He represents himself when he gets arrested. I am a lawyer. He's a pretty good lawyer. Very interesting personality -- full of stories. He's a perennial shoplifter. Perennial shoplifters who are drunks get caught all the time and in Oklahoma they go to the penitentiary for a year. Tangle-eye makes the trip -- he's been down there eight or ten times. He's a funny man -- very funny -- a real comic -- a natural born comedian. I don't know about -- I've never seen Charlie Chaplin work, but this guy is a natural comedian. There are some interesting stories that he defended himself in a theft charge where he stole a baseball glove from Skaggs, Fifth and Main. He had gone down in the basement and got a glove and got out the door with it and somebody put the 'habbus grabbus' on him. What does a seventy-year-old man want with a baseball glove? His defense was that he thought Skaggs was defrauding people and he was a self-made consumer advocate and he was taking this glove out to compare it with the one in the window to show everybody that they put expensive stuff in the window and sold shoddy merchandise. The jury didn't buy this and gave him two years and as he walked out of the courtroom he says: 'Judge, I think Skaggs is making a federal case out of this and I don't think they're entitled to that much protection.'

In conclusion, the life of the urban nomad seems to be filled with uncertainty. The goals of the urban nomad appear to be short term usually involving money, a place to sleep, and booze. Evidence suggests and indicates that many of the Skid Rowers drink heavily. It has been further suggested that perhaps their drinking influences them to feel stigmatized and to lack self appreciation. However, Skid Rowers apparently do have some comradeship in the form of "bottle-gangs." Lastly, it appears urban nomads exist through innovation and creativity. Their clothes, their bedding, their booze, and their financial support involve a lifestyle which requires almost a daily routine of ingenuity in order for them to survive in the environment of Skid Row.

The Police on Skid Row

A strategic arm of law enforcement which constantly buffers society from Skid Row derelicts is the Midwest Police Department. On Skid Row, numerous patrols were observed by the Midwest police. Mobile police units were observed trolling slowly down Skid Row streets or parked in an alleyway or on the street. In the interviews with the patrolmen "on the beat" and in the interview with Assistant Chief of Police Hayes, the word used to characterize Skid Row men is "habs" -- a term short for habitual. Moreover, the "typical" Skid Row bum habitually is arrested for public intoxication or an alcohol-related offense.

Crime on Skid Row

Since "habs" are continuously arrested for various infractions of the law, the question was raised concerning the crime problem on Skid

Row. Although Chief Hayes answered the question of crime on Skid Row, there were many opinions from others interviewed who work and live on Skid Row. First, Chief Hayes commented on Skid Row crime:

I don't have any statistics. Now, I'm talking from my own experience and how I feel -- seat of the pants kind of stuff. What you and I think of as conventional crime probably is no problem. It's a crime problem in the sense that we arrest alcoholics and drunks down on the street. Probably sixty or seventy percent of our arrests are related to alcohol. So a high percentage of our arrests occur down there. But it's not what you or I would call crime.

A cop on Skid Row, Patrolman Garth, also commented on Skid Row crime:

A lot of the crime downtown, in the Urban Renewal areas, are fires in abandoned buildings that are generally from one of two causes. Winos or transients who use them to sleep in. They build fires in them during the winter. They get out of hand and catch fire. And others who want the buildings down and burning them down is the cheapest way to get them down.

While the police had their ideas about crime on Skid Row, the businessmen interviewed also reported their perceptions about crime. Mr.

Prater considered crime a minor problem:

Well, actually, as far as the serious crimes are concerned, it's very very little bit. Now it might be once in a great while -- it might be a mugging of the type that if an old boy might knock him in the head at night around a dark corner and take that. But, we don't have any serious crime to speak of.

Mr. Carnation, the pawn shop owner interviewed, echoed Mr. Prater's sentiments concerning crime on Skid Row. However, Pastor Smith differed markedly in his perception of crime. Specifically, Pastor Smith remarked on the prevalence of drugs on Skid Row:

They say that there's more dope now than there ever was. This isn't true. When I was a boy you could buy dope right here on the street just as thick as you can now -- twenty-five cents a tabacco can full -- red birds and yellow jackets. You could get all that kind of stuff when I was a boy. The only difference is it's got cameras on it. Publicity about it. It makes a boy want

to say well, if it's all that I'll try a little of it. I've smoked a few weeds myself when I was a boy just to see what it would do for you. They say it doesn't bother you. It does. It makes the curb look like it's three foot high. That's why they call it 'getting high.'

Pastor Smith further noted the violent crime in the Skid Row area:

There are two or three men killed a week down here. You don't read that in the paper. It's nothing to walk around the corner and see an old boy's guts cut out. But you see you never read about it in the paper. You know why? It's not news. It's just a Skid Row man. He may be a lawyer or a doctor or something. He may be down on his luck on Skid Row. It doesn't make any difference. Now, if he was up in an office with the same title he had down here, why, it would be all over the paper -- headlines. But he was on Skid Row.

Lastly, with regard to the women on Skid Row, Pastor Smith related his perceptions about the crime of prostitution:

Now, the prostitutes are almost out of business. And the reason for that is there is too much free love. Now free love, as you men may know, is brought on around the dormitories. One bragging about I been with this woman. And one trying to get ahead of the other one. I went down to [Midwest] University the other day where my daughter is in college down there. And right in the dormitory a boy had a girl undressed practically. He had her panties off and her dress plumb up over her head, right in broad daylight. Now this is the kind of thing that should be stopped in the college.

Pastor Smith believes that prostitution on Skid Row is declining due, in part, to the prevalence of attitudes of "free love." According to Pastor Smith, "free love" is a moral attitude which involves the relaxation of conduct codes regarding sexual behavior. Moreover, due primarily to changing moral codes, Pastor Smith argues that many people are increasingly engaging in promiscuous sexual behavior for "free" which used to "cost" and used to be engaged in primarily with prostitutes. Furthermore, Pastor Smith testifies that "free love" has originated in the dormitories of college campuses and he illustrates

his point with a personal account of "free love" in a dormitory at Midwest University. Finally, he concludes that "free love" should be stopped in its breeding place -- the college campus.

In summary, most of the people interviewed including several police officers agreed that there is little serious or violent crime on Skid Row. Rather, the crimes that are perpetrated include public drunkenness, petty larceny, accidental or planned arson, and other alcohol-related offenses categorized as misdemeanors. Pastor Smith is the only informant interviewed who suggests that serious and violent crime is a frequent occurrence on Skid Row. Those frequent serious crimes specifically listed by Pastor Smith include distribution of drugs, assault, murder, and prostitution. In light of observations on Skid Row, interviews with businessmen, and interviews with Skid Row men, Pastor Smith's accounts could not be substantiated. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Pastor Smith seems to use stereotypic events to characterize everyday life on Skid Row. Therefore, it is difficult for the researchers to believe that Pastor Smith's accounts of crime on Skid Row are everyday occurrences.

The Arrest Procedure

Skid Row winos or "habs" are meshed in a lifestyle which fluctuates between Skid Row and jail. Chief Hayes remarked on the physical and mental condition of the men when they are arrested and brought to jail:

Usually the first week they are in jail they're still pretty hung over -- pretty shakey. But they straighten up after awhile. In fact, our jailers become pretty solitious to their condition. In fact, a jailer there (at the Detention Center) was concerned because the judge had fined Charlie [Patterman] one hundred-five dollars which is a pretty high fine. They usually run

around a twenty-five to fifty dollar fine. He didn't think that was fair. He was taking Charlie's side. The jailers tend to really take care of them the first few days until they get back on their feet. Sometimes it takes a pretty long time. Many times a drunk has been out of jail for two or three weeks. He's been drunk ever since he's been out. He just hasn't been seen by a police officer and he hasn't eaten properly. And he's really got one hung on. It takes him awhile to get sobered up completely. He may be sober enough to talk to you rationally for a few minutes. But he will be shaky. A lot of them -- when you've had this kind of serious alcoholic problem for a number of years it affects your thinking ability. I don't know about the medical problems of drunks, but I think they have deteriorated somewhat. They're kind of childish and opinionated. A lot of them will talk freely about their problems. A lot of them will promise you 'I'm never gonna take another drink.' And they'll be out fifteen minutes and they'll already be at it.

In this passage, Chief Hayes indicates that after engaging primarily in alcohol consumption while on Skid Row, the "sobering up" process appears to be traumatic on the physical and mental state of the wino. According to Chief Hayes, many Skid Row bums are so drunk when they are arrested that it sometimes requires a week for them to sober up. Furthermore, for some men, the affects of prolonged alcohol consumption has seemed to decrease their ability to function mentally. Chief Hayes characterized some Skid Row alcoholics as childish in their behavior and opinionated in their attitudes.

Furthermore, Chief Hayes reported the procedure of incarceration after a Skid Row wino is arrested for public drunkenness:

We bring them in here to this building (Midwest County Court House) and put them in a holding cell. We used to have benches in the cell for them to sit on. But, they kept falling off the benches and hurting themselves. So now there is nothing in the cell at all. All they do is lie on the floor until they get sobered up and back on their feet. We check on them every thirty minutes or so and when a guy can navigate by himself we'll put him back in an open cell with other people. He stays there until he goes to trial which is normally the next day

except on weekends when they have to wait until Tuesday. At that time he can state his cause before the judge. Most of them plead guilty. The judge will sentence them. The charge is usually public drunk. He'll serve his time normally at the Detention Center. I think the maximum fine is five-hundred dollars and/or thirty days in jail. Something like that.

During the interview, Chief Hayes was most cooperative. As it turned out, he had received his bachelors degree in sociology. It appeared as though the common bond of a sociological field of interest enabled the researchers an entre to the process of arrest, conviction and detention that might not have occurred if Chief Hayes had not been so cooperative. With his help, the researchers were able to go through the incarceration process. The following narrative is the author's perception of the arrest procedure. Since the author is not an alcoholic and was not drunk at the time of the trek through the arrest procedure, the perceptions of the author are not intended to be a simulation of the perceptual experiences of the urban nomad. Rather, the narrative is intended to be informative to the reader concerning the arrest procedure per se.

The arrest procedure begins on Skid Row with a Skid Row bum who appears drunk. He may be sitting in a bar, stumbling down the sidewalk, or "passed out" on the sidewalk or in an alley. Consequently, the Skid Row bum is either reported to the police or the police apprehend him during a patrol through the Skid Row area.

The Skid Row bum is determined drunk by the arresting officers(s). The arresting officer(s) does not usually employ any criteria for determining a drunken condition other than a subjective judgement of the situation. Although the arresting officer(s) relies on training and on perceptual definitions of a drunken condition based, in part,

on past experiences with Skid Row drunks, subjective judgements can be inaccurate. That is, there appear to be conditions which may bias the perception of the policemen as to the nature of a drunken condition.

First, many Skid Row men are alcoholics and most of them drink alcohol heavily. Therefore, many of these men continually smell of alcohol. Moreover, Skid Row men often store partially empty bottles of booze in a coat or pants pocket. Thus, their clothing is usually saturated with alcohol. Consequently, the accumulated smell of alcohol on the clothes or on the body of Skid Row men may influence an officer(s) to suspect these men to be in a drunken condition when they may not have had a drink for several hours or several days.

Second, the police often arrest the same population of men time and time again. Moreover, the cycle of arrest from Skid Row to jail for many Skid Row men has occurred over a period of years. Consequently, the "expected" drunken condition of the policemen's perceptual experience concerning this population of Skid Row men may influence subjective judgements about a drunken condition. Lastly, the police occasionally make group arrests in which case a "paddy wagon" or a police van is brought to a locale, usually a bar, and a number of men are arrested. In some cases, it was reported by Skid Rowers that men were arrested in group arrests who did not appear drunk or who had just walked into the bar.

While touring the police station, the electronic equipment which coordinates police activity was reviewed. In a special room, various policemen coordinate patrols via radio transmissions with patrol cars. On a wall of this room (for the purpose of this study this room will

be referred to as the coordinating room), is a large map of Midwest County divided into sections. Each section of the map contains the same number of lights as police cars in the section. When answering a call, the light which corresponds to the police car on call lights up. When the patrol car has completed his assignment, the light on the board is turned off. This way the policemen in the coordinating room know which cars are on assignment and how many of the patrol cars in a particular section of the city are busy. Thus, when a patrol car is dispatched to handle an assignment on Skid Row, the appropriate light is activated on the wall map in the coordinating room at the police station.

When Skid Row men are booked into the police station on a charge of public drunk, they are placed in a small room called the "drunk tank." The "drunk tank" is a room approximately four feet square and seven feet tall. It is made of concrete and has a large metal door with a small window in it. The floor of the "drunk tank" is concrete and is sloped to a drain at one side of the room. The Skid Row drunk is forced to stand or sit in the "drunk tank" until he is relatively sober and can maneuver under his own power. Frequently, the drunks are sick to their stomachs and vomit on themselves and on the walls and the floor of the "drunk tank." Thus, the jailers hose down the "tanks" to keep them relatively clean. There are approximately eight to ten drunk tanks in one room of the police station. While observing the "drunk tanks," several drunks were noted in separate "tanks" slumped on the floor of the "tank." In one case, a drunk was banging on the door of the "tank" and yelling for someone to let him out.

In most cases, the Skid Row drunks have been arrested before and have a file in the data room of the police station. During the tour through the police station, the police were transferring all of their records and files to computer storage on microfilm. The police can exhibit an arrest record on one of two television screens. One screen monitors the photograph and historical arrest record of the person arrested while the other screen is devoted to enlarged photographs of finger prints. Thus, the police can produce the arrest record, historical background, photograph, and finger prints of anyone who has a previous arrest in a matter of seconds. A large glassed room is devoted to data storage in the police station and the police have employed a number of computer processors who handle the data storage function of the police department.

When the Skid Row drunks can motivate by themselves, they are placed in a holding cell to await trial. Trial is usually held the next day with judges who are on a rotating schedule. There is a separate trial docket and trial time for public drunk defendants. Moreover, the name of this procedure is the "drunk court." Many of the judges do not like to handle the "drunk court." Consequently, they have devised a rotating system where the judges only have to serve one or two days a week in "drunk court." In court, Skid Row men comprise the majority of those arrested for public drunk. Furthermore, the drunks usually plead guilty. According to the Skid Rowers interviewed, this is the primary reason. Drunks are usually fined twenty-five to fifty dollars for their crime. And, if the drunks cannot pay their fine, they may work the fine off at four dollars a day at the detention center doing odd jobs for the city. Therefore, at four

dollars a day at the detention center doing odd jobs for the city. Therefore, at four dollars a day, the drunks can usually work off their fine in a couple of week. However, if an alledged drunk pleads not guilty, he must face trial in another court. Moreover, not guilty pleas are not tried in "drunk court." The second trial is usually held from two to three weeks after the "drunk court" trial. At that time, a trial is held to determine the presumed innocence or guilt of the Skid Rower. If convicted, the drunk will have to pay a fine for the crime plus court costs. Consequently, if the Skid Rower loses his court case, and cannot pay the fine plus court costs, he will have to work his debt to society off at the detention center. In this case, the drunk's stay in the detention center will be longer than his cohorts who pleaded guilty due to the increased monetary amount that he owes the court. Finally, because most Skid Row winos have a history of repeated offenses of public intoxication, they figure their chances of winning a court trial are slim. Moreover, if they plead guilty, even if they feel that they were not drunk at the time of their arrest, they will usually get out of jail in much less time than if they were to plead not guilty. Thus, most Skid Rowers arrested for public drunk plead guilty to get out of jail sooner than if they had pleaded not guilty.

The last stop in the arrest procedure ends at the Midwest Detention Center. The Center will accomodate about one hundred inmates at a time. At the time of the study, there were approximately ninety-five inmates in the Detention Center. Permission to visit the Detention Center and to talk to the inmates was secured by Chief Hayes. The Center consists of several wings of jail cells, a dining hall and

kitchen, a snack bar, and a grounds area with a tall chain link fence around it. Furthermore, the office space of the Center guards is located at the entrance to the Center and is protected from the rest of the Center by walls of iron bars. In the office space, the guards were dressed in everyday street clothes and sat at their desks. With the guards were several inmates who sat with their feet up on the desks of the guards. The atmosphere seemed relaxed and casual. The Center was observed via a tour led by one of the guards. He was informed by Chief Hayes to let the research team view anything in the Center and to talk to anyone who would be willing to talk with the research team. Many of the inmates were quite willing to talk while others remained aloof. Chief Hayes indicated that a Skid Row alcoholic named Charlie Patterman be sought out and interviewed. He further suggested that Charlie was easy to talk to and was capable of expressing himself fairly articulately. Hence, Charlie was sought out, agreed to be interviewed, and the interview with Charlie took place in a visiting room away from the rest of the inmates and guards. In this way, it was hoped that Charlie would "open up" and engage in an in-depth interview. The next chapter consists of the interview with Charlie Patterman.

CHAPTER V

A PORTRAIT OF A SKID ROW BUM

Introduction

Assistant Chief of Police Hayes introduced Charlie Patterman to this study. Chief Hayes had this to say about Charlie:

Charlie has been a Skid Row drunk ever since I can remember. I'd say he's mid-fifties. He's got a crooked nose. The story is that he's a punchy fighter, but I don't know. He looks like the proverbial punchy fighter. Charlie's pretty likable, out-going, and reasonably articulate. He's no college professor, but he's always willing to talk.

In the Detention Center, Charlie, a Skid Row wino and self-proclaimed alcoholic, walked nervously into the room. Beads of sweat dotted his forehead. A man from a complex environment, his face wore the lines of a man grown old and tired from alcohol. Tense by the uncertainty of the situation, Charlie was at first vague and apprehensive. But as the element of trust began to grow in the interview, he unfolded a fairly sophisticated knowledge of the legal procedure, the American Medical Association, and some of the social-psychological problems affecting Skid Row bums. In a short period of time, Charlie melted a research interview into a bond of human understanding. The researchers anticipated a research object, but left instead with an insight into the problems of a sick man.

The interview began where Charlie was asked about his boxing career. Charlie responded, "A few years back -- yeah. Well I fought

in the navy and semi-pro out on the West Coast." Moreover, Chief Hayes's description of Charlie seemed accurate as far as Charlie's appearance was concerned. His nose was flat and pressed against his face. He was short and stocky and looked like a "punchy fighter." However, Charlie was articulate, friendly, and seemed to be perceptive of his environment.

The Skid Row Environment

Although categorized as a Skid Row bum, Charlie Patterman is different from many Skid Rowers in several ways. First, Charlie is not as old as many of the men who are on Skid Row. Charlie is about fifty-five years old. Secondly, the affects of alcoholism are not as pronounced with Charlie as they appear to be with older winos. Consequently, Charlie appeared to be in satisfactory physical condition. When asked to describe the Skid Row environment in general, Charlie replied, "Well, I don't know too much about the citizens around there other than the drinking people. You know, on the street. When I don't drink, I don't mess around that part of town at all." Charlie indicated in the interview that he considered himself different from the average Skid Row wino. Furthermore, as evidenced in the excerpts from the interview, Charlie discussed the problems of the Skid Row bum in the third person. Moreover, although he considered himself an alcoholic, Charlie did not identify with many Skid Row alcoholics. Charlie stated, "I'm not as far gone as a lot of these men." Consequently, Charlie did not comment at length about the Skid Row environment.

The Rescue Mission

Charlie was asked to comment on the Rescue Mission and the part it plays in the lives of Skid Row men:

I never have been in there. I don't think a Mission could possibly do anyone any good other than give them a night's lodging. A person that would stay in there, now this is my own opinion from what I've gathered and watched, men that stay in those places -- they can't make any money. They can keep drinking. But I'd venture to say that 99 out of 100 are psychotic that stay in places like that. A Mission can't do anybody any good. I read in the paper where they got a deal going where they are going to help these guys and they started up in [Frontier City] area and up in that part of Oklahoma and they haven't got this far yet. But they are thinking about coming on into [Midwest]. Now, something like that will help these alcoholics. These detoxification units.

Charlie feels that the Rescue Mission does little for the Skid Rowers except give them a night's lodging. Charlie suggests that people who stay in a Mission cannot work and pay their way. Consequently, Charlie infers that most of them are psychotic. Here, Charlie's meaning or reasoning does not seem clear enough for further interpretation. However, Charlie does seem to feel as though the Rescue Mission cannot help the Skid Rower. Charlie indicates that a detoxification center would help the alcoholics more than a Rescue Mission. Later in the interview Charlie added, "Well, if they'd ever get this detox unit set up and quit jailing them. If there's some way they could give them some job opportunity and consultation -- that would do it. Which they've never had in [Midwest]." Evidently, Charlie considers work and consultation more important to the rehabilitation of Skid Row alcoholics than the spiritual salvation attempted by the Rescue Mission. Thus, Charlie doubted the functionality of the Rescue Mission relative to the needs of Skid Row alcoholics.

The Transient Nature of Skid Row

In Chapter Four, Pastor Smith introduced the concept of menopause as an explanation for the phenomenon of wanderlust. Moreover, Pastor Smith felt that the transient nature of Skid Row was due, in part, to the mobile condition of the urban nomad. Charlie commented on the family ties of many Skid Row bums:

Most of them have had wives and families. They're ashamed to go around their relatives. I have relatives all over [Midwest]. I'm ashamed to go around them anymore. Broke and they know I've been in jail -- in and out in the past few years. Don't even go around them anymore. A lot of men are in the same boat right in this place.

Charlie indicates that most Skid Row winos have had families at one time or another. However, according to Charlie, the Skid Row alcoholics are ashamed to be around their relatives because of their arrest record. Perhaps as an escape from the frustrations surrounding their mobile condition, the urban nomads appear to attempt drowning themselves in booze. Charlie also remarked about the relationship between alcohol and family ties, "Well, like I said, a lot of these men have had families. They don't have anything anymore. And, they don't drink like a sensible person. They drink until they fall." One interpretation which could arise from Charlie's remarks suggests that alcohol is temporarily functional to a need of Skid Row alcoholics. Moreover, the alcoholics' needs appear to include a crutch to cope psychologically with the frustrations and anxieties which apparently accompany severed family ties. Consequently, alcohol could be considered functional in the sense that it helps to temporarily blank out the reality of the situation. Hence, the Skid Rowers "drink until they fall."

The Future of Skid Row

In Chapter Four, the future of Skid Row was discussed. One particular program, Urban Renewal, was considered in relation to its affect on the Skid Row environment. Charlie was asked his opinion of Urban Renewal on the lifestyle of the Skid Row resident:

Now I don't know how those ole people feel around those apartment houses and old hotels that have been there for years on end. But, now if they tear that down to beautify the city and so forth they're going to move somewhere else. Cause [Midwest] is a big city and growing every day. Well, there's more parts of [Midwest] that has cheap housing and everything and and that's where they'll go. That's where they'll have to go. They're in a low income bracket and they'll do the best they can on a limited income.

In the interview, Charlie stated that he thought the Urban Renewal program will force Skid Row residents to seek other low-cost housing. Because Skid Row residents are in a low-income bracket, they have little choice than to rent or buy low-cost housing in other parts of Midwest. Consequently, although the Urban Renewal program may be functional in terms of beautifying the city, it may not be functional in terms of eliminating slum conditions precipitating from low-cost housing areas.

The Urban Nomad

In this study, many Skid Row bums are viewed as alcoholics. Charlie was asked if he considered himself an alcoholic:

Yes, cause once I take a drink I can't quit until I'm drunk. If I don't take the first drink then yes, I'm all right. But once I take a drink -- a heavy drink -- strong stuff -- say a shot of whiskey, or rum, gin, anything strong, I'm gone. I can't quit until I'm drunk.

Charlie reveals that he considers himself an alcoholic. When he takes a drink, he can't stop until he is drunk. Furthermore, Charlie was

asked to characterize other alcoholics on Skid Row. He replied, "A lot of old people who just sit there and drink their wine and think about a better day, I imagine."

In response to the subject of alcoholism, Charlie agreed that many Skid Row men desire help for their dilemma:

Yes, yes a lot of them -- a lot of them. Some don't. These older men, they've quit. They've lost their spirit. They've given up. But a lot of men do. Because they don't enjoy getting drunk and wearing these type clothes. I know I don't. A lot of these men don't. Some don't care, but some do.

In this passage, Charlie perceives that there are men who have given up wanting to reform or seek help to meet the expectations of larger society. Charlie believes that they have lost their spirit and no longer wish to conform their behavior to a socially prescribed mold. However, according to Charlie, there are men who wish to be rehabilitated into acceptable behavior. Charlie admits that he does not enjoy the arrest and incarceration process. Furthermore, he states that he does not enjoy getting drunk. He gives the impression that he would like to find other ways to cope with his social environment other than alcohol, but for some reason does not. Thus, an interpretation of Charlie's comments might exhibit the following characteristics. Alcohol is temporarily functional to the wino's need to block out his perceived reality, but it can become dysfunctional in the long run to the wino's need to re-enter the domain of respectable behavior.

In light of previous comments, Charlie was asked why he thought Skid Row men keep getting drunk when they will probably be arrested. Charlie responded:

Well, some of them keep hoping they won't. I'll slide by this time, drink a day or two, and get

good and sick and quit and get on back to work. But, throwing a man in jail, you asked me awhile ago what I thought you could do, ah, anyone could do I mean. Here's the only thing on earth they could do. These men get out of here broke. They're dead broke. They have no means of habitation. No means of support. A lot of them are on pension. A lot of them are veterans. In fact, I'd venture to say that nine out of ten of these men are honorably discharged veterans. But, they get out of jail and they don't have anything for a holdup. No job prospects. Nothin. And they just go down there and take the fast way out. You can always get a drink stone broke in [Midwest] in that end of town. Because you know somebody and all you have to do is just say give me a drink and you got a drink.

One interpretation of the motivation behind Skid Rowers' inability to conform to the wishes of society are revealed in Charlie's testimony concerning the lifestyle of the urban nomad. Urban nomads have little permanent ties which bind them to the norms and which reinforces them to behave in acceptable ways of larger society. By mentioning that many of the Skid Rowers are honorably discharged veterans, Charlie seems to be implying that the men are capable of conforming behavior and have done so in the past. However, mobile and without "roots" or permanent ties upon release from the Detention Center, urban nomads "take the easy way out" and return to Skid Row which contains the elements necessary to support their lifestyle: booze, cheap housing and friends. Charlie was asked to elaborate on the friendship ties on Skid Row, "Well, there's a lot of men right in this place that don't trust anybody unless it's another alcoholic. They've gotten that far along." In the last statement, Charlie seems to be lamenting the idea that alcoholics only trust other alcoholics. Evidently, he considers that a less desirable situation than trusting people who are not alcoholics.

Charlie responded to the question, "What would you say if a man with all the power in the world said what can I do to help you?" He said, "I'd ask him for a job. If he had a job I'd accept it gladly. That would be the first thing is work. It's work with most of them -- employment." An interpretation of Charlie's remarks might include the idea that Charlie, as well as the other bums, considers work a therapy for alcoholism. Perhaps work is a socially approved way of self-actualizing oneself and restoring a damaged self-concept. Through work, Charlie feels that the winos could pay their own way and enjoy some of the social sanctions of a productive member of society, which he thinks the winos desire. Consequently, one interpretation of Charlie's statements might reveal that Charlie considers work a functional therapy to his perceived need for engaging in forms of behavior which are positively sanctioned by larger society.

Because many urban nomads are not bound to society through permanent ties of family, employment and residence, Charlie was asked if he feels Skid Row bums are lonely people:

Well, sure they are. That's one of the main things. They'll get stupified and forget about it. But that doesn't do it. They're twice as bad when they wind up in jail laying there and can't get a drink and sick and in delerium tremens and everything. That's mostly it. They're lonely all right, but I'd venture to say that the main thing with a lot of men that are able to work or physically able to work is employment. If they had some type of place where a man could fall out of here and go to work, that would straighten out more men than anything on earth.

Charlie indicates that loneliness seems to be a "main thing" in the life of Skid Row bums. Charlie was then asked if he thought the winos wanted to talk about their loneliness with someone. He said, "A lot of them would, but they don't know how. That's why. That'd be the only

reason." Moreover, Charlie seems to be saying that while they are cut off from the positive sanctions of larger society via their lifestyle from Skid Row to jail, Skid Row winos are lonely men who seem to lose their ability to interact and communicate with people other than fellow alcoholics. Consequently, Charlie recommends work and consultation as two types of therapy through which he feels winos have a chance of re-entering the cultural values and behavioral forms of larger society which he thinks they wish to do.

To follow up on the notion that winos somehow lose their ability to interact and communicate with other people, Charlie responded to the question concerning the affects of prolonged alcoholism on bodily functions. He said, "Well, they lose their equilibrium. And, they can't remember. And, permanent brain damage sets in after so many years I know. It must." As revealed in this passage, the loss of ability to interact and communicate does not appear to be only a loss in the art of social interaction. Rather, it appears to be a function of biological deterioration as well as social deterioration.

The Role of the Woman

In an attempt to add additional information concerning the role of the woman on Skid Row, Charlie was asked to comment from his experience:

Now years ago when I was out on leave from the service, you had all types of women down there -- sixteen, seventeen, eighteen-year old women. But, since things have changed there's nothing down there anymore but old Skid Row bars and old flop house hotels -- they're out in the shopping centers. They don't go down there at all. Just older women. And, most of those women down here -- they're so far gone I don't think they could be helped at all. They're just too old to care anymore.

Charlie relates that although at one time there were prostitutes on Skid Row, today there are few women except several older women who are too "far gone" to be helped. Charlie also commented:

Well, sure they're prostitutes, but they can't even be called prostitutes. They're just bums. They'd go all the way for a bottle of wine or a ten cent glass of beer. So, you couldn't call them prostitutes. Well, they're not too many women down there.

Charlie's testimony supports findings concerning Skid Row women presented in Chapter Four. They, like their male-counterparts, seem to be concerned only with the acquisition of booze to satiate their alcoholic needs.

Educational Experience of the Urban Nomad

In the interest of comparing Charlie's interview with those of others presented in Chapter Four, the subject of the educational experience of Skid Row men was brought up. Charlie responded, "There are a lot of men that are craftsmen and have a skilled trade." He was then asked if he knew of anyone on Skid Row with a college degree or who was a professional person. Charlie stated, "In this [Midwest] area, no." A follow-up question to this line of inquiry concerned Charlie's skill or trade. He related, "Well, I'm in sheet metal work. But you don't walk out of jail and into a sheet metal shop, broke." In this comment, Charlie inferred that he had trouble finding work because of his jail record and because of his lifestyle; i.e., lack of a permanent address, lack of a stable family setting and lack of appropriate references.

If given the chance to work upon his release from the Detention Center, Charlie was asked if he would take the job. He stated, "Sure

I would. Cause I'm not as far gone as a lot of these men." Finally, Charlie was asked if he thought many Skid Row winos were past the point of being able to secure employment. To this question Charlie said, "physically, yes -- mentally also."

Charlie's comments were not substantiated by another wino named "Red." "Red" was a good friend with one of the jailers who had business concerns other than his duties as a jailer. The jailer told "Red" that he would hire him to work for 800 dollars per month as long as "Red" remained sober. "Red" worked for the jailer for only a few months before he was drunk and in the Detention Center again. From this example, it appears as though work may not be a total therapy for all Skid Row winos. Even with a high paying job, "Red" did not refrain from getting drunk and being thrown in jail.

Creativity Among Urban Nomads

One of the motivations for conducting an in-depth interview with Charlie Patterman was that he knew "Tangle-eye," the infamous Skid Row bum discussed in Chapter Four. Charlie commented on his friendship with "Tangle-eye:"

Well, I've ask him at times, I've known him since I was about eighteen, nineteen years old, and he's a little guy. He's crosseyed. He has a complex from that. Of course these guys don't know that, but he does have. He's a dope-fiend. He's a drunk. He's everything. And everytime he goes up and defends himself in court where if he'd keep his mouth shut he'd get maybe a year. They file petty after former on him which they have in this state and they don't have in other states. They give a person up to five years if he don't have a good legal counsel behind him and he ends up doing four years for stealing a four dollar shirt. And that's all he's ever did is petty larceny. He's just a petty larceny thief. He's an old man. They put him on this state aid -- state

welfare the last time he got out of the [State Prison]. And he was doing all right staying in an old hotel up there and Urban Renewal took that. Friend keep him up. Then the Reagle hotel closed and that was the end of Tangle-eye. He hit the streets again and he quit stealing for about a year and a half and now he's back in the pen for stealing a four dollar shirt then they got him four years out of it. Now that's the resume on him.

In this passage, Charlie states that he has known "Tangle-eye" for many years and confides that "Tangle-eye" has a complex about his crossed-eyes. Charlie further admits that "Tangle-eye" is a "chronic thief." Supposition might indicate that "Tangle-eye" commits petty larceny to support his drug habit of "dope" and alcohol. In any case, "Tangle-eye" often represents himself in court when arraigned on a charge of petty larceny. As evidenced by "Tangle-eye's" courtroom drama presented in Chapter Four, in most cases, "Tangle-eye's" defense, although innovative and humorous, is not adequate in terms of proper defense. Consequently, "Tangle-eye" often receives a harsher sentence for his crime than someone with a good legal counsel. The "petty after former" stipulation to which Charlie refers is a legal condition where a person is convicted of a petty larceny charge after having previously been convicted on a charge of petty larceny. Thus, the sentence for a "petty after former" is usually more stiff or for a longer period of time than a first time offense. In some cases, however, a good legal counsel can bargain with the court for a lighter sentence for the defendant. "Tangle-eye," at the time of the study, was serving a four year sentence at the State Prison for stealing a four dollar shirt. Assistant Chief of Police Hayes verified Charlie's statements concerning the whereabouts of "Tangle-eye."

The passage on "Tangle-eye" yields interesting data about Charlie Patterman from the word choice that he uses. Though a Skid Row bum and

a semiskilled laborer, Charlie uses words such as "complex," "chronic," "pathological," and "resume." Moreover, to the research team, it was puzzling that a man with Charlie's background used what could be termed a fairly sophisticated vocabulary. From his vocabulary and his general decor, Charlie did not appear the mentally and physically deteriorated alcoholic that was represented on Skid Row.

The Police on Skid Row

In the interview, Charlie seemed to be quite frank and open in his discussion. One of the areas of concern to this study was the activities of the police on Skid Row. Charlie's comments give the study a perspective which sheds an interesting light on police activity. Concerning the kinds of policemen on Skid Row Charlie replied:

Now they have a lot of policemen down there, but the only thing they have is young policemen. Four or five squad cars with a sergeant over them and the only thing they arrest is some drunk stumbling out of a bar.

Charlie contends that Skid Row is a training ground for rookie policemen. On Skid Row, rookie police have an excellent opportunity to practice the process of arrest and incarceration. Hence, according to Charlie, Skid Row winos are guinea pigs for police rookies on which to gain training and experience. In the interviews with the police on Skid Row, little evidence was collected which would support or refute Charlie's contentions. Although many of the officers were young, most of them operated a patrol car alone. Occasionally there were two policemen to a patrol unit.

Charlie also commented on the role of the Skid Rower in the Detention Center:

These men save the city hundreds of thousands a year in labor. They work over at the police garage. They work out at the rifle range. They work for the fire department. They work all over the city of [Midwest]. They work for the water department. And, if they didn't have these men in this Detention Center to do that labor, they'd have to hire city employees.

Another of Charlie's attitudes focused on the role of the Skid Rower in the financial system of the city government. Charlie maintained that the population in the Detention Center represented a work force to the city. Further Charlie indicated that the men in the Center saved the city considerable money by working at various tasks for several city departments. Otherwise, according to Charlie, the city would have to hire employees to accomplish the tasks that the Center population accomplishes. Observations by the research team confirmed Charlie's statements concerning the tasks which the Detention Center population completed.

Finally, it was noted that the police do have a policy which allows prisoners in the Detention Center to work for other businesses if they have jobs or can get them. In these instances, the employers pick up the prisoner in the morning at the Detention Center and return the prisoner to the Detention Center at the end of a day's work. Usually, the jobs are unskilled manual labor and the per diem reimbursement for services rendered was ten dollars a day. Usually the Detention Center received five dollars a day for room and board and the prisoner received the other five dollars. The police praised this practice because not only does it give the prisoner a chance to earn money, but when the prisoner has been released, he has money on which to afford a place of residence and has a job. In this way, the police hope that the prisoner will not be inclined to repeat drinking as

quickly as he would if he has no residence or income upon release from the Detention Center.

Crime on Skid Row

An important variable to the study concerned the types of crime and the crime rate on Skid Row. Charlie elaborated on Skid Row crime:

The biggest crime they commit down in that area is for one drunk to stumble over another one. That's about it. There's hardly any violence at all down in that area of town. Very little violence. Because they are not capable of violence. I don't know of any sex criminals down there because they don't care anything about that. All they care about is another drink of wine.

In speaking about crime on Skid Row, Charlie's statements support the interviews by most of the people interviewed in Chapter Four and refutes the comments of Pastor Smith concerning violent crime. Charlie mentions that because of deteriorated mental and physical conditions of Skid Row alcoholics, most Skid Row bums are not physically capable of committing a violent crime. Further, in their drunken condition, Skid Row winos do not have the physical coordination or dexterity to out-manuever a potential victim. Charlie infers that most crime on Skid Row that involves bodily injury is the result of an accident; i.e., a fall out of a building or boxcar, falling through plate glass or being run over by a train or car while "passed out" in a precarious place.

Lastly, several rookie policemen had inferred that it was dangerous to investigate people in flop houses and bars. At the time, the research team had the impression that a few of the police patrolling Skid Row were not supportive of the research project. Hence, they may have been trying to scare the researchers away by informing them of the dangers involved. As it turned out, none of the researchers were physically

hurt or even threatened. Rather, the research team seemed to be viewed as a financial resource or potential customers for panhandling efforts. Consequently, Charlie was asked if he felt as though it was safe to interview Skid Row people in bars and flop houses:

Physically yes. The shape those people are in, as far as violence goes, you could whip five of them by yourself. They're all run-down and old winos. They can't hardly walk. They can't think. Sure you could go up there.

By this comment, Charlie seemed to be inferring that the only potential danger involved in conducting a study in the flop houses and bars of Skid Row was the psychological stress which could accompany the encounter of people who live in conditions which could be interpreted as sub-human.

The Arrest Procedure

Lastly, Charlie was asked to comment on the affect of incarceration as a deterrant to public drunkenness and the arrest procedure in general:

Now a person like me who's my age and able to work, you know, physically able to work. There's a lot of these men around here that are older men. Now I don't know too much about them. But men around my age, you know, the same age I am. They put them in jail here in [Midwest] for 21 days at a time. They figure, well, I've lost 21 days here. And, you can't scare them into doing anything. You make it worse when you try to. The rougher you are the more time you give a person for something like public drunkenness, he feels in his own mind that he hasn't did anything. The United States Supreme Court says he hasn't. The American Medical Association says he hasn't. They're sick. And, you incarcerate them which there's one judge up here that's doing, [Jonas Gleason]. He's the only one out of the four municipal court judges. He's given them all the maximum. I went up there yesterday and you know what I got for public drunk? No aggravation involved whatsoever. No resistance. No anything. Just being docile and

getting arrested for being drunk -- 105 flat days because I can't pay a fine. [Frontier City] for instance, they give every drunk -- that judge is fair. I've only been in there once. That was three or four years ago, but I hear the men talking all the time themselves. They give every man 16 dollars in court costs. It takes them four days in git up to get out of there. Well, he can go back to work if he feels like it. But the system they got in [Midwest] -- it's awful. Well, he just happened to be there. I happened to be one of the last men out of approximately 55 that got 100 in cost. Now, I'm not -- yes, I'm crying yeah, because that's the first time it ever happened. That I recall, it's the first time that the judge designated that that time be done at a dollar a day. That's 105 days for nothing but making yourself sick for a few hours. Six men out of about fifty. Six out of fifty received a fine of 105 dollars flat. See, they can't give you days in [Midwest] for public drunk. They can give 105 dollars -- 100 dollars plus 5 dollars court cost. That's maximum for public drunk, no aggravation. And six men out of fifty -- and forty of those I know of are just in and out of jail all the time. And, they were probably before that judge five or six days before. Some of them. And you go up there -- you haven't been up there for two or three months, and they give that -- now is that fair? It can't be. It can't be fair.

Charlie remarks that the average sentence for public drunkenness is approximately twenty-one days. In his opinion, the Skid Rowers rationalize the incarceration sentence as "lost time." According to Charlie, most drunks feel that they have not committed a crime against society. All they have done is made themselves sick. Charlie considers incarceration an ineffective process in dealing with men accused of public drunkenness. Charlie seems to equate the incarceration process as attempting to "scare" Skid Row men into discontinuing their behavior by being "rough" on them. Charlie accuses a drunk court judge, [Jonas Gleason], of "giving them all the maximum" sentence. Charlie indicates that the day before the interview he was given 105 days in the Detention Center because he could not pay the fine assessed. He then contrasts

Midwest with Frontier City in terms of the "fairness" of the incarceration process of each city. In Frontier City, Charlie states that his one-time experience plus the "talk" that occurs between the Skid Row men has influenced him to believe the incarceration process is "fair." That is, the standard procedure is to assess each man sixteen dollars in court costs. If the man cannot pay the fine, he is sent to a Detention Center to work off the fine at four dollars a day. Hence, with a sixteen dollar fine, a man can usually get out of jail in four days. However, in Midwest, Charlie believes the sentencing procedure unfair and arbitrary. He states that the fine is not based on the crime committed or on previous arrests, but on the "mood" of the judge at the time of sentencing. Charlie laments the situation he is faced with. He could not pay the fine of one-hundred dollars plus five dollars court costs. So, the judge ruled that he and several other men accused of public drunkenness must serve a sentence of 105 days. According to Charlie, "flat time" in jail means that the fine assess by the judge for the crime is worked off at a dollar per day. Thus, a fine of one-hundred and five dollars would take a man one-hundred and five days to work off. Charlie states that he believes his sentence is the first time the judge has designated that the fine be worked off at a dollar per day. Furthermore, Charlie argues that only the last five or ten men out of a group of approximately fifty-five were given the stiff fine of one-hundred and five dollars to be served as "flat time." Lastly, Charlie pleads that his dilemma "can't be fair."

Concerning the statement of Chief Hayes indicating that most Skid Row men plead guilty to the charge of public drunkenness, Charlie commented from his perspective as a Skid Row drunk:

I got stuck for being drunk cause I didn't have the money to pay a fine. And, it was either that or up town there. Lay on steel. It's air-conditioned all right, but lay on steel for a month or more before you're ever tried because you don't have the money to make a bail bond. The best thing to do is to just plead guilty and get your fine and forget about it.

Charlie reports that he feels the primary disadvantage of Skid Row men is a lack of money. If Skid Row men had the money to pay their fines when arrested for public drunk, they would not have to go to jail to work off their fines. Furthermore, if Skid Row men accused of public drunk plead not guilty, they must await their trial in jail at the police station. Moreover, the police remove the mattresses from the bunks in the jail at the police station because, according to Chief Hayes, the bums often accidentally set them on fire by smoking in bed. So, during the day, the men in jail must either stand or recline on steel bunks without mattresses. Both Chief Hayes and Charlie state that it often takes from two weeks to a month before men accused of public drunk come to trial. Therefore, many men must await their trial for two to four weeks in jail cells which are equipped with steel bunks. Thus, most men plead guilty, receive their fines, and work their fines off before they would have gone to trial if they had pled not guilty. And, according to Charlie, the living conditions at the Detention Center are preferable to the jail cells at the police station.

Charlie was then asked if he had any recourse to his dilemma with Judge [Gleason]. He responded:

Yes, but I don't want to go that far. You see, I can't afford to mess up with them yet. I'd contact a federal judge or a district judge. Cause that's cruel and unusual and yesterday that's the first time it ever happened.

Charlie indicates that he did not want to get in trouble with the city police and the city judges by going over their heads to a higher authority. Charlie believes that his sentence of one hundred-five flat days in jail is "cruel and unusual" punishment. He repeats his contention that his sentence was the first time that the maximum fine be assessed as "flat" time.

Lastly, Charlie was asked if there was anything that he would like to tell a class of students about his situation:

Well, the only advice I'd be able to give them is what anyone would give them out of here is just don't start drinking alcohol at all. Because it wears on you and these so called social drinkers -- I've seen so many of them. There's more alcoholics out there in the south end of [Midwest] in those big homes than there is on the north end. But they don't get in jail. Because they don't get on the streets. They've got money or someone to take care of them with money and that's why they're not out here. But I'd venture to say that in the city of [Midwest], people with money, there's three to two alcoholics above indegene alcoholics. Now I'd say that. And another thing, they won't arrest those people for public drunkenness. You take a man walking around there with a Botany 500 suit on and a sack of something under his arm and he's stumbling all over the place the policemen will go by him. They don't want to arrest him. Cause they're going to have to appear in court. He's going to be out on bond in a few hours and they're going to appear in court. And, they don't want to go up there in court. They might be off duty. And they don't want to go up there and mess with him so they just leave him alone unless he's down and then they call an ambulance for him. But down here they pick up all hands. On these paddy wagons they pull up, whether you're drunk or sober -- Get in! -- fifteen or twenty at a time at times.

The advice Charlie gives is the advice he thinks any Skid Row drunk would give and that is to never start drinking alcohol. Charlie states that he thinks alcohol "wears on you." Furthermore, Charlie contrasts two types of alcohol drinkers, the Skid Row drinker and the social drinker. Charlie feels that there are more alcoholics in the south

end of Midwest where the middle to upper class of people reside than on the north end of Midwest where Skid Row is located. He believes middle to upper class alcoholics are seldom arrested because they have money or someone with money to take care of them. Thus, the social drinkers, according to Charlie, do not need the low-cost services which Skid Row offers. Hence, Skid Row does not appear functional to social drinkers who can afford other services. Consequently, Charlie believes social drinkers are not as exposed to police surveillance as are Skid Row drinkers. Therefore, Charlie thinks social drinkers comprise a greater percentage of the overall population of alcoholics and are not arrested for public drunkenness nearly as often as Skid Row drinkers. In addition, Charlie hypothesizes that there are three alcoholics to every two Skid Row alcoholics above the level of indigene alcoholics in the south end of Midwest.

Furthermore, Charlie reports that he feels the police will not arrest people who are dressed well and who apparently look like they are middle to upper class citizens because these people will probably plead not guilty. Thus, the arresting officer will have to appear in court to testify against the accused. Charlie indicates that the arresting officer might be "off duty" and have to appear in court "on his own time." Therefore, Charlie feels that the police will ignore these types of drunks unless they are passed out on the street. In these cases, Charlie states that the police will usually call an ambulance.

Lastly, it is Charlie's opinion that the police will arrest "all hands" on Skid Row. In order to accomplish this task, the police enlist the services of a paddy wagon as reported earlier in this study.

According to Charlie, the police might enter a bar or a hotel and arrest practically anyone they see whether drunk or sober. Charlie estimates that sometimes as many as fifteen or twenty men are arrested at a time.

Several of Charlie's Friends

There were several Skid Row bums in the Detention Center of particular interest to this study. First, there was a man who will be referred to as Tatoo. Tatoo, as the name implies, had tatoos all over his body. He appeared to be a relatively young man, probably in his latter thirties. Tatoo eagerly conversed in the fenced-in yard of the Detention Center. Tatoo related a story in which he maintained that he had been attempting to leave town for several months. However, he stated that everytime he was released from the Detention Center he was arrested by a policeman who held a grudge against him. Then, Tatoo related his account of the following story. He reported that while in a bar one day, a policeman who was also in the bar walked behind the counter of the bar. Tatoo mentioned to the bartender that he thought it was against the city health code for anyone who was not licensed to walk behind the counter. Consequently, the bartender asked the policeman to move to another area in front of the bars counter. Becoming irate over the incident, the policeman allegedly told Tatoo and the bartender that he could walk anywhere he pleased. Tatoo further alleged that the policeman told him that everytime he saw Tatoo he was going to arrest him. Therefore, Tatoo maintained that he could not get temporary employment to save enough money to leave town because the policeman would arrest him whenever he would see him. Tatoo further stated that several times he had been arrested by this policeman for

public drunk and was sober at the time. However, due to aforementioned reasons, he pleaded guilty in hopes of drawing a small fine, serving a light sentence and getting out of town as soon as possible.

A final story concerns a man in the Detention Center who had lost both of his arms in World II. While the research team was conversing with several drunks in the fenced-in yard, two other men were dressing Jack in the doorway of the Detention Center leading to the yard. When Jack joined the group, he asked the researchers to contact his lawyer and ask the lawyer if he would secure a residence for Jack so Jack could get out of the Detention Center. Consequently, the next day the researchers telephoned Jack's lawyer and discussed Jack's plight. The lawyer indicated that he was Jack's legal guardian. As his guardian, the lawyer related that he had purchased several pairs of artificial limbs for Jack which were fairly expensive. However, whenever Jack's income would dwindle, according to the lawyer, he would "hock" his artificial limbs at a local pawn shop for booze money. The lawyer stated that in these cases, Jack's drinking buddies or "bottle-gang" members would hold the bottle to Jack's mouth and get him drunk along with them. Furthermore, the lawyer reported that they would dress him and generally care for him until he received a new set of limbs. Thus, even though Jack has no arms, his needs seem to be met through his friends on Skid Row.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the data presented in Chapters Four and Five, to summarize the data, and then to draw some conclusions. In order to accomplish this task, the following chapter is divided into three parts: 1) Vital Sequences as a Theoretical Tool, 2) Reflections on the Study and 3) Vital Sequences on Skid Row which consist of (a) Vital Sequences of the Skid Row Environment, (b) Vital Sequences of the Urban Nomad, (c) Vital Sequences of the Police and (d) The Endless Cycle. Chapter Four sets the stage for the comments of Charlie Patterman in the preceding Chapter. Therefore, Chapters Four and Five are intended to contrast each other in terms of the reliability of the interviews of the people in this study. Consequently, the Summary and Conclusions will be primarily a synthesis of the contrast of Chapters Four and Five.

Vital Sequences As A Theoretical Tool

Vital sequences are one way of attempting to gain a partial insight into a social organization of Skid Row. The intent of this study is to view the social interaction among the people on Skid Row in terms of the relationships between people's perceived needs and the forms of behavior they engage in to satisfy their perceived needs. For the purpose of

this study, relationships between perceived needs and behavioral forms are measured in terms of the degree to which the perceived needs are satisfied by the behavioral forms. The word which is used to depict the degree of satiation between perceived needs and behavioral forms is function. Therefore, the functionality of a particular form of behavior to a specific perceived need can vary from functional to dysfunctional. Thus, functionality may be considered a theoretical tool which may shed light on a form of social organization of Skid Row.

In this study, vital sequences are not meant to be ideal types into which the data of this study are poured and molded. Rather, they can be employed as a type of "glasses" to be used as a heuristic device to attempt to see social phenomena on Skid Row in a particular light. Vital sequences are meant to be an aid for gaining insight rather than an ideological restriction designed to manipulate the data of this study. Consequently, the summary and conclusions drawn from this theoretical perspective are interpretations of the social organization of Skid Row using the theoretical tool of vital sequences.

Reflections on the Study

There are aspects of the study which were realized upon reflection on the study. In addition, the concept of "symbolic interaction" pioneered by such men as Mead, Cooley and Blumer may serve as a theoretical guide to view several of the aspects reflected about in this chapter. Mead (1934) indicates that behavior occurs in a social context through a process of symbolic interaction. Meltzer (1959) and Blumer (1969) stress that people interact through the use of significant symbols in which they progress from making simple gestures to "taking

the role of the other" people develop shared meanings, shared perspectives and "generalized others" which contribute to the notion of society. Furthermore, social interaction stimulates the growth of an individual's self via the interplay between the "I," the impulsive aspect, and the "Me," the social self. Herbert Blumer (1969:10) synthesizes the elements of symbolic interaction by saying, "Human group life is a vast process of such defining to others what to do and of interpreting their definitions; through this process people come to fit their activities to one another and to form their own individual conduct." In light of this schemata, the task of the researcher seems to be that he become meshed in the process of symbolic interaction of the target group; and through the experience of Verstehen, attempt to be resocialized to the symbols, meanings and perspectives of the people in the study by "taking the role of the other" or understanding the significant symbols used by the participants.

On Skid Row, the interviews with the urban nomads were designed to illicit a set of data focusing on key concepts. Therefore, as outlined in Chapter Three, a general interview schedule was employed to orient discussion with urban nomads around the foci of the study. As reported in Chapter Four, the responses of several of the nomads to the questions asked during the interviews did not elicit useable information, per se, for this study. That is, several men ignored questions asked and/or captured conversations by engaging in monologues about booze. Most attempts to return the conversations to the topics of the interview schedule were fruitless. Consequently, since several urban nomads seemed to be unwilling to converse in terms of the interview schedule, the interviews were written off as incoherent and useless to the study.

The inability of the winos to communicate with the researchers contributed to the interpretation of the interviews as incoherent.

Upon further examination, however, the interviews were interpreted in terms of the concept of coherency. The conversations of the winos were defined incoherent from the perspective of the study. From the perspective of the winos, however, their conversations based, in part, on money for booze were probably coherent and to the point. Moreover, the winos may have perceived the questions of the researchers as incoherent and useless to them. Therefore, the concept of coherency appears to be a value-laden concept defined in accordance with the perspectives, meanings and symbols of each person taking part in the interaction. Thus, a conclusion drawn from the interviews with winos on Skid Row implies that coherency appears to be an individualistic concept which draws meaning from perspectives of each individual taking part in the social interaction.

In addition, it was difficult to "take the role of the other" or to understand the significant symbols of drunk urban nomads due, in part, to their altered mental condition. In the Detention Center, after the winos were "dried out," it was not as difficult to interact with them and thus to experience Verstehen by "taking the role of the other." Hence, one aspect of the study involved the difficulty of communicating and interacting with those Skid Row men who were drunk on Skid Row. It should be pointed out, however, that the number of men interviewed on Skid Row who were drunk represents a small percentage of the overall population of people in this study. Thus, although the researcher largely failed to become socialized to the perspectives of drunks on Skid Row, the identification of vital sequences in the study for the

purpose of illuminating the degree of social organization was not prohibited. Rather, the researcher felt as though the perspectives of the Skid Row men in the Detention Center described the perspectives of men who were drunk on Skid Row at the time of the study. Although it was not included directly in the study, the researcher did not feel as though there was a great change in the perspectives of the Skid Row bums on Skid Row or in the Detention Center.

While reflecting on the study, a central theme which pervaded the study focused on the idea that reality is defined as being what the members of the target group perceive it to be. However, as evidenced by the data, there were different perspectives of people interviewed concerning Skid Row topics which seemed to blend and clash on different topics. Social symbols and meanings which appear coherent to some people may not be meaningful or coherent to others. Thus, in the cases of conflicting perspectives, the problem arises of evaluating apparent inconsistencies from different perspectives. People appear to selectively perceive stimuli which they encounter rather than respond to all stimuli in a random fashion (cf. Meltzer, 1959). People also appear to selectively perceive environmental stimuli in terms of their perspective which consists of personal and social symbols and meanings. For example, Pastor Smith seemed to dwell on the evil involved with individual choice while Mr. Prater, on the other hand, appeared to view the city government as evil. Moreover, the perspectives revealed by those interviewed seemed to be colored by the symbols and meanings which fit their particular ideology. In this study, the researcher attempted to weigh statements made by those interviewed with a gestalt impression of Skid Row gained from observations and interviews. The credibility of

various statements were analyzed via the gestalt impression of Skid Row accumulated by the researcher. Consequently, statements concerning different topics by an informant were analyzed according to other statements and observations about the same topic. Thus, an attempt was made by the researcher to weigh the credibility of statements about Skid Row and not the credibility of particular people on Skid Row.

In addition, in order to organize the data around the foci of the study, certain aspects about Skid Row were not included. First, the study focused on the aspects of Skid Row which lend themselves to an interpretation of social organization. Thus, aspects of Skid Row which did not lend themselves to an interpretation of social organization were not focused on in this study.

In Chapter Three, social disorganization was defined as a condition which arises when there are failures or inadequacies in the arrangement and operation of interrelated roles and statuses within a society. In this study, the theoretical tool of vital sequences appeared to depict the interrelated roles and statuses of people on Skid Row in terms of the way people mutually related in a type of organization. Aspects of Skid Row which may have illuminated a type of social disorganization, i.e., Park and Burgess' Concentric Zone theory in which they characterize Skid Row as a region of the city possessing a high mobility and social disorganization, were not directly focused upon.

Secondly, the target population of urban nomads did not include minority group members, i.e., Black or Native Americans, or those Skid Row bums who successfully made it out of the endless cycle and consequently, left the Skid Row area. Instead, the target population of Skid Row bums was restricted to Caucasian men who fluctuated from Skid

Row to jail. The researcher did not attempt to find members of the group of urban nomads who had left Skid Row because it seemed to be an immense task to locate people who had left Skid Row. Moreover, Chief Hayes indicated that he thought very few men, if any, successfully left Skid Row and re-entered society as a working and productive member of society. Rather, most men who leave Skid Row of Midwest, according to Chief Hayes, travel to the Skid Row sections of other cities. Also, Pastor Smith mentioned that very few men wholly accept Christ through the Mission and leave Skid Row. Therefore, the researcher gained the general impression from these comments as well as a limited number of arrest records at the Detention Center that very few men escape the endless cycle.

Lastly, reflections upon the study reveal that there were many ways of expressing the phenomena of Skid Row from a number of theoretical perspectives. If Skid Row were viewed as a type of informal institution, Skid Row could be analyzed in terms of the various functions of most institutions outlined in sociological literature, i.e., political, economic, educational, religious and social. Moreover, these functions might be analyzed at different levels of sociological investigation. These levels may include the Skid Row level, the city level, the national level, or a cross-cultural analysis. That is, the phenomena of Skid Row appear to be pertinent foci of investigation which might be compared to the overall organization of the city structure, the overall organization of Skid Row city sections nationally, and a cross-cultural comparison of American Skid Row areas with other types of economically depressed areas in cities in other nations including established countries and developing nations.

Vital Sequences on Skid Row

As elaborated in Chapter Three, Skid Row is divided into three components: 1) The Skid Row Environment, 2) The Urban Nomad and 3) The Police on Skid Row. The theoretical perspective of vital sequences is employed to illuminate the social organization of Skid Row and its components. The following sections are devoted to the identification of vital sequences on Skid Row.

Vital Sequences of the Skid Row Environment

Much of the physical structure of the Skid Row environment appears to be oriented around the needs of the urban nomad perceived by those who operate its services. However, the forms of behavior in which Skid Row proprietors engage are also related to their own personal needs. For the most part, the needs of most Skid Row proprietors in relation to their businesses appear to be financial. That is, it seems as though the primary reason Skid Row proprietors operate their businesses is to make money. The businesses which can be included among those whose primary concern appears economic are the flop houses or hotels, liquor stores, bars, restaurants, and pawn shops. These businesses engage in forms of behavior which provide goods and services to Skid Row men. These goods and services include a night's lodging, "quick" money via the hocking of merchandise, booze, inexpensive clothing, other materials necessary to subsist and relatively cheap meals. Consequently, although providing goods and services to Skid Row men, Skid Row businesses are also forms of behavior which satisfy, to some degree, the proprietors' need for a livelihood.

The Rescue Mission appears to be a slightly different form of interaction than the other businesses. While the Rescue Mission does offer services to Skid Row men, it seems to meet additional needs of the Mission staff which appear different from other businesses. Pastor Smith and his staff are involved in forms of behavior which appear to meet personal needs which may include for example a spiritual calling, a humanitarian ethic or an authoritarian need for dominance over other people. Therefore, the Mission staff, like other Skid Row proprietors, engage in forms of behavior designed, in part, to satisfy their own personal needs.

The Rescue Mission also appears to attempt to meet the needs of the churches who contribute financially to the success of the Mission. That is, by giving money to the Mission, many churches in Midwest can meet a need of evangelistic pursuit among the "down-and-outers" of the city.

Finally, the city of Midwest perceives a need to beautify the inner city as well as stimulate new business and commerce in the inner city area. Therefore, Midwest has implemented a program of Urban Renewal to accomplish this task. Although Urban Renewal appears to satisfy the needs of Midwest, it seems to magnify the needs of Skid Row men by eliminating Skid Row and its services.

Vital Sequences of the Urban Nomad

The needs of urban nomads appear to be varied. Furthermore, their needs are interpreted by many people according to several perspectives. First, urban nomads appear to need food, shelter, booze and clothing. Because of these perceived needs, Skid Row proprietors operate businesses which cater to the perceived needs. Therefore, urban nomads and

Skid Row proprietors appear to co-exist in a symbiotic relationship. That is, urban nomads serve as an economic base for Skid Row proprietors and Skid Row proprietors cater to basic needs of urban nomads.

In addition, although the population of urban nomads appears to fluctuate, the population of Skid Row proprietors seems to be relatively stable. Consequently, it appears as though fairly constant forms of behavior, i.e., the businesses on Skid Row, cater to homogenous needs of a migrant population. And, these needs appear constant over time.

Another need of Skid Row men appears to be money. Thus, Skid Row bums may engage in forms of behavior designed to temporarily satisfy their financial need. Two forms of behavior are petty theft and panhandling. With regard to petty theft, Skid Row bums may "hock" stolen merchandise at pawn shops to get quick cash for booze or whatever. Also, winos may panhandle people on the street for money to satisfy their needs.

Skid Row men also appear to need companionship and the social psychological benefits of being around other people. Therefore, Skid Row men apparently attempt to satisfy this need through forms of interaction such as "bottle gangs" and friendship groups. According to the interviews in the study, many Skid Row bums have no families or few relatives or are ashamed to interact with relatives. Hence, Skid Row bums may rely primarily on the other Skid Row bums for companionship and friendship. Hence, Skid Row men may develop close personal ties among one another.

Lastly, Skid Row men may use vacant buildings and the abandoned train depot to meet several of their perceived needs. First, the abandoned buildings are frequently used as meeting places to drink booze.

Often "bottle gangs" convene at specific sites to drink their booze. These meeting sites can be analagous to men's "lodges" such as the Moose or the Elk lodges. Although the bums do not usually have philanthropic goals in mind, they seem to enjoy a group feeling of brotherhood similar to the brotherhood atmosphere of men's lodges. Secondly, bums use the abandoned buildings as free residences. Thus, the abandoned buildings may become a type of dormitory for homeless men. Consequently, it appears that abandoned buildings on Skid Row help satisfy several of the Skid Row bum's perceived needs.

Vital Sequences of the Police on Skid Row

Legally, most of the needs of the police are determined by law. That is, a primary duty of the police is to protect the public from harmful and negligent people. Consequently, the police may need urban nomads to fulfill their legal obligation. Moreover, one way of viewing urban nomads from the perspective of the police is to see them as a resource of crime. The forms of behavior in which Skid Row men engage which are defined illegal contribute to the need for a police department. Hence, offenses committed by Skid Row men help keep policemen employed and provide a continual source of jobs.

Additionally, the police may incarcerate Skid Row winos as an alternative to hiring city employees to do manual labor work which needs to be accomplished for the city to grow and prosper. Therefore, Skid Row derelicts may represent a labor force or a covert type of city employee.

The police may also view Skid Row as a training ground for rookie policemen. Thus, the police may need Skid Row men to train rookies in various forms of behavior essential to their occupation as policemen.

These behavioral forms can include a single arrest, a multiple arrest or how to process an arrested man. In any case, Skid Row winos appear to be a valuable "training" resource to the police.

Lastly, the police help to satisfy the biological needs of Skid Row bums by periodically forcing the bums to stop drinking, rid their bodies of alcohol and eat a balanced diet. This service is accomplished in the Detention Center and appears to perpetuate the physical existence of men who might kill themselves with alcohol if left alone to do so.

The Endless Cycle

The vital sequences of Skid Row previously discussed can be organized into a conceptual framework which will be called the endless cycle. The discussion of vital sequences of Skid Row indicates that one way of describing social relationships is in terms of the functionality of relationships. In the Skid Row environment, the physical structure of Skid Row and the goods and services which Skid Row proprietors provide seem to be functional to the depressed economic condition of most urban nomads. Conversely, urban nomads appear to be functional to the varied personal needs of most Skid Row proprietors. Further, urban nomads appear to be functional to various needs of the police. And, the police may be characterized as functional to the biological needs of many urban nomads. Therefore, a symbiotic relationship appears to exist among the three components of this study: the Skid Row environment, the urban nomad and the police on Skid Row. Moreover, it appears as though a relatively stable organization of services both on Skid Row and at the Detention Center cater to a fluctuating population of urban nomads. From this study, the primary conclusion which is drawn focuses on the cyclic

migration of urban nomads from Skid Row to jail to Skid Row and so on. It seems as though both Skid Row proprietors and the police need for this cyclic phenomenon to continue in order to support the economic base of their respective institutions. And, primarily because of an alcoholic condition among many urban nomads, they do not attempt to stop it. Thus, the endless cycle appears to become a lifestyle in which the participants become accustomed to patterns of habitual arrest.

An example of the Endless Cycle might begin on Skid Row with a Skid Row bum getting drunk with a few of his buddies in a bar. For this example, the drunk's name will be Ray. After finishing a bottle of cheap wine, Ray stumbles off to see friends who are convened at his room or flop or hotel room. On the way to the flop, he is stopped by a police unit cruising Skid Row. Obviously inebriated, the police take Ray downtown. Probably Ray has been arrested several times before and has a police record on file. At the city jail, he is placed in the "drunk tank" to sober up. In the "drunk tank," Ray feels sick to his stomach. The room is hardly big enough to sit comfortably in and he slumps against the wall heaving. After several hours, he bangs on the door for someone to let him out. Periodically, a jailer checks on him by looking through a small window in the large metal door. After Ray has sobered up enough to motivate under his own power, he is placed in a "holding" cell to await trial. Inside the holding cell are several of Ray's friends. Too sick to talk, Ray lies down on a steel bunk. During the day, the bunk mattresses are removed from the cells so the winos will not accidentally set them on fire while smoking in bed. The next morning, Ray eats breakfast and talks with his friends. In a few hours, "drunk

court" will be held for those men in the holding cells who have been arrested for public drunk.

In drunk court, Ray is accused of public drunkenness by the judge. When asked his plea, Ray pleads guilty. The judge then fines him fifty dollars plus five dollars court costs or a total of fifty-five dollars. Ray has been through this routine before and knows that he will be sent to the Detention Center to work off his fine because he has no money to pay the fine.

At the Detention Center, Ray is greeted by many of his friends. Because they are arrested so frequently, the winos know the "system" in the Detention Center and they fit in without any trouble. Ray will work off his fine at four dollars per day. Thus, he will get out in fourteen days or two weeks. Because Ray is young(thirty-five), the wear and tear of alcoholism have not taken their toll like they have with the older alcoholics in the Detention Center. Many of them undergo severe cases of delerium tremens and are sick for days. Being young, Ray responds to the balanced meals and the rest at the Detention Center and feels better quickly. When his two weeks are up, Ray is released from the Detention Center. While he was in the Center, he worked as a mechanic in the police department garage. But, although Ray is a fair mechanic, he has no job when he is released. Consequently, broke, no job, no residence (his room at the hotel expired several days before Ray was released), Ray heads back to Skid Row where he has friends and where he can get a drink. Back on Skid Row, Ray panhandles several passersby, collects several quarters, and heads for the liquor store.

Although this example is fictitious, it approximates the general phenomenon of the Endless Cycle. In terms of symbolic interaction,

Skid Row winos seem to possess the same shared symbols and meanings as other Skid Row men. Thus, it is not as difficult for Skid Row winos to "take the role of the other" winos because they have the same social symbols and group perspective. Through group consensus the winos find a type of safety in each other because they can generally anticipate the attitudes and actions of other winos. Furthermore, the winos are somewhat familiar with the type of behavior which is expected from them and they are somewhat familiar with the attitudes and actions of these two groups of people toward them. Consequently, although Skid Row winos may report that they do not like the type of social world in which they live, they may find it more satisfying in terms of expected behavior than novel situations would produce. That is, Skid Row winos are usually quite knowledgeable about the process of arrest, conviction, and incarceration. Thus, they know what the "system" is like and they know what behavior is expected from them. Therefore, they may find a safety in a secure position even though the position is stigmatized and degraded by Skid Row proprietors and police. Ultimately, the Skid Rower may argue that he doesn't like his social situation, but he apparently endures it because his perspective and social position are the only things he knows.

In this light, it does not seem difficult to realize that possibly few people actually want to change the conditions of the Endless Cycle. As seen earlier in this Chapter, it appears that Skid Row proprietors do not want to change the Cycle for economic motivations. And, the police may not want to change the Cycle for economic and legal motivations. Lastly, Skid Row winos do not appear to want to change the Cycle because they have incorporated the Cycle into their lifestyle and are familiar with expectations of themselves and expectations of others.

In conclusion, the Endless Cycle appears to operate between the institutions of Skid Row proprietors and the police department. These relatively stable institutions cater to some of the perceived needs of urban nomads. Moreover, the perceived needs seem to be fairly constant although the population of urban nomads constitutes a migrant group vasculating between Skid Row and jail. Even though several of those people who comprise the Endless Cycle reported that they were unhappy with particular elements of the Cycle, nevertheless, the Cycle continues to function as a type of social organization which has punishments and rewards for most of the participants. Thus, as long as there are Skid Row proprietors who cater to some of the perceived needs of urban nomads; urban nomads who drink alcohol continuously; and a police department who patrols Skid Row and frequently arrests urban nomads for public drunk, the Endless Cycle will probably function as a type of social organization.

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