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RECEPTION:

Organization and Decision Making in a
Juvenile Correctional Reception Center

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CONTENTS

Preface and Acknowledgements..... i

PART ONE

The Organizational Setting

I An Overview: The Juvenile Correctional School System..... 1

II The Juvenile Correctional School Reception Center.. 7

PART TWO

Organizational Functions and Decision Making

III The Role of the Reception Center..... 14

IV Human Factors in Decision Making..... 22

V Decision Making at Reception..... 26

VI Factors in Decision Making: A Summary..... 71

Notes..... 77

Appendix I Staff Perceptions of Boys Sent to Receiving Units..... 81

PREFACE

This paper is the result of some seven months of observations (averaging about two a week) at the reception unit of a state juvenile training school system. The unit accepts boys from the ages of twelve to seventeen who are committed to the system by a juvenile or a probate court. The boys are processed through the reception program in about four weeks and assigned to receiving units in the system where treatment and training programs are initiated. The observations took place between February and November, 1966, with a three-month break during the summer, plus several days of interviewing the following January. After some uncertainty, discussed in Appendix I, the focus of these observations became not the boys, nor the staff, nor the staff-boy interaction, but something broader, the organization itself--the functions of the Reception Center, and especially, because of its importance for the system, the placement decision function.

The paper is divided into two distinct parts. Part One is generally a descriptive presentation first of the entire system and then of the Reception unit. Section One, in describing the J.C.S. system,¹ gives an environmental perspective to the functioning of Reception as an organization. Section Two presents the organization in an essentially descriptive manner, describing the physical plant, the boys, the staff and the program.

Part Two is essentially analytic. The functions of the Reception organization are analyzed and the importance of Reception for the entire system is examined. After a brief discussion about staff interaction, one function of the organization, that

of placement decision making is examined in detail. Emphasized here are the mechanics of the process--what is done and who does it, that is, who the decision makers are--and then the factors that go into making the decision are examined in detail. These include organizational, human, and random or non-logical factors. The final section is a resumé of the factors that were seen to be important in the decision-making process. Appendix II consists of a series of direct quotations from the Reception staff pertaining to questions about typical boys sent from Reception to the other units, and is related to the decision-making chapter.

Since reception centers are fairly dull and prosaic things, very little has been written about them. Most articles and books are of the prison manual type, have no bearing on the kind of study involved here, and because of their generally poor quality and different approach will not be cited or mentioned again. Given this total lack of previous material to build upon in the area, this study is necessarily explanatory and descriptive. While the reader may feel that some verifiable hypotheses could be developed out of the material at hand, this is not the purpose of the study--rather this work should be regarded as a first step to a more refined study, and the material here should be regarded as only indicative of areas worthy of future exploration.*

*For these reasons, the number of placement conferences attended, while admittedly a small sample, is not viewed as a major problem. It should be kept in mind, however, in the examination of the data in Chapter V, that these observations do not necessarily reflect the current situation at Reception, and that over a larger sampling of conferences, the superintendent and the part-time counselor would not rank as high in overall importance, since they would have attended a smaller percentage of the conferences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Perhaps the greatest debt is owed to the Superintendent of the J.C.S. system and the two Reception Directors, who by allowing the observations made this study possible; and the entire Reception Staff, who were cooperative throughout and endured my presence and frequent questions with amazing equanimity. Thanks are also due Dr. John Lofland for much advice and encouragement, Drs. Robert Vinter and Charles Wolfson for initial assistance in the study, and Drs. Rosemary Sarri and Robert Vinter for various comments and ideas. Finally a debt is owed to Mary Surplless Dickson for her assistance, support and endurance.

PART ONE THE ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

I. An Overview: The Juvenile Correctional School System.

The Juvenile Correctional School System (J.C.S.), part of the state Social Services Department of a fairly populous mid-western state, is now part of an integrated program of treatment for delinquent youths. The integrated program, consisting of the Field Representatives, J.C.S. and the After-Care Workers, is designed to supervise the youths for an indeterminate period from commitment by the court until discharge.

COMPOSITION OF THE UNITS.

To get a general idea of the nature of the J.C.S. units, the description provided by J.C.S. in a 1966 memorandum sent to all County offices and Field Representatives should suffice (with the appropriate unit name changes for anonymity):

Reception Center: Except for boys processed directly to target units from the Metropolitan County Youth Home Reception staff, all admittances are to the Reception Center at Lakeville.... A three- to six-week diagnostic and orientation program will be conducted with each boy prior to transfer to a permanently assigned J.C.S. unit. The capacity in the Reception Center is 62 boys.

Stillwater School: An open campus type program with a capacity for 440 boys in three housing units (currently numbered I, II, and III Units) for 140, 150, and 150 boys respectively. Each housing unit is divided into separate halls of 20 or 25 boys each. All boys are assigned individual rooms. A full curriculum or academic school, vocational training and recreational activities is offered. Group and individual counseling, psychological, psychiatric and medical services are vital parts of the treatment program. The boy's readiness for release is determined by the staff and is based on their evaluation of the boy's investment, response to program and aftercare worker's information regarding the readiness of a placement.²

Center City School: An open campus type program which operates most effectively when the population can be maintained at a capacity of not more than 300 boys. This involves cottage units of 20 and 25 boys each except for Pennsylvania Hall which provides a community employment program for 15 boys. All cottages are of the dormitory type. A full academic and vocational training curriculum is offered along with a variety of recreational and extra-curricular activities. Group and individual counseling, psychological, and medical services are designed to help the boy gain the most from this institutional experience. Determination of release readiness based on the same criteria as from other J.C.S. programs.

Youth Rehabilitation Camps: Located at Belleaire and Fallingwater, two year-round camp facilities offer a focus on outdoor educational, work and recreational activities for 50 boys each. Boys are carefully selected for this program based primarily on their ability to form relationships, maturity level and motivation toward a heavy emphasis on conservation work project activity.

Rolling Meadows Center (Formerly Maximum Control Unit):³
A back-up program for all J.C.S. units, this facility can offer services on a more individualized basis than in any other program. For the boy requiring a careful blending of relationship, program activities and structure, Rolling Meadows Center is selected. Some boys are assigned on a short-stay basis in order to re-enforce strengths and then return to an open-program setting. Others are in need of continued treatment in this setting where the program can be opened or closed to allow the testing desired. Return directly to community from Rolling Meadows Center is a desired plan in selected cases. This facility has a capacity for 100 boys and individual rooms are provided all residents. Social and psychological treatment techniques, augmented by psychiatric consultative services, are integrated with educational, recreational and group-care activities to motivate social, emotional and education growth.⁴

Average populations in the four units (regarding the camps as one unit and the two Stillwater School sections as one unit) during the first half of 1966 as computed by J.C.S. were:

Table I: Populations

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Average Population</u>	
	Number	Per Cent
Center City	348	44.8
Stillwater	252	32.4
Camps	97	12.5
Maxcon	<u>80</u>	<u>10.3</u>
Totals	777	100.0

During the same period (which includes half of the observation time) the average population at the Reception Center was about 45, that of the Metropolitan County Reception Center, about 15.

THE PROCESS OF TREATMENT: THE RECEPTION CENTER.

After it is determined by the court and the field representative that the boy should be placed in the J.C.S. system, he is sent to the Reception Center for processing. The boy remains at Reception for about four weeks--the usual range is from three to five weeks, though a few remained over three months during the observation period. After this period of testing and observation by the Reception staff, a decision is made in a general meeting of the professional staff as to which of the possible J.C.S. units described above is "best for the boy". The boy is told that his placement is in his best interest, that there is no "bad" placement, and that his length of stay depends only on how much he "invests" in the program. It should be noted, however, that the average time spent in each unit before release varies significantly. Thus in the June 1965 report by the

superintendent, the average lengths of stay for 758 boys who were released during 1965 up to that time were by unit:

Table II: Length of Stay

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Length of Stay</u>
Center City	10.7 months
Stillwater, Unit I	8.8 months
Stillwater, Unit II	8.1 months
Maxcon	10.6 months
Camps	13.8 months ⁶

Although initial placement need not be permanent, usually, with the exception of transfers to Maxcon, this is the case. Maxcon receives some boys from Reception, but primarily it receives boys from the other units. Although none of the Reception staff was certain of the exact criteria for sending a boy from one of the other units to Maxcon, the feeling was that these were boys who had "failed" in a more open program--boys who had run from the other units ("truanted" in the argot of J.C.S.), boys who had become very aggressive or abusive with other boys or staff, or boys who refused to participate in the programs at the other units. The average length of stay for these boys was 16.3 months over the same 1965 period.⁷

THE TREATMENT PROGRAM.

Individual differences between the various J.C.S. units have been indicated before and will be discussed in some detail later. In general, J.C.S. tries to achieve its objectives⁸ through a combination of separation from the home and environment, schooling,

psychological and psychiatric treatment and academic and vocational training within a structured and to some degree custodial setting. The program differences among units, then, stem from a different mix of the above--one program emphasizes school more heavily, another discipline and treatment. The Reception unit is supposed to, among other things, make a determination which mix of the above will best meet the needs of the boy.

As a first step in accepting a boy from Reception, all units except Camp have their own reception facility where the boy will be held for up to several weeks while further testing may take place and he is oriented to that facility's program. This second step results in some duplication of functions and some confusion, but apparently the outputs of Reception are not satisfactorily processed to meet the needs of these units. The presence of these secondary reception facilities has resulted in the suggestion by various personnel within J.C.S. as well as outsiders, that the Reception unit be closed or used for some other purpose.

After this second period of observation and testing, the boy is accepted into the unit's program, and is "treated" at that unit, unless transferred out, until release.

RELEASE AND DISCHARGE: RETURNING THE JUVENILES TO THE COMMUNITY.

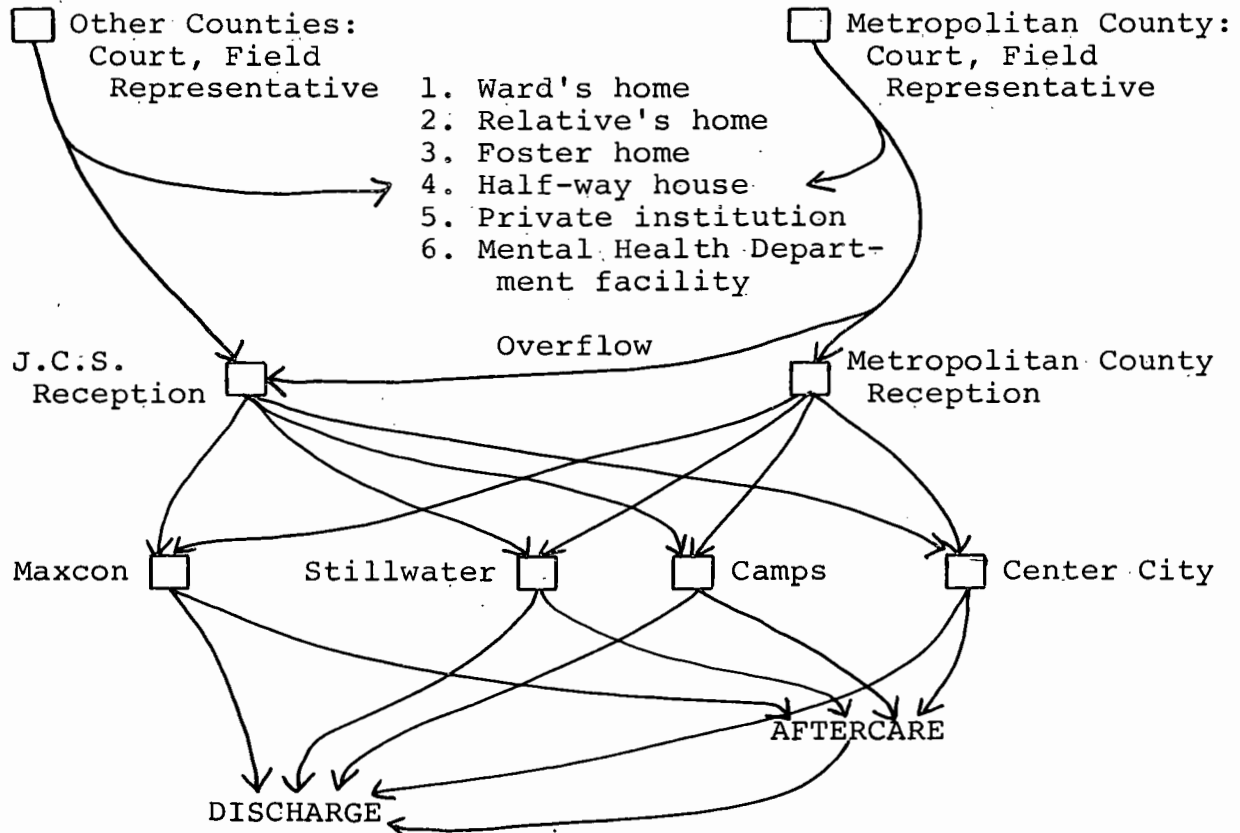
When there is a determination made by the boy's caseworker and the caseworker's supervisor that the boy has received "maximum benefit" from the institutional program, he is transferred to an after-care status. Usually, the boy is returned to the home, but in about ten or fifteen per cent of the cases, the

boy is placed in a half-way house or some sort of foster-care facility. Occasionally (in about five or ten per cent of the cases), the boy is discharged from further supervision at the time he leaves J.C.S., but usually he goes through a period of aftercare. Immediate discharge occurs 1) when the boy reaches nineteen, 2) when he enters the armed forces, or 3) if he has been sentenced in an adult court for some offense committed while on home leave or "truancy".

THE TOTAL SYSTEM

The flow chart in Diagram I illustrates the total J.C.S. system. The diagram is simplified in that it does not show the return flow from after care or discharge to the J.C.S. units or the county court.

Diagram I: J.C.S. System Flow Chart



II. The Juvenile Correctional School Reception Center.

PHYSICAL PLANT.

The Reception Center consists of a series of interconnected one-story wings located a few miles from the town of Lakeville in a rural area of the state. From the outside, the Center looks more like a factory--there are no bars and only one fence, surrounding the athletic field behind the structure. No staff member is armed or in uniform. Nowhere on the grounds is there posted any sign indicating the nature of the J.C.S. complex.

The boys are separated from most professional staff (the distinction between professional and line staff will be made at a later point) by locked doors. Each boy has his own room in one of the two residential wings. Each of these wings also contains the classroom and a recreation area. A separate wing contains the detention area. Wing supervisors keep the boys under surveillance during the day and supervise work details. Usually the separation by wings hold throughout a boy's stay--he rarely has contact with the boys, the teacher or the wingmen on the other wing. The teachers and the recreation director are also located in this area. Like the boys, the teacher's rarely have contact with the other residential wing. The recreation director, in charge of all reaction activities, has contact with both groups.

The rest of the professional staff--the director, the psychologist, the counselors, the psychiatrist, and the part-time counselors, are located in a separate wing of the facility.

THE BOYS.

As was stated above, the boys who are sent through Reception range from twelve to seventeen. There is some attempt to weed out the serious mental cases and those who are so retarded mentally that the J.C.S. program would be worthless, but other than these efforts, all commitments are sent to Reception for processing. At Reception, there is no attempt made to segregate a boy because of his past record, and while the more serious offenders and those whose records indicate that they might create problems; i.e., homosexuals, exhibitionists, emotionally unstable boys or highly aggressive boys might be watched more carefully, there was no conscious effort by the staff to treat the boys differently, and the observer noted little differential treatment based on the boys' past records. Even when a boy who committed a particularly repulsive and violent capital offense which received nationwide press coverage was sent to J.C.S., this norm was adhered to by the staff--he was put with the other boys and treated no differently.

Offenses among the boys covered a wide range, particularly because of the broad discretion of the committing judge and the disparity in sentencing between rural and urban courts. Thus a boy might be committed for as minor an offense as a curfew violation in a rural court, while a series of violent crimes might be viewed as not sufficient grounds for commitment in some urban courts. Crimes ranged from serious assaults, rape and murder to minor thefts, fights and property damage and also included boys who were committed because of chronic truancy from

school, running away from home or "incorrigibility". Due to a lack of facilities and a broadly-worded statute, "neglected" children--children who were deserted by their parents or whose parents were judged incapable of properly caring for them were also committed to J.C.S. and processed through Reception.

As might be expected, most Negro boys came from the urban areas, particularly Metropolitan County. In August, 1966, the composition of the entire J.C.S. system was white: 493, Negro: 417, or about 45% Negro.⁹

Educationally, the boys also varied widely--scoring on the Wide Range Achievement Test and the Stanford Achievement Test showed a range from non-readers to advanced high school readers, and I.Q. scores ranged from 145 to the low 60's during the observation period.

THE STAFF.

Professional and Line Staff.

One distinction among staff that has been alluded to several times is that between line and professional staff. Line staff are those staff members whose duties are mainly custodial, such as the wing supervisors, or are involved in the everyday running of the Reception Center, such as grounds crews, maintenance or kitchen staff. This is not to indicate that the latter group, those who are involved in the Reception Center's everyday operations, do not also serve a custodial function, for many of them do. Frequently, boys assigned to "work details" help with many of these operations under the supervision of this group of line staff.

The professional staff are those whose major function is diagnostic and/or therapeutic. Each of these staff members has a particular professionalized skill which is utilized in obtaining an over-all assessment of the boy when the placement decision is made, and in addition, this professionalized skill may be used to help the boy with a particular problem or group of problems while he is at the Reception Center. The two groups are further distinguished in that all professional staff members have a B.A. degree as a condition of their employment, and they have a higher base-pay rate. The professional staff members include the director, the counselors, the teachers, the psychologist, the recreation director and the psychiatrist.

This group, along with the superintendent, have a substantial impact upon the individual boy at Reception, and have the primary responsibility for deciding where to send the boy after processing. For these reasons, the main emphasis will be upon these staff members.*

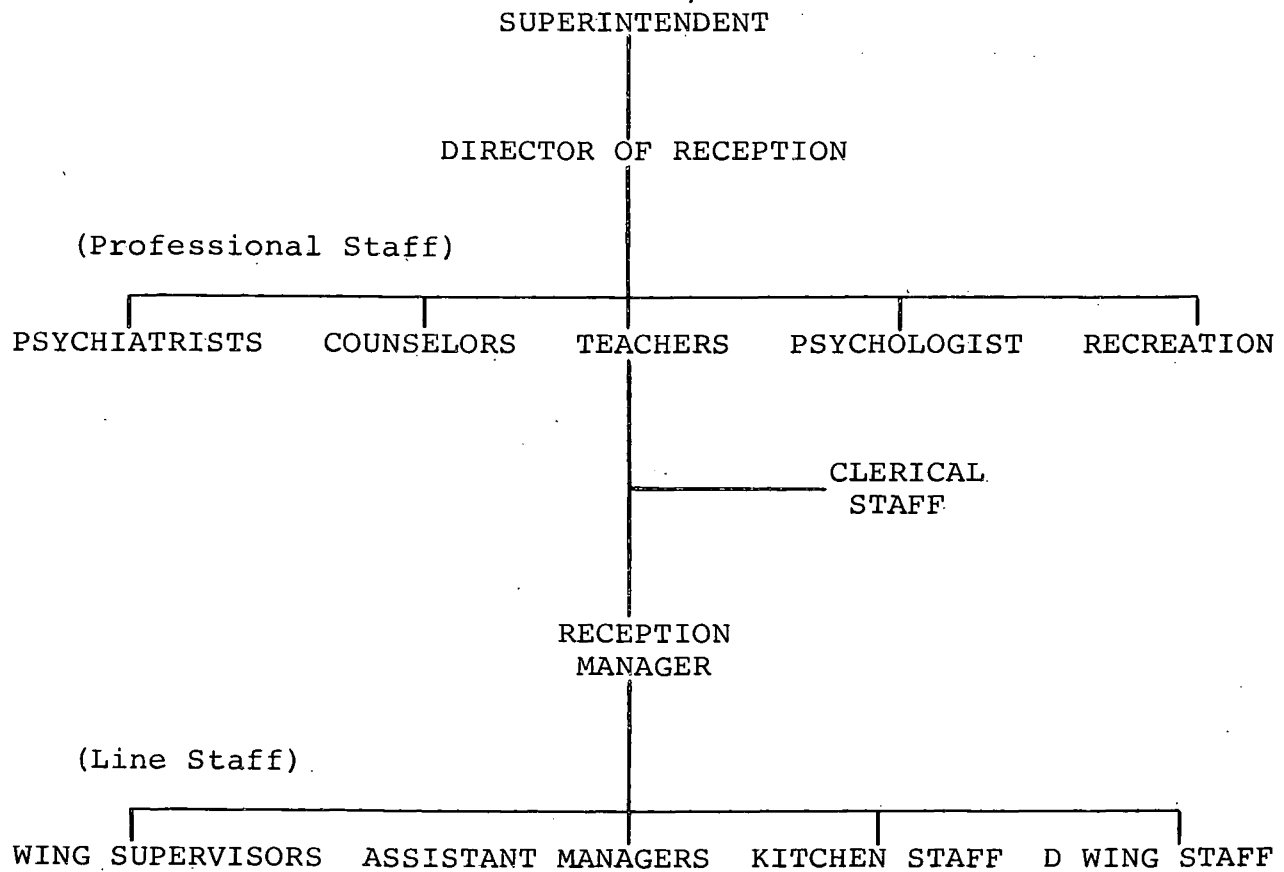
*This admitted bias results in a relative neglect of the line staff, and thus perhaps results in an unbalanced presentation of the Reception Center. This could not be helped, for it soon became evident that it would be extremely difficult if not impossible to belong to both "camps", especially given the aforementioned distinct split between the two staffs. Donald Black has suggested that the line staff, while of little import in the actual conferences studied, may have been a factor in that they transmitted their impressions of the boys to the professional staff. To the extent the professional staff members adopted these perceptions as their own, the line staff could be a factor. In addition, to the extent line staff members through their custodial acts affect the behavior of the boy as seen by the professional staff, they could be a factor in the placement decision.

The medical facility and staff will be neglected, for here observations were not only difficult, but of questionable worth, since the impact of this group on the functions of the Center was not significant.

Staff Duties.

The administrative organization of Reception is presented in Diagram II. No formal job descriptions were available to the observer during the observation period. The observer was several times told by the director and the superintendent that none existed. In the absence of these, it is necessary to draw up a list of functions and duties based upon the observations.

Diagram II: Administrative Organization of Reception



The Director. The director of Reception is the administrative head of the facility. He serves directly as advisor to and supervisor of the members of the professional staff, and indirectly, through the reception manager, as supervisor of the line staff.

For the first two months of the observation period, Mr. Gilbert¹⁰ was the director of Reception. He resigned in early April, 1966, to take an advisory position in corrections in a neighboring state. Several weeks later, Mr. Packard, a professional staff member of the Maxcon unit was appointed director of Reception. The most noteworthy change Mr. Packard brought about in the Reception organization, it should be mentioned, was the change in the basic structure of the placement decision--from a decision by the director and the counselor to a joint decision made by all members of the professional staff.

The Counselors. During the observation period, there were two full-time counselors, Miss LaPeer and Miss Walters, and sometimes one, sometimes two part-time counselors. In addition, during Mr. Gilbert's directorship, the psychologist also carried a case load. The position of counselor is similar to that of a caseworker, except that only a B.A. degree is required.

After a boy is assigned to a counselor, the counselor is expected to read his record and then meet with the boy soon after he arrives at Reception. Further meetings and counselling sessions take place as necessary--when the boy commits a serious breach of rules and is disciplined, when the counselor thinks it necessary, based on his own observations or on information received from other staff members, or when the boy desires such meetings. The main purpose for these meetings, aside from meeting the needs of the individual case, is so the counselor can get enough information and insight on the case to write a final report.

Under both directors, the counselor was expected to make a placement recommendation. Under Mr. Gilbert, the counselor's report and recommendation were made and discussed privately, while under Mr. Packard, the recommendation was part of a general placement conference in which all professional staff made and discussed placement recommendations.

The full-time counselors were the only female staff members (excepting secretaries and nurses) at Reception. This situation caused some difficulty in that the male staff members, both line and professional, felt that women could not properly handle young delinquents--that they had favorites and that they were too lenient.

The Teachers. There were two teachers at Reception, Mr. Clark and Mr. Scott, one on each residential wing. One main function of the teacher is to administer a series of achievement tests to determine the boys' scholastic abilities. After this,

the teacher works with the boys individually at their grade level as determined by the testing. Through this interaction the teacher may help the boy and may interest him in school work, but also, the teacher gets a clearer idea of the boy's capabilities and prospects. The teacher then makes an educational report on the boy which is incorporated into the counselor's report. After Mr. Packard became the director, the teacher had the additional duty of taking part in the case conference and making recommendations on the boys' placement.

The Psychologist. Under the directorship of Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Frank, the psychologist had a limited case load of boys, who, Mr. Gilbert judged from their records, would be most in need of psychological help. In addition, he took referrals from the counselors. The duties of the psychologist are to administer various psychological tests and make a final psychological report on each boy he tests. Also, most recommendations for further examination or possible mental commitments begin with him.¹¹

The Coach. The coach, or "recreation director" as he is more formally designated, supervises all athletics at Reception. When weather permits, the coach takes the boys outside, usually in groups so they can be handled more easily. During these periods, he helps the boys with their athletic skills and also observes them and their behavior. Mr. Scott, a teacher, would frequently assist the coach in this work. During the winter, the coach supervises "Arts and Crafts", a shop work period.

The Superintendent. While not actually a member of the professional staff, the superintendent was frequently in close contact with the Reception Center during the observation period. As the immediate superior of the director, he handled the pressing business of that job for the two-week period after Mr. Gilbert left and Mr. Packard was appointed. In the absence of the director, the superintendent took charge of the placement conferences.

PART TWO ORGANIZATIONAL FUNCTIONS AND DECISION-MAKING

III. The Role of the Reception Center.¹²

From an organizational perspective, the Reception Center, though technically part of the treatment process,¹³ is only the initial stage of that process. Thus on a more specific level of analysis, focusing only on the J.C.S. system, it comprises the input stage of the system. As such, Reception serves three major functions: 1) information processing, 2) socialization and orientation, and 3) placement decision-making.¹⁴ Each of these roles and their implications for the larger organization will be examined.

THE ROLE OF INFORMATION PROCESSING.

There are several aspects to this role: 1) information from various sources outside Reception is assembled in the boy's record; 2) gaps in this information are filled; 3) new information is collected; and 4) all the information is summarized in the counselor's final report.

While most information comes from the court where it has already been collected, additional information may come from schools or social agencies. Frequently gaps exist in the assembled information and even if not, there are wide variations in both quality and quantity. Apparently this is because specific formal requirements for information have never been stated. In some cases, the record is practically empty, while others may run over 100 pages. The observer noted one case where there was no school record or family history and another

where the reason for commitment was never stated, and the boy himself did not know why he had been committed.¹⁵ Some information gaps can be filled by the boy himself, others require contacting the committing court, the school or a social agency. Frequently information from the latter sources does not arrive until after the boy is processed through Reception, and thus cannot be used in selecting the receiving unit.

While the information received at Reception will vary from boy to boy, ideally it will include: 1) school behavior and progress--academic performance, psychological tests and social behavior; 2) community behavior--social behavior in the community and reason for commitment; 3) information on the boy's family--composition, stability and social or criminal problems in the family; and where applicable, 4) reports from community agencies that had contact with the boy; and 5) reports from other institutions where the boy had been held or "treated".

At Reception, formal requirements for information do exist--the intake record, the medical record, the school record, the counselor's report and when deemed necessary, the psychological report. In addition, information is developed informally, from reports by the wingmen or by the coach's staff. With the advent of placement conferences, a new source of informal information was created, through staff discussions of the boy's behavior. Though previously staff were expected to discuss the boys with each other, this seemed to be a rather haphazard arrangement--the discussion would take place only if two or more staff members who knew the particular boy

happened to get together and if the boy became a topic of conversation. While the requirements for certain types of information are formalized, the extent and quality of this information are not. One major control is the boy himself. If he is well behaved, quiet, and causes few disciplinary problems, in short, seems to be well adjusted to life at Reception, there will be less information accumulated about him. He probably will not be referred for psychological testing, the amount of social information will be curtailed since the counselor will probably have had less contact with him, and there will be little information from the line staff, since for the most part, they tend to accumulate negative information. Conversely, if the boy becomes a major problem for the staff, large amounts of information will be gathered. Further, personalities are a factor. To the extent the boy may appear more interesting or attractive to a staff member, or seems to have interests in common with a staff member, more information will be accumulated, since these interests will create more staff-boy contact.

The information accumulated at Reception, along with all information that comes from the other sources is summarized by the counselor in the final report, discussed previously.

THE ROLE OF SOCIALIZATION AND ORIENTATION.¹⁶

Though never specified as a main function of Reception, it appears that the Center serves as a sort of basic training experience, adjusting the boys to the quite different life of an institution. This "boot camp" analogy seems particularly

applicable to Reception. The boys are told by their counselors and by other staff members that Reception is the hardest of all the units--rules and restrictions at the others units are less strict and there are more activities to keep the boy occupied. The boys are isolated from the outside world, dress alike, have the same haircuts, live regulated lives, and are put through the same program of testing and observation. In short, there is an effort to eliminate or at least de-emphasize characteristics and past records which might differentiate the boys.¹⁷ Part of the Reception program consists of supplying the boys with information about the receiving units in the system--what the units are like, what programs they offer, and how the length of commitment is determined--both formally through an introductory movie and orientation session and informally through discussion with staff members. However, as with most analogies, there are limits. The Reception program does differ from a basic training program in the amount of individualized care provided, in part due to the ages involved, and in part due to the problems presented.

THE ROLE OF DECISION MAKING AND PLACEMENT.

While this area is the subject of one chapter, a general overview of the process at this point provides an introduction to a major focus of this paper.

There are two kinds of decisions made at Reception, first whether to accept the boy into the system, and second, if accepted, where to place him. The first is important to the

J.C.S. system, since those who do not belong in the program-- those who will receive no benefits from it or perhaps more important, those who will disrupt it--need to be screened out. Under the provisions of P.A. 229,¹⁸ this decision should be made at the court level by the field representative. Frequently, however, it is felt by the Reception staff that the field decision was erroneous.

A few of these felt to be erroneous decisions were reversed at Reception. Consequently, these boys were not accepted into the J.C.S. system. It should be emphasized, however, that this was not commonplace, though complaints about the types of boys sent were frequent. Certainly one reason for this was pressure from the officer of superintendent to "do the best you can with what you've got." Another reason was that it was very difficult to find alternate placements--since this work was being done primarily at the county level, lines of communication between Reception and alternate target units were weak and confused, and these target units were reluctant to take Reception placements since they were used to relying on the field representative's judgment, and thus felt that if these boys really needed their services, they would have been sent from the field.

Three types of boys were screened out during the observation period, mentally retarded, mentally ill, and boys whose conduct did not warrant commitment to J.C.S. The first two groups together did not average more than two boys a month, or less than three per cent of the total passing through Reception. The latter group was rarer still.

The second decision, placement in one of the receiving units, depends upon a number of factors including the information received or accumulated in Reception and the boy's behavior while at Reception. These and other factors are discussed at length in a later chapter.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECEPTION.

These are the functions of Reception. A further question which should be considered is, given these functions, how important are these functions to the larger system--how important or even necessary is Reception? Each function will be considered below.

1. Information Processing. Collecting information, while a useful operation for the entire system, need not be done at Reception. All community information could be collected (as it is supposed to be) at the community level and gaps could be filled in at that time. Because of the close proximity to information sources this would be a simpler process.¹⁹

It is not clear how important the information collected at Reception is to the larger system per se. Certainly the psychological and educational information would have to be gathered at a later time if it were not done at Reception.

2. Socialization and Orientation. There seems to be little question that this is an important step in the processing of the boys. Some type of induction process is necessary to accustom the boys to the substantial environmental change they are about to go through. Both socialization in the form of a

"boot camp" atmosphere and orientation to other units are important in this. There may be some question raised as to how effectively Reception performs this function, for all of the receiving units except the camps now have their own reception centers which receive the boys from Reception, orient them to the program at that unit, conduct further testing when necessary and observe them further. This second reception program may last up to two or three weeks, during which time the boys are entirely separated from the rest of the receiving units except for contacts with staff.

3. Placement Decision-Making. Before the screening process was initiated at the court level and placed under the field representatives, Reception handled much more of the screening of boys, especially mentally ill and mentally retarded. Though this first decision--accepting the boy into the J.C.S. system--is quite important for that system, as was stated previously, it now occurs normally at the court level. Further, in the receiving units, the presence of boys who disrupt the programs would soon become apparent, and the "weeding out" process could then take place.

The importance of the second decision, placement in the units, is harder to assess. It could, to be sure, take place at the court level provided that the programs at the receiving units were understood clearly so that one that would best benefit the boy was chosen, and provided that sufficient information of the type collected at Reception could be accumulated. Implicit in this statement is an assumption that the

various receiving units work most effectively with different types of boys--that all units are not essentially the same. An assessment of whether this is so or not would require a thorough knowledge of the other institutions, something that was not possible in this study. Probably differences between the units would depend upon the programs at the units and the type of boys sent to them--for example, a school program that was filled with low I.Q. boys would soon have to adapt to the inputs. Indications are that the Stillwater and Center City programs are not very much dissimilar, but that the Maxcon and Camp programs are geared to much different types of inputs. It might be that the main placement decision is separating the Camp and Maxcon boys from the others. Though this group accounted for only about fifteen or twenty per cent of all the boys, their presence in the Stillwater and Center City programs might be very disruptive. As with the mentally ill and retarded boys, this group could eventually be separated out, but considering the size of this population, the difficulty is isolating them, and the effects of them on the other boys and the program, (and perhaps the effects of the program on them), it would be far better to make this decision at an earlier point.

Whether all of this could be done more effectively and efficiently at the court level than is being done at Reception, or could be done at Reception are questions left to the reader to consider at the conclusion of this paper.

IV. Human Factors in Decision Making.

Placement conferences are essentially a time and place where the professional staff members come together to discuss and decide on the placement of the boys. While a range of factors is important in these conferences, and will be discussed in the following chapter, it is important in any study of an organization that the reader not neglect the fact that decisions made at these conferences are human decisions, and for this reason, a whole range of human elements is involved.

We sometimes forget that an organization is a group of people behaving. These people are not tools or machines. They have feelings, hopes, and fears. They get sick, hungry, angry, frustrated, happy, sad. Their behavior is subject to a whole range of influences extending back to their births...and impinging upon them from all directions at every moment. Their behavior in organizations is a resultant of all these influences.²⁰

While a detailed description of the staff personalities involved might be useful in analyzing the conference decisions, this is beyond the scope of participant observation in this setting. However, staff interaction is also important and, being a far better area for observation, will be briefly examined here.

STAFF INTERACTION.

Given the functional specialization and the physical separation of the professional staff members, as described in Chapter II, it was interesting but not overly surprising to the observer that there was not a lot of staff interaction at the beginning of the observations. Before the advent of the case conferences,

those "up front", the counselors, the psychologist and the director might meet at coffee breaks or at lunch to discuss a boy, but informal contact was usually limited to these occasions. Formal contact was more limited, primarily to special conferences and meetings. Those "on the wings" were even more isolated, both from each other and from the staff office section. It seemed to the observer that this physical separation between the wings and the offices put the teachers and the coach in an ambivalent position, for their loyalties were to both the professional staff of which they were part, and to the line staff with whom they had most contact. Frequently they would support the line staff in their complaints about the professional staff people "up front".

After the case conferences were instituted, staff interaction increased sharply, both informally in increased contacts between staff as the counselors, the psychologist and for a while the director spent more time on the wings, and formally in the case conferences held weekly. The impact of the case conferences upon the informal interaction is hard to assess, for it cannot be separated from the effect of the new director. He was far more lenient than his predecessor, and this could explain part or all of the increased staff interaction as well as could the conferences.

As might be expected, increased interaction caused some increase in friction. In informal gatherings, especially at lunch time, the staff divided into several groups. Miss Walters, Miss LaPeer, Mr. Frank, and Mr. Gilbert would lunch in one group, and Mr. Mason, Mr. Scott, and Mr. Tanner in another. Mr. Clark

frequently ate alone. Interestingly, this grouping reflects to some degree the separation of the offices from the wings. Of course friendships and hostilities arose and disappeared between and among these groupings. They are interesting insofar as the placement conferences are concerned in that on some occasions they affected the amount of support or opposition a given placement recommendation received.

Another factor in staff behavior at placement conferences and in the Reception unit was that each staff member felt that his or her particular specialization enabled him or her to "know the boy best". Each felt that his particular job enabled him to "know the real boy". Each was sure that most boys were putting up a front for the other staff, but that this facade disappeared during his contact. This opinion was expressed to the observer by all the counselors, the teachers and the coach. Partial exceptions to this were Mr. Scott, who felt that the teachers and the wingmen knew the boys best, and Mr. Mason, who felt that his knowledge of the boy stemmed not from his role as counselor but from his frequent contact with the boys on the wings. Nor was this feeling restricted to the professional staff, for the observer was told by several wingmen and by the Reception manager that they knew the boy best. This generalized feeling was thus always based upon the staff member's role, not his personal qualities.

It should be emphasized, as Diagram II illustrated, that all the professional staff under the director are of equal rank. Being under civil service, all these full-time employees have

equal base salaries, with the only differentials based on further education and length of service. While the observer was told by Mr. Gilbert that each staff member was equally important in the decision-making process, since each provided information based upon his specialization, this was not the case. Since the counselor and the director alone made the decision, and the counselor was the most important person outside of the director in the placement decision, and this was recognized by the other staff. With the advent of the group placement conference, all staff contributed their particular knowledge of the boy and then a decision was made. The only limitations on participation by the various staff members were self-imposed, such as desire to participate, preparedness and having a placement in mind. Thus the previous structural hierarchy disappeared.

V. Decision Making at Reception.

CLASSIFYING THE RECEPTION DECISION.

Perhaps the first distinction that should be made in analyzing decisions is between normative and descriptive analyses of decision making--that is between what the person or the group should do and what either does do.²¹ Judging decisions normatively can become quite a complex project, even if all the necessary information is present, (which is rarely the case) for the analysis often must include value judgments of the value judgments of the decision maker. Seemingly simple questions such as "Was this the right decision?" become "Was this the right decision in light of the facts as now known?", or "Was this the right decision in light of the facts as they should have been known?", or "Was this the right decision in light of the facts as they were known?" or even "Was this the right decision in light of the facts as they were known, given the decision-maker's set of values and psychological make-up?" These sorts of questions are beyond the scope of this paper, and far beyond the limitations of participant observation. Thus we shall limit ourselves to the descriptive type of decision-making analysis--we are more concerned with the "What was done?", "How was it done?" and "Why was it done?" sorts of questions, which though seemingly simple when stated in this form, become quite complicated, as will be shown.

The field of decision making is commonly partitioned according to whether a decision is made by i) an individual or ii) a group, and according to whether it is effected under conditions of (a) certainty, (b) risk, or (c) uncertainty. To this last classification we really must add (d) a combination of uncertainty and risk in light of experimental evidence.²²

The above typology by Luce and Raiffa is expanded by Taylor:

Decision under certainty is that in which not only the alternatives in the choice to be made are known, but also each alternative is known invariably to lead to a specific outcome. Decision under risk is that in which the alternatives are known and in which each alternative leads to a set of possible specific outcomes, each outcome occurring with a known probability. Decision under uncertainty is that in which probability of specific outcomes are unknown, or perhaps not even meaningful.²³

It is clear, then, that the placement decision at Reception, whereby a choice of four possible alternatives within the system is made,²⁴ falls under Luce and Raiffa's partition ii. a., that is, a group decision made under conditions of certainty.

Thus the actual choice is quite simple, given the possible range outlined in the quoted passages. It is the factors that enter into the relatively simple choice that are complex.

Typically, decision making under certainty boils down to this: Given a set of possible acts, to choose one (or all) of those which maximize (or minimize) some given index.²⁵

This index, as the authors later point out, presents the main problems in this type of decision making.²⁶ A Reception staff member, when asked what index is used in the placement decision would probably respond something like, "We choose that program which best meets the needs of the boy." However in an analytic discussion, this statement though useful seems somehow incomplete. In addition we need to know how the needs of the boy are determined and how it is determined whether a program meets these needs. A better phrasing of the indices might be, "We choose that program perceived to best meet the perceived needs of the boy." Though improved, this still is incomplete,

for it ignores at least two other elements: 1) that the decision does not take place in a vacuum, but rather as part of an organizational process and thus must be responsive to the needs of the organization involved; and 2) that the decision is not made by an individual, but by a group, and thus personalities, interaction and other group processes complicate the matter.

To restate the above in another, perhaps simpler form:

- 1) The staff member's perception of the needs of the boy; matched with
- 2) the staff member's perception of the unit designed to best meet those needs;

(together the matching of these two constitutes the recommendation for placement)

which, when presented to the group, if it survives

- 3) the various group processes, interactions and influences that go to make up the actual mechanics of decision making and gains the group's acceptance;

and if it survives

- 4) the organizational constraints and other factors which may be operating;

becomes the placement decision.

In either form, we have four elements, two of which comprise the process of the recommendation, one pertaining to the mechanics of the decision and one outside of but impinging upon this framework, the organizational constraints and requirements. These then will be the foci of this chapter.

Because of the length of the chapter and the complexity of the factors involved, a brief guide to the chapter seems to be in order. The above sequence is somewhat altered so that the reader will develop a sense of the mechanics of decision making.

before the other factors are considered. The placement conferences are first described, then examined along several dimensions. Next the actual mechanics of decision making are examined and an attempt is made to discover which staff members were most influential and why this was so.

The recommendation-making process is the focus of the next three sections, which examine first the staff's perceptions of the boys and the units and the factors which are important in these perceptions and then the possibility that the staff uses a stereotyping process as a short-cut in the matching of the two perceptions. Finally, organizational constraints are examined and several other factors in the decision-making process are discussed.

THE PLACEMENT CONFERENCE.

Through April 1966, the placement decision was essentially a decision reached by the director and a counselor in a private meeting. The counselor's recommendation was supposed to be in part based upon information gathered from the other professional staff members, but it was apparent that frequently there was little attempt to gather or to supply that information. Thus the decision was almost entirely a two-party decision in contrast to the placement conferences that followed.

The placement conferences, which were first held in early May 1966, are usually held weekly. All professional staff members and the reception manager are expected to attend. Exceptions to this were the part-time counselors, whose work days

were Monday and Tuesday, the reception manager, who after a few meetings no longer attended, and of course those absent due to illness or vacation.

The format for these conferences is presented on the following page. As with many formal statements, it frequently was not followed in either order or detail. The director chairs the conferences or in his absence (and in one special meeting, in his presence)²⁷ the superintendent assumes these duties. The names of the boys to be discussed are circulated several days before the meeting to all professional staff, the reception manager and the wing supervisors so that reports can be prepared. The order of names on this list is not alphabetical, but rather based on the time when the boys arrived at Reception--those who arrived earliest are discussed first--and thus is a random occurrence. The boys are almost always discussed in the order on the circulated notice.

If present, the counselor speaks first, covers the outlined material on the format and may or may not make a recommendation for placement. For a while, the counselor also gave the educational material, leaving the teacher with nothing to say. After several pointed complaints, this practice occurred less frequently and the teacher usually spoke second, giving the educational material and perhaps making a recommendation or commenting on the counselor's if one had been made. After that, discussion followed no fixed order. The coach would frequently comment on his impressions of the boy during athletics, as would Mr. Scott, the teacher who frequently helped out during recreation

FORMAT FOR WEEKLY PLACEMENT CONFERENCE

In an effort to have the weekly placement conference operate more expeditiously with opportunity for ample contribution from all members of the team the following format is suggested:

ORDER OF CASE PRESENTATION

I. (COUNSELOR ASSIGNED) - SOCIAL HISTORY

- a) Brief factual resume of family background and intra-family relationships.
- b) Brief resume of delinquencies and attitude re: offenses.
- c) Major problems and needs of boy, tentative treatment plan and program.

II. (TEACHER) - EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS

- a) Past school adjustment, major problems.
- b) Present academic needs, motivation, goals, and potential.
- c) Suggested programming during placement.

III. (RECEPTION MANAGER) - RECEPTION ADJUSTMENT

- a) Brief summary of total wing evaluations.
- b) Major problems on wing and type of supervision required during placement.
- c) General evaluation re: interpersonal relations, work details, etc.

IV. RECREATION

- a) Participation in various recreational activities and ability.
- b) Team work, sportsmanship, acceptance of rules, etc.
- c) Intra-group relationships and general evaluation.

V. (PSYCHOLOGIST) - PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

- a) Personality impressions.
- b) Intellectual functioning and potential.
- c) Strengths and weaknesses in personality.

VI. BRIEF DISCUSSION--Signed counselor's recommendation for target agency, group impressions and recommendations.

periods. Since the reception manager was rarely present, wing reports, when submitted (for less than half of the conferences attended), would be read by the coach or the director. The psychologist, if he had any contact with the boy, would also join in the discussion.

This, then, was the general picture of the meeting. When all those who had pertinent information were present, a boy might be discussed by as few as two staff members, his counselor and his teacher, or by as many as were in attendance, which varied from four to nine. One teacher, Mr. Clark, was very reticent, only spoke about boys in his classroom, and did not present material on all of them. The other teacher, Mr. Scott, who with coach Tanner had contact with almost all of the boys, spoke freely. The psychologist, when in attendance, spoke only on those boys referred to him. The director was involved in most discussions, but not as a major participant--though he frequently made placement recommendations based on the discussion that was taking place. The superintendent, when present, played a larger role in the decision making than did Mr. Packard--frequently he would make recommendations before any had been offered, and occasionally he would overrule others.

One norm at the conferences which was never articulated but yet seemed to operate frequently was that a counselor never makes a conflicting recommendation for another counselor's boy if that counselor is present and has a recommendation. This was violated in only one instance during the observations. In fact, counselors generally refrained from commenting upon each other's boys at all.

THE OBSERVATIONS.

Due to several factors--the conferences were not held until two and one-half months after observations began, the meetings were not always held, and the day of the meetings and even the starting time varied--the observer could not attend all the placement conferences. Nine conferences were attended: three in May, three in September, two in October, and one in November. No observations were made in June, July or August. During the conference observation period, of May, and September to mid-November, two conferences were not held, and four were held but not observed. A total of 118 cases were discussed in these nine conferences, or an average of thirteen cases per conference. The number of cases discussed ranged from ten to sixteen. One early observation day of 12 cases was thrown out because of insufficient data about the decision-making process. The data on placement discussions and decisions are presented in Table III.

Table III: Placement Discussions and Decisions

<u>Cases</u>	<u>Number</u>
Meaningful discussion	
Decision reached without real conflict	53
Decision reached with conflict	23
Total Meaningful discussion	<u>76</u>
Decision reached, but no meaningful discussion because of time limitations	13
Total Decisions reached	<u>89</u>
No decision reached ²⁸	17
Total Cases	<u>106</u>

Of the remaining 106 cases, no decision was reached in seventeen or sixteen per cent of the total. In thirteen or fifteen per cent of the eighty-nine cases where a decision was reached, no meaningful discussion took place because the conferees ran out of time.²⁹ Of the seventy-six cases in which a decision was reached and in which time was not a factor, the observer judged that fifty-three decisions were reached without real conflict, while in twenty-three, or thirty per cent of the seventy-six, conflict occurred. The judgement of the occurrence of conflict is that one or more placement recommendations were rejected by the group in the twenty-five conflict cases. The non-conflict cases were cases in which there were no rejections of recommendations. Since suggestions of alternate placements are frequently made (data on these were not collected), the observer had to make a decision whether the alternative placement was a suggestion or a recommendation. Those alternatives which were presented to the group and argued for were considered recommendations, while those which were more or less just "thrown out" to the group as a possible placement were considered suggestions. Doubtful cases were classed as only suggestions. The breakdown of the eighty-nine cases by receiving unit, both for recommendations adopted and rejected, are presented in Table IV.

Table IV: Placement Recommendations by Receiving Unit

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Adopted</u>		<u>Rejected</u>	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Camp	12	13.5	5	20.0
Center City	35	39.3	7	28.0
Stillwater	31	34.8	8	32.0
Maxcon	5	5.6	1	4.0
Center City or Stillwater	5	5.6	0	0.0
Not Camp	0	0.0	3	12.0
Not Stillwater	0	0.0	1	4.0
N.A.	<u>1</u>	<u>1.1</u>	<u>0</u> 30	<u>0.0</u>
Total	89	99.9*	25	100.0

For comparison, Table V presents the total transfers from Reception (both Lakeville and Metropolitan County units) during the calendar year in which the observations took place.

Table V: Transfers from Reception Units

<u>Receiving Unit</u>	<u>Admitted</u>		<u>Admitted</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	Jan. - June ³¹		July - Dec. ³²		1966	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Center City	173	34.0	198	45.8	371	42.4
Stillwater	198	44.6	173	40.0	371	42.4
Camp	60	13.5	38	8.8	98	11.2
Maxcon	<u>13</u>	<u>2.9</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>5.3</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>4.1</u>
Total	444	100.0	432	99.9 *	876	100.1 *

*Percentage totals marked with an asterisk do not total 100 per cent due to rounding.

While the observation data are not claimed to be typical of the entire year; it is interesting to note that the percentage distribution in the yearly output totals closely parallels that of the observation period, with only the Stillwater distributions varying by more than three per cent.

It is clear that the great majority of the decisions made, more than eighty per cent, are either a Stillwater or a Center City placement. As has been mentioned, this is not to indicate that there is no purpose for the conferences, for it may be that although the choice between Center City and Stillwater may not be important in some cases, as is indicated by efforts to "even up" these two populations³³ and even by the fact that in five cases, there was no effort on the part of staff to choose between the two, still channeling the other fifteen to twenty per cent out of one main flow to Maxcon or Camp may be vital to the functioning of the other two programs, and may be important in the treatment of the fifteen to twenty per cent group. Further, the fact that staff disagreed in almost one-third of the cases on the placement, and argued these disagreements (sometimes quite heatedly), indicated that they did not see these decisions as unimportant.

The four rejected recommendations in Table IV titled "Not Camp" and "Not Stillwater" occurred when a staff member recommended that the boy not be sent to a particular unit, and later that unit was chosen by the group. These four cases are counted as a rejected recommendation for that unit in Table VI to give an indication of the relative difficulty in choosing among the

various units, since either a rejected recommendation for or a rejected recommendation against a particular unit indicated that the person making the rejected decision did not, in the group's opinion, properly match the boy with the unit.

Table VI: Per Cent of Total Recommendations Made for (or Against) a Unit Rejected by the Group

<u>Placement Decision</u>	<u>Rec. Made</u>	<u>Rec. Rejected</u>	<u>Total Recs.</u>	<u>Per Cent Rejected</u>
Camp	12	8	20	40.0
Center City	35	7	42	16.7
Maxcon	5	1	6	16.7
Stillwater	31	9	40	22.5
Center City or Still- water	5	0	5	0.0
N.A.	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Total	89	25	114	

This differential is made even more clear when the thirteen time-controlled decisions made without discussion are removed.

Table VII: Per Cent of Total Recommendations Made for (or Against) a Unit Rejected by the Group (Time-controlled Decisions Excluded)³⁴

<u>Placement Decision</u>	<u>Rec. Made</u>	<u>Rec. Rejected</u>	<u>Total Recs.</u>	<u>Per Cent Rejected</u>
Camp	8	8	16	50.0
Center City	32	7	39	17.9
Maxcon	5	1	6	16.7
Stillwater	27	9	36	25.0
Center City or Still- water	3	0	3	0.0
N.A.	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Total	76	25	91	

While it is impossible to tell from the data and very difficult to tell from the meetings if the difficulty in matching the boy with the unit arose from a misperception of the unit or of the boy, the results do show relative difficulties in placements. One possible explanation for this disagreement is proposed later in this chapter.

THE MECHANICS OF DECISION MAKING.

In most meetings, as social psychologists have frequently demonstrated, certain people for various reasons will assume a dominant role and others a passive role. Placement conferences are no different. Certain staff members were consistently more influential in the decision-making process, while others consistently took a minor role. Table VIII ranks the staff by the percentage of the total decisions they made. This again is a subjective ranking, for it is necessary to separate out those who actually made a placement decision from those who merely seconded it.

Decisions were deemed made in two possible situations:

- 1) where there was little discussion and a staff member made a recommendation that was readily accepted by the group; or
- 2) where more than one staff member spoke in favor of a decision that was accepted by the group. In (2), if the observer could not determine whose arguments were the decisive ones (as frequently happened), all those who argued in favor of the decision were credited with having made it. If the observer could determine whose arguments carried the group, then that person was credited with the decision. The important

distinction to be made here is among 1) those who discuss a placement, 2) those who argue for a placement, and 3) those who merely agree with the arguers--the "me too's". Only those in the second group are regarded as decision makers. Frequently decisions were made by more than one person, and in some cases, it was impossible to determine who had made the decision.

Table VIII: Staff Recommendations Adopted³⁵

<u>Staff Member and Position</u>	<u>Recommendations Adopted</u>	
	Number	Per Cent
Scott, teacher	19	17.4
Walters, counselor	17	15.6
Murphy, superintendent	16	14.7
Tanner, coach	15	13.8
Mason, part-time counselor	12	11.0
LaPeer, counselor	10	9.2
Packard, director	5	4.6
Clark, teacher	3	2.8
All others	6	5.5
N.A.	6	5.5
Total	109	100.1*

The number of recommendations each staff member made that were rejected by the group also gives an index of the relative influences of the staff. These are presented in Table IX in order of increasing number of rejections.

Table IX: Staff Recommendations Rejected

<u>Staff Member and Position</u>	<u>Recommendations Rejected</u>	
	Number	Per Cent
Mason, part-time counselor	0	0.0
Walters, counselor	1	3.6
Tanner, coach	1	3.6
Scott, teacher	2	7.1
Murphy, superintendent	2	7.1
LaPeer, counselor	4	14.3
Clark, teacher	6	21.4
Packard, director	9	32.1
All others	3	11.0
N.A.	0	0.0
Total	28	100.2*

A third index of relative strength among staff members is the number of times they made a recommendation that was adopted while another staff member's recommendation was rejected. That is, in a conflict situation, their recommendation was preferred. The data are presented in Table X, in order of the largest number of these recommendations adopted.

Table X: Staff Recommendations Adopted in Cases Where Other Recommendations Were Rejected

<u>Staff Member and Position</u>	<u>Recommendations Adopted</u>	
	Number	Per Cent
Scott, teacher	9	21.4
Tanner, coach	7	16.7
LaPeer, counselor	6	14.3
Walters, counselor	5	11.9
Packard, director	5	11.9
Mason, part-time counselor	5	11.9
Murphy, superintendent	3	7.1
Clark, teacher	0	0.0
All others	2	4.8
N.A.	0	0.0
Total	42	100.0

Finally, it should be pointed out that some staff members did not attend all the observed meetings, and therefore could not make recommendations on all possible boys or participate in all possible decisions made. For example, Mr. Murphy, the superintendent, attended less than half of the meetings, and thus his recommendations were limited to a fairly small universe of boys. Recommendations adopted as a percentage of possible recommendations that could have been made are presented in Table XI.

Table XI: Recommendations Adopted and Possible Recommendations

<u>Staff Member and Position</u>	<u>Rec. Adopted</u>	<u>Possible Rec.</u>	<u>Per Cent Possible Rec. Adopted</u>
Murphy, superintendent	16	32	50.0
Mason, part-time counselor	12	26	46.2
Scott, teacher	19	76	25.0
Walters, counselor	17	69	24.6
Tanner, coach	15	65	23.1
LaPeer, counselor	10	65	15.4
Packard, director	5	53	9.4
Clark, teacher	3	73	4.1
All others	6	NA	----
N.A.	6	--	----
Total	109	NA	

Since in general, counselors do not make recommendations about other counselors' cases, and especially do not do so if that counselor is present, one method for ranking counselors among themselves is by the percentage of each counselor's cases in which that counselor's recommendation was adopted. These data are presented in Table XII for the three counselors included in the observations.

Table XII: Counselor's Recommendations Adopted

<u>Counselor</u>	<u>Total Rec. Adopted</u>	<u>Rec. for Own Cases Adopted</u>	<u>Own Cases</u>	<u>Per Cent Rec. for Own Cases Adopted</u>
Mason	12	9	10	90.0
Walters	17	16	26	61.5
LaPeer	10	10	21	47.6

While various correlations and rank order statistics could be computed on the above data, it is not the purpose of this paper to discover the best method to measure relative staff influence in decision making. To give too much credence to the above rankings without understanding the factors in the decision-making process would be folly. These will be discussed at a later point, but two examples will illustrate the problem. Mr. Packard ranks higher than normal in Table X, where he is tied with several others in fourth position. Because of the organizational demands for space he had to make these decisions and reject those of others. His relative power, then, varies with the organizational demands. If there are more constraints, he will become more powerful in this respect, and if there are fewer, his importance will diminish. Mr. Murphy ranks surprisingly low in Table X compared to his position in the other tables. This, however, is an indication of his strength, for when present, he would usually make his recommendations first, then ask for comments. Since staff rarely argued with these, he ranks relatively low in this respect.

A combination of all four rankings, without assigning priorities to the various methods used, yields the following indication of relative importance in decision making:

Table XIII: Ranking of Staff by Relative Importance in Decision Making

Staff Member and <u>Position</u>	Rank Table <u>VII</u>	Rank Table <u>VIII</u>	Rank Table <u>IX</u>	Rank Table <u>X</u>	<u>Total Rankings</u>
Scott, teacher	1	4	1	3	9
Walters, couns.	2	2	4	4	12
Mason, pt-time counselor	5	1	4	2	12
Tanner, coach	4	2	2	5	13
Murphy, super.	3	4	7	1	15
LaPeer, couns.	6	6	3	6	21
Packard, director	7	8	4	7	26
Clark, teacher	8	7	8	8	32

While admittedly rough, the table does give some indication of relative importance. As with any ordinal ranking, actual differences between staff in each table, while perhaps important, must necessarily be ignored. Further, there is no attempt to weight the various tables. Nonetheless the results are interesting.

Given the job descriptions and the format for case conferences, one would think that the counselors would be the most important staff members in decision making. It seems that this is not the case. The preceding data indicate that the decision-making process at Reception was a group affair. However, the composition of the group is a little unusual: given the difficulties with Table X, the superintendent should rank even

higher, but in any case, the major decision makers are a teacher, a counselor, the coach, and when they were in attendance, the superintendent and a part-time counselor. Of relative unimportance, and generally in attendance were the director, another counselor and another teacher.

Many factors could be cited to account for this surprising disparity in decision-making importance. Certainly personalities are a factor, especially strong personalities vs. weak ones. Some attempt was made in a previous chapter to present an indication of the personalities involved and the reader is left to draw his own conclusions, for a discussion of small group behavior based on these personality dimensions is beyond the scope of this paper.

Closely linked to personalities are 1) commitment--if a staff member felt very strongly for or against a given placement, this frequently decided the placement; and 2) staff interaction--rivalries, hostilities, friendships or alliances which sometimes determined whether a staff member would support, not support or disagree with another's recommendation. Thus the observer was told after one meeting, "I couldn't shoot her down twice in the same meeting, she's a good kid." Another staff member, commenting of the relative importance of his fellow staff in decision making said of a person (who, by the way, ranked quite low in Table XIII) "He could recommend Maxcon or the Moon, it makes no difference. No one listens to him."

Another important factor is degree of preparation of the staff. The observer was told by one counselor (who ranked quite

high in Table XIII) "If you know your boy and you know the placement you want beforehand, you can almost always ram it through." This is especially true of the counselors--the counselor ranking lowest of the three in Table XIII stated several times she was not prepared, and frequently had no recommendation to make. Although in such cases the boy could be held over for another week, counselors rarely requested this. Instead, others made the decision. Preparation was a factor in the decision making of the non-counselor staff also. If it was evident that a person making a recommendation did not know much about the boy, as was true of the director, who told the group that he did not have time to read the records and was only going by the discussion at the conferences, the chances of that person's recommendation being rejected increased.

Also pertaining to the staff, but in a more random nature, is the mood any or all are in at a given conference. Though perhaps related to commitment and certainly to personality, it should be regarded as a separate factor. Thus the observer was told once "I just didn't feel like fighting them" and another time "I felt it was time to take a stand."

Finally, besides the two organizational factors relating to the superintendent's and the director's roles in the conferences, it should be pointed out that in terms of contact with the greatest number of boys, the counselors ranked lowest, and while they knew some other boys through observation or conversation with their boys or other staff, the unarticulated norm of not making recommendations for other counselors' boys.

constrained the universe they could comment upon. Mr. Clark, who had contact with only about half of the boys, also was so limited. While Mr. Mason adhered to the counselor norm, he had more contact with the wing area than did the full-time counselors, and thus knew more boys and could make recommendations in the absence of the boy's counselor. Mr. Tanner through his recreational activities with most boys, and Mr. Scott through his teaching and his assisting in recreation had contact with the greatest number of boys.

One other important factor which is not presented in the data since all the staff being discussed are "old-timers", is the relative length of employment of a staff member. The recommendations of newer staff members were frequently discounted and several times ignored during the observations. All three rejected recommendations in the "All Other" category in Table IX were this type--the observer was later told by several "old timers" that this was because the staff members were new. Apparently there was an assumption operating that only the "old timers" were qualified to make recommendations.

A Note on Staff Comments on Placement Conferences.

In January, 1967, the observer carried out individual interviews with all professional staff members at Reception at that time. Among other things, staff were asked three questions: 1) whether or not they preferred the case conference to having the counselor and director make the decision; 2) what they liked or disliked about the case conferences;

and 3) how they would describe the typical boy sent to each receiving unit. Only the results of questions (1) and (2) will be discussed at this point.³⁶ Of the professional staff discussed so far, only one, Mr. Mason, had left. A complete listing of staff interviewed is included in Appendix I.

The observer in asking staff opinions on the conferences told the staff members that their comments would not be identified in any report, and thus all remaining discussion about these staff comments will be so limited. Of the six long-term staff interviewed, a majority, four, preferred the case conferences to the previous counselor-director method. Two of these staff rated quite high on the decision-making index in Table XIII, while two rated quite low. Among the two who thought the counselor-director method preferable, one was a non-counselor who rated high in Table XIII.

Those who liked the conferences liked them for various reasons. The two staff members who ranked quite low on the decision-making scale thought the group decision was a good idea because more opinions could be heard. One of the influential decision-makers felt the conferences were no better than the counselor-director method, but liked having a group discussion so that information about boys or programs could be transmitted easily. The other staff member preferred them because with them it was possible to mold group support behind a given decision, while in a private discussion with the director, this would be more difficult. Thus while it might be expected that those ranking higher in influence, especially those with

little influence before, would prefer the new method, this was not the case. Only the two staff who ranked low in influence preferred the meetings because they allowed for a group decision, while the staff who ranked high in influence and preferred the conferences preferred them for entirely different reasons, and one influential staff member preferred the former method where he would not participate in the decisions made. In general, those who were not important decision makers in the conferences preferred them because they allowed for a group decision, while those who were important did not seem to care about the group decision advantage.

No one complained about the way the decisions were made in the conferences. Of the nine staff interviewed, over half felt that there was frequently a lack of preparation on the part of many staff and seven mentioned either 1) that the conferences were too long and too much irrelevant material was discussed, or 2) that a disproportionate amount of time was spent on cases where there was no question of the placement while others were ignored.

STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THE BOYS.

The recommendation by a staff member consists of the matching of his perception of the boy's needs with his perception of the unit that best meets these needs. While it is impossible to discuss in a detailed, meaningful way all the elements that are involved in an individual staff member's perceptions of the needs of a given boy, it is possible to isolate some more generalized factors that may be part of these perceptions.

The perceptions are based on: 1) the information about the boy received at Reception; 2) the staff member's personal contact with the boy; 3) other staff members' personal contact with the boy of which the perceiving staff member is aware; 4) those manipulative efforts by the boy which, if successful, will alter these elements.

Information Received at Reception.

The information received at Reception pertaining to the boy may be detailed or scanty, accurate or incorrect. While it is true that to the extent that this information is misleading it may lead to a misperception of the boy, the observer felt that the staff had developed a general distrust of this information. This occurred because certain elements of the information are often verifiable to some degree at Reception, especially educational achievement and to a lesser degree, gross behavioral attributes. Frequently the staff discovered that differences between the record and their findings at Reception occurred. Thus, though certainly influential, the record was not as important as might be expected, especially in those cases when it was at variance with the observed behavior at Reception.

Of the information received, behavioral information was probably relied upon most heavily, since it was the most difficult to verify, and school information the least, since it could be checked and in some cases produced at Reception.

Personal Contact with the Boy.

The staff member's personal contact with the boy is usually a function of the staff member's role. This is especially true in regard to the amount of contact with the boy. Thus the counselor usually has limited contact, the coach more frequent contact, and the teachers the most frequent contact with the boy. While amounts of contact alone need not affect a staff member's perception, this may be the case when the contact is severely limited. If, for example, a counselor spends a total of three hours with a boy during his four week stay, this could be a factor in the counselor having a different perception of the boy than other staff who had more contact. Of course, the perceptions made during these contacts are the result of the wide range of personal and psychological factors referred to in Chapter IV.

Other Staff's Contact with the Boy.

The effects of other staff members' perceptions are first a function of their communication to the perceiving staff member. To the extent that these other perceptions are not transmitted either through conversation or written record, they will have no bearing upon the perception being made. Further, to the extent they are transmitted but not given weight due to either some personal conflict between the two staff members or due to a feeling that the transmitted information is inaccurate, it will have no effect.³⁷ Of course, there may be a time factor involved. A perception transmitted early in the staff

member's contact with the boy, before he has formed an opinion of the boy, may have a greater impact upon the perception to be formed than one transmitted after the staff member has formed his own perception. Because of this, the case conferences per se may not have been a factor in perception changing, for most perceptions may have been too firmly entrenched to be affected. However, the increased interaction that probably resulted from those conferences may have been a factor in the changing of perceptions.

Manipulation by the Boy.

A final factor to be considered is the boy himself, for to the extent that he can alter his presentation to the staff, he can affect the perception they have of his needs. How frequently this occurred would be impossible to assess. Some staff members felt that it was occurring constantly, while others did not think so. The frequency and duration of staff contact with the boy are important here, for it is much harder to consistently manipulate or "bluff" a person over a longer time period. The reason for the manipulative attempts seems to be that the boys develop their own perceptions of the receiving units and their programs through a combination of staff contacts, previous knowledge and information from other boys, and thus prefer a placement in a unit perceived favorably. It was interesting that during the observation period various units would be "in" on the wings, that is, preferred by the boys, at various times. Only Maxcon was never "in", and Camp was "in" most frequently

of all. Given this, the boy could to some degree gear his behavior to that needed for a placement in a high priority unit, such as an anti-academic attitude or a strong vocational bent to facilitate a Center City placement, or a sudden love of the outdoors that might make Camp seem more probable.

STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THE RECEIVING UNITS.

The second half of the process of matching the boy with the receiving unit is that process whereby the staff member develops a picture in his mind of each unit, its program and most important, the type of boy that belongs in or will do best in that program.

Early in their employment, staff are given a memorandum consisting of a list of criteria for each of the four units. The staff are instructed in the memorandum:

The following criteria and considerations are guides in assigning the boys from Reception to target units....38

The criteria are:

Camp:

1. Age: 15 to 17 years.
2. Dull through superior intellectual range.
3. School dropout or unmotivated for academic investments (school activities available 4-8 P.M. on voluntary basis).
4. Interest in outdoor work and recreational activities.
5. Physically capable of full day outdoor conservation work activity.
6. Ability to relate and invest in group activities.
7. Sufficient internal controls to deal with a reality-oriented environment.
8. Supportive and milieu counseling.
9. No history of impulsvie, aggressive, homosexual, assaultive or arson type behavior.
10. Ability to handle peer group situation without close protection or supervision.

Center City:

1. Age range, 12 to 17 years.
2. Ability to invest in open program activities (cottage group sizes 25-35 boys, classroom and training group activity sizes, 8-15 boys). Housefathers and housemothers in most groups. All dormitory arrangements.
3. Borderline through superior intellectual range.
4. Remedial through high school levels.
5. Pre-vocational, work and vocational training programs.
6. Primarily milieu and supportive type counseling.
7. Wide range of recreational and varsity sport activities.
8. Campus location within city.
9. Variety of religious program outlets.
10. Limited closed program resources.
11. Structure and supervision varies with the group.

Maxcon:

1. Age range, 14 to 17 years.
2. Inability to invest in open program activities.
3. Need for greater external controls than offered in open programs (hyper-aggressive, chronic truant, etc.).
4. Borderline through superior intellectual range.
5. Remedial through high school levels.
6. Primarily milieu and supportive type counseling (group counseling utilized).
7. Limited pre-vocational activities.
8. Wide range of recreational activities.
9. Religious activities and counseling.
10. Need for short term special care prior to transfer to open program.

Stillwater:

1. Age range, 14 to 17 years.
2. Ability to invest in open program activities.
3. Borderline through superior intellectual range.
4. Remedial through high school levels.
5. Limited pre-vocational and work experiences.
6. Living and activity groups sizes include 20-25 in each hall, classroom sizes 8 to 12 boys. All individual room arrangements. Male supervisors, housemother identified with each of two halls.
7. Primarily milieu and supportive type counseling (group counseling techniques utilized).
8. Limited closed program resources.

9. Current range of recreational activities limited.
10. Rural campus location.
11. Variety of religious program outlets.³⁹

These criteria, then, form the basis for the staff member's perception of the units--but only the basis. Mr. Gilbert told the observer that the counselors (when only they were deciding placements) had a clear picture of the receiving units when they began work, but in time this picture blurred. He felt that this was a function of the organizational constraints of the decision making--that when a boy who belonged in a given program could not be sent there because of some organizational requirement, that this confused the counselor and blurred the picture of the sort of boy that was to go to a given unit.

Since the perception of the unit was an important factor in the placement conference and since it was readily verifiable, the observer decided to attempt to find out 1) how clear were the staff's perceptions of the receiving units?; 2) how consistent were they a) with the official criteria and b) with other staff members?; and 3) were the perceptions of the receiving units at all a function of the staff member's job?, e.g., did the psychologist see the units primarily in terms of psychological criteria?

The results of the inquiry "what types of boys go to each unit?" are presented in their entirety in Appendix I. Abstracting and summarizing only those responses which were not repetitious or redundant, we have the following list broken down into four types of criteria.⁴⁰

CAMP.

Behavioral - psychological - social.

"responsible for their own behavior" "not acting out or aggressive type" "hold own with other kids" "truants OK" "more neurotic type" "need closer relations with adults" "social skills" "needs group work experience" "no truants" "able to control himself" "sound" "no sex problems" "not necessarily the emotionally stabler type" "semi-independent worker" "can hold own in a group setting"

Physical.

"white" "older" "build" (larger boy)

School.

"generally not good academically" "non-academic" "not academically motivated"

Background.

"experience outdoors" "outdoor boy"

CENTER CITY.

Behavioral - psychological - social.

"can handle group living" "socially less skilled" "needs dorm mother and group living" "needs more structure, less pressure" "needs athletics" "immature, more dependent" "the more aggressive types" "cottage parents not that important"

Physical.

"Negro" "younger" "athletic"

School.

"can't handle all-day school" "drop-out type" "trade skill needs aren't that important" "non-achieving" "for the type that needs half-day school" "for those who need vocational training" "trade school boys" "duller"

Background.

"inner-city"

MAXCON.

Behavioral - psychological - social.

"needs protection" "understanding" "can't take care of themselves" "sick" "con artists" "real aggressive types" "used to be for the aggressive and the truants, not now" "unstable" "psychotic" "highly disturbed" "uncontrollable" "runners" "mentally retarded" "hyperactive" "not necessarily the aggressive type"

Physical.

none.

School.

none.

Background.

none.

STILLWATER.

Behavioral - psychological - social.

"socially skilled" "more mature" "those who need the protection of their own room" "need to withdraw" "more abstract" "own room is important" "not for those who need a group setting" "own room not important"

Physical.

"white" "older"

School.

"those who can handle school and want to" "the school types" "those who want some trades, especially auto mechanics" "bright"

Each staff member interviewed seemed to have a clear picture in his mind of the type of boy that belonged in the units. The factors were uniformly given without any hesitation.

Comparisons with the official criteria are complicated by two factors: 1) the generality of the official criteria, and

2) the fact that the responses are not complete. The second factor was a result of the way the observer handled the interview. There seemed to be three possible methods of interviewing: a written questionnaire, which would elicit the most complete response since the staff would have time to study their answers for each unit; a verbal interview with prompting such as "anything else?" or "what about school?", which would be fairly complete since the staff would be encouraged to reflect upon their answer; or a verbal interview without any prompting, which would be the least complete, but which might be more indicative of the factors most salient in the respondent's mind. It was felt the last choice would be best, for it could be assumed that these salient factors were also those that were salient when placements were considered, for here again the staff often had to make a quick decision to a verbal inquiry. Thus it was hoped that these salient factors would approximate those in the conference situation. Another reason for this method over the written one was that the staff would be more willing to devote a few minutes orally than to fill out a schedule. With the oral method, the observer was more assured of a 100 per cent response rate.

One obvious problem with the oral method is that the staff might, and undoubtedly did in some cases, not bother to list an obvious criteria, such as age.

For these reasons, a comparison with the official criteria is not meaningful. (2) (b), however, yields better results, for it is apparent that the staff differ substantially

in their perceptions of some programs. The behavioral - psychological - social factors in the Camp criteria are a good example. They include both truants and non-truants, those responsible for their own behavior and those not necessarily more emotionally stable, those who are sound and those who are neurotic, those who are semi-independent and those who need closer relations with adults.

The Center City type, while quite varied, is less conflicting, with the main differences being that cottage parents are and are not important, and that vocational training is or is not important.

Maxcon presents the best agreement on types, but here again, there is some variance over the aggressive boy--the unit is for that type, it used to be for that type, it is not necessarily for that type. These, of course, are not necessarily conflicting.

Stillwater again presents some disagreement, over the importance of the boy's own room, and possible between those who think the unit is for the mature and socially skilled and those who think it is for the boys that need to withdraw.

Of course there is a problem in separating conflicting criteria from those which may be in conflict but are not necessarily so. For example, a socially skilled boy may also need to withdraw at times. Nonetheless, some differences do exist.

The results of question 3, whether there was a relation between the criteria given by a staff member and his function

in Reception are not entirely clear. The reader is invited to leaf through Appendix I comparing the remarks with the occupation. In some cases, there seems to be a correlation, in others, none. Mr. Clark, the teacher, saw all programs except Maxcon in terms of their school programs. Miss Walters, the counselor with a bias toward psychological diagnosis for her boys, saw all institutions except Stillwater in terms of psychological types, and mentioned psychological factors in Stillwater as well. The psychologist's criteria were quite similar to Miss Walters'--psychological for all but Stillwater, and that was a combination of psychological and school. The psychiatrist also is included in this group, for most of his unit criteria were based on psychiatric or psychological factors. The rest did not seem to dwell on any specific type of criteria in their comments.

Some propositions indicated by this admittedly crude data are:

- I. All staff have a clear picture of what types of boys do best at the receiving units.
- II. Staff disagreements within units are greatest for Camp, least for Maxcon, and about the same for Center City and Stillwater.
- III. Staff disagreements are rare among the criteria classed as school, physical or background, and are greatest among that group which includes behavioral, psychological and social factors.
- IV. Staff disagreements are not common, but the range of possible criteria varies considerable between staff members.
- V. There is some indication that the perceptions of the units are in part affected by the specialization or main interest of the staff member.

Proposition I has been discussed previously. Proposition II is in part substantiated by the results of Table VI on page 37. There, the units were ranked by the number of recommendations rejected as a percentage of the total number of recommendations made for that unit. Camp had by far the highest percentage, Stillwater the next highest, and the two other programs were quite similar. The conclusion was that the Camp placement was the most difficult to make. Given Proposition II, it seems this difficulty stems from a disagreement over the type of boy that belongs in that placement. Further, Proposition II indicates that with more data, Maxcon would rank lowest in Table VI.

Proposition III indicates that the disagreements occur in the least quantifiable, least verifiable area of treatment programs, and probably the most difficult area resolve differences between perceptions or even make clear estimations of the programs involved.

Proposition IV indicates that while disagreements between staff are not common, most staff members seem to have a somewhat different perception of the receiving units, and there may be great differences between them if all staff had to assign priorities to the various criteria. Unfortunately, this could not be measured.

Proposition IV also leads to Proposition V, that it may be that the wide range of different perceptions of the receiving unit are a function of or at least are linked to the specializations of the staff members. Rough indications

are that this linkage existed for at least four staff members while it was not apparent in the remainder of the group (which actually should exclude the director, since he has no functional specialization in regard to the boys).

Other factors, including the organizational constraints referred to by Mr. Gilbert, might account for the varied perceptions (and if these are at variance with the official criteria, that variance). One major factor is communication. There were no formal lines of communication between the other programs in the system and Reception except through the superintendent to the director and through him to the staff. Consequently staff were rarely aware of what was happening in the other units or what programs had been changed. This was a frequent complaint from most staff. In the absence of formal communication, informal communication usually in the form of rumor and gossip takes precedence. This was the case at Reception, where staff would frequently comment at placement conferences to the effect that they had heard that a certain program was being started or that another was poorly staffed or accomplishing nothing.

A feedback system whereby the staff could learn how well their placements were doing might have alleviated some of the problem, but there was little feedback, and what there was was usually negative, i.e., which placements had failed.

Another factor connected with both feedback and rumor was the physical proximity of the Stillwater and Maxcon programs. Staff learned more and heard more about these two

units than the others, and heard least about the camp programs. The effect of the differential in communication can only be speculated upon. If the information about Stillwater and Maxcon was an accurate portrayal of those programs, staff would have more exact perceptions of those two. If inaccurate, the perceptions might be more confused or more varied than those of the other two units. This, of course, was true of the Camp program, the most distant of the units.

To the extent that the information coming to the Reception staff about a particular unit gave the staff an unfavorable impression of that unit, staff might prefer other placements. The observer heard several recommendations to this effect, and recorded one: "Well I don't know about Center City's program, but I know Stillwater's is lousy, so I recommend Center City."

THE ROLE OF STEREOTYPES IN DECISION MAKING.

Admittedly, one insuperable problem in this study given the available resources and the length of the observation period is that it is not possible to examine the matching process of the boy with the unit in any single recommendation. Ideally, the staff member should carefully examine and observe the boy for the duration of his stay and then make a recommendation based on all observable factors--at the least all those applicable to his area of specialization, and probably on the basis of other factors as well. Whether all or any

of the staff went through this laborious process for all boys cannot be documented. One might assume that because of the number of boys involved, the limited number of placements and other work pressures, that the matching process could not consistently be a complicated affair.

One alternative to this is the concept of stereotyping, aspects of which have been suggested by Sudnow⁴¹ and Scheff.⁴² The argument is that for a number of reasons, similar to those outlined above, people in diagnostic positions cannot carefully examine each case, but rather resort to a stereotyping process as a short-cut in diagnosis.

An example of stereotyping is given by Sudnow in his examination of a California public defender's office. The defender, argues Sudnow, develops a stereotyped picture of "normal crimes", that is, a picture based on his experience and expertise of the type of person that normally commits a certain crime and of the circumstances of that crime. For example:

...burglary is seen as involving regular violators, no weapons, low-priced items, little property damage, lower class establishments, largely Negro defendants, independent operators, and a non-professional orientation to the crime.⁴³

The interesting thing about the normal crimes is how they govern the thinking of the public defender, for during Sudnow's observations the public defender's contact with his client was not so much to find out what happened, but rather to discover what stereotype he fell into, for that would govern the public defender's later actions.

Scheff extends this concept to medical diagnoses and uses the term "normal case" to refer to essentially the same sort of occurrence in terms of doctors and patients rather than public defenders and clients, and also considers other areas where this process may exist:

It is conceivable that the same kinds of conceptual packages would be used in other kinds of treatment, welfare and control agencies. Surely in rehabilitation agencies the conceptual units which the working staff uses cover only a rather limited number of contingencies of disability, placement possibilities, and client attitudes. The same minimal working concepts should be evident in such diverse areas as probation and parole, divorce cases, adoption cases, police handling of juveniles, and in the area of mental health.⁴⁴

Unfortunately, the use of stereotypes could not be examined in this organizational study, for the observer would have to determine whether or not the staff members made their determinations on a placement recommendation on the basis of all the factors involved in his specialization or upon a relatively small number of key factors, which may or may not be related to this specialization but which have a background in his experience. The unanswered question then is, to what extent does the staff apply their perceptions of the four types of boys listed above to the boy without first determining all salient information? That is, does the teacher, for example, make a Center City recommendation upon the basis of the boy's school performance or total performance while under observation, or does he do so on the basis of a few experiential factors, such as the boy's Negro race and aggressive behavior? A determination of this would require extensive

interviewing and observing and constant comparisons with the case records.

Scheff points to a number of factors which may affect the accuracy or validity of the stereotypes, among them 1) their number--the more categories, the more likely they will be accurate; 2) the power or status of the client--the less power or status, the less accurate the stereotype; 3) the client-diagnostician relationship--the less dependent the diagnostician upon the client (especially monetarily) the less accurate; and 4) the body of knowledge employed--the more scientific the knowledge base, the less important and more accurate the stereotype.⁴⁵

If these factors are important in the validity of the stereotype (Scheff supplied no empirical evidence to support these assertions), then Reception stereotypes, if occurring, should fall among those with the lowest possible accuracy and validity, for 1) the categories of the types are limited to four; 2) the clients, delinquent boys, have no power and minimal status; 3) the staff is totally independent of the boys for any sort of reward; and 4) the body of knowledge employed, with the exception of the educational tests and some psychiatric work is a mixture of sociology, psychology, social work and instinct, and certainly far from a scientific base.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTRAINTS ON DECISION MAKING.⁴⁶

One difficulty with organizational factors is that frequently they are not only difficult to discover, but they are

even harder to document. One assumes that there are a great many pressures that never filter down to the staff, and these can never be accounted for in a discussion such as this. Even many of those that do filter down, do so only in the form of rumors and are never verifiable. This was true at Reception, for the staff's placement decision was always subject to change by the director or the superintendent, and thus the staff did not necessarily participate in discussion of the reasons for the changes. Two constraints, space limitations and pressures to send certain types of boys to certain institutions to balance the populations were commonplace, but would be difficult to document.

The reasons for organizational constraints are multitudinous and varied, depending upon the organization and the constraints involved.⁴⁷ Before examining the organizational factors operating in the decision making at Reception, one useful distinction should be made. Frequently the term "organizational constraint" is used in either of two contexts, 1) referring to situations where all alternatives are removed and the choice is forced by the organization; or 2) referring to situations where the alternatives are merely limited or ordered, but the actual choice is not forced. For clarity, the first of these will be referred to as "organizational requirements" in the remainder of the paper, while the second will be referred to as "organizational restrictions". The complicated reasons why staff members obey these restraints or under what conditions they no longer

obey have been sufficiently examined elsewhere and will not be discussed in this paper.⁴⁸

Organizational requirements were not common at Reception. This is not surprising, few staffs could function for long in a situation that was otherwise, and this is especially true of Reception where the organizational requirements usurped the decision-making function. Primarily these were situations where there was pressure brought to bear either from without the system, by parents or aftercare workers, or from within the system, from a particular unit.

Organizational restrictions were quite common at Reception. Basically there were two types, 1) where one or more alternatives were closed, restricting the possible choices, and 2) where all alternatives were open but there were pressures for more or less of a given type of boy among them. Alternative one occurred when one unit became full and could receive no more boys, or when the unit or an individual within or outside of the J.C.S. system brought pressure to keep a specific boy out of a specific unit. The first of these, the lack of space, was by far the most common of the two situations.

Alternative two was usually the result of pressure from the units or from the superintendent to "even up" the populations at the receiving units. Thus when it was felt that there were too many Negroes being sent to Center City, or too many intelligent boys sent to Stillwater, rough quotas would be established to send more Negroes to Camp or Stillwater

and more bright juveniles (usually white also) to Center City, even though the programs were so structured that the Center City program would normally get duller Negroes and the Stillwater School would normally get the smarter whites. This requirement was perhaps the most important organizational factor. At several placement meetings, at the director's request, the staff and the director juggled placements so that the proper mix by race, adjustment and intelligence was achieved.

Though never stated, the observer felt that some reasons for these constraints might have been 1) it was poor public relations to concentrate a number of Negroes in one institution; 2) the dull, vocationally-oriented youth was frequently a behavior problem; and 3) the Center City and Stillwater units were sufficiently similar so that these shifts were usually not dysfunctional for the unit.

RANDOM OR NON-LOGICAL FACTORS IN DECISION MAKING.

Most of the random factors have been alluded to previously, and thus will not be discussed extensively. The assignment of the boy to a counselor is a random choice by the director, and whether that counselor is strong or weak, or old or new will have an impact on his placement, for as shown earlier in the chapter the stronger and older counselors took a much greater part in the placement decision. A similar situation exists relative to assignment on the wings.

The presence or absence of his counselor or others who might have a placement recommendation is also a factor, as is the mood of these or other staff members at the decision conference; e.g., the aforementioned situations where staff said "I just didn't feel like fighting them" or "I felt it was time to take a stand." Given his importance in the decision-making process, the presence or absence of the superintendent is also an important random factor.

Finally two other factors frequently had an impact. One was where the boy's name came on the list of boys to be discussed, and the second was time. If a boy's name came at the end of the list, a random factor based on when the boy came to Reception, a desired placement might be filled due to the space and compositional organizational constraints discussed above. While a general reshuffling of the placements could be accomplished if someone felt strongly enough (and was accomplished several times), this was not often the case. Also, the order of discussion coupled with time was often a factor, for those at the end of the list were usually run through without discussion and the first recommendation usually stood unquestioned. In one meeting a series of six boys were covered in less than ten minutes, while earlier one boy was discussed for one hour. The only exceptions to this were one case where a staff member told the others "Let's don't race through this one, this kid's got problems," and another where a placement recommendation was met with a chorus of "no's"--a second placement was suggested and accepted without discussion.

OTHER FACTORS.

Perhaps the most important factors in this miscellaneous group are the boy's own placement preference and his age. Age is a controlling factor over all others--the boy must go to one program if he is under a certain age and cannot go to several others unless he is over a specific age.⁴⁹ The boy's own preference is frequently cited in the conference, though its importance seems to vary. When the boy desires a certain placement so that he can take part in a specific program at that placement, e.g., forestry at Camp, auto mechanics at Stillwater, this request is normally honored. When the request is for a unit and not a program, this request is taken into consideration but not necessarily honored. Apparently there are two counterbalancing considerations, first that the boy may "invest" in a program if he himself has selected the unit, but second, that he may be manipulating the staff in selecting this unit. The observer could never ascertain how this was resolved in particular cases, though it frequently seemed to be.

The other physical factors that were occasionally important were size and medical problems. Small boys were normally not sent to Camp, nor were those who were not healthy or who had some illness that might recur and require medical attention.

VI. Factors in Decision Making: A Summary.

The factors bearing upon the placement decision while mainly occurring in the last chapter, have been presented in various contexts through the paper. In this brief summary, they will be classified generically in outline form and then ordered into a qualitative rank by importance and frequency of occurrence.

GENERIC CLASSIFICATION.

I. Organizational Factors.

A. Space limitations.

1. Pressure to avoid as much as possible a given unit because it is near capacity.
2. Pressure to send as many as possible to a given unit because it is not near capacity.

B. Pressure from another unit.

1. Pressure for more of a given type of boy--white, well-adjusted, high I.Q., etc.
2. Pressure for less of a given type of boy--Negro, emotional, borderline, etc.

C. Pressure by individuals in the organization.

1. Desire of an individual in a unit to get or to avoid a particular boy.

D. Pressure by individuals outside of the organization.

1. Pressure from an individual to send or not send a boy to a given unit, e.g., parent, after-care worker.

E. Pressure by groups outside of the organization.

1. Pressure by communities or by others to send or not send to a given unit a particular boy, a type of boy or group of boys.

II. Random or Non-Logical Factors.

A. Assignment of boy to a counselor.

1. New or old.
2. Strong or weak.

B. Order of name on agenda.

1. Units filled before later names discussed.
2. Time runs out and no real discussion of placement.

C. Presence of his counselor.

1. Part-time counselor rarely present.
2. Full-time counselor usually present.

D. Make-up of meeting.

1. Presence or absence of members who have definite feelings where the boy should or should not go, or who have information bearing on that decision.
2. Presence or absence of superintendent--depends on director.
3. Mood of staff on a given day--"I just didn't feel like fighting them", or "I felt it was time to take a stand."
4. Staff rivalries, hostilities or friendships at a given time.

III. Behavior of Boy in the Community as Presented by His Record.

A. Behavior in school.

1. Grades, I.Q. tests--performance.
2. Social behavior--especially aggressive, assaultive, sexual, criminal, or delinquent acts.
3. Results of psychological testing in the school.

B. Behavior in the community.

1. Social behavior as above.
2. Reason for commitment.
3. Family relationships and problems.

C. Family and peer relations.

1. Family stability.
2. Social transgressions of family--drinking, whoring, etc.
3. Criminal transgressions of family--criminal offenses.

D. Reports from community agencies who handled boy.

1. Social.
2. Psychological.

IV. Behavior of Boy in Other Institutions as Presented by His Record.

A. Social, psychological, peer group, etc. (social as above).

B. Truancy record.

V. Behavior in Reception* (especially where observed by one of decision makers--classroom, recreation, with counselor or one of decision makers; to a lesser extent where observed by line staff--on wing, at night, on details).

A. Behavior in classroom.

1. Results from testing.
2. Peer group relations.
3. Behavior with teacher.
4. Ability to work in classroom setting--or desire.

B. Behavior in recreation.

1. Peer group relations.
2. Behavior with coach.
3. Ability to participate in sports.
4. Desire to participate.

C. Behavior with counselor or psychologist.

D. Behavior on the wing (especially where observed by decision makers).

1. Behavior with peers.
2. Behavior with wingmen--especially ability to take orders.

E. Behavior on work details.

1. Behavior with peers.
2. Behavior with wingmen.
3. Ability and willingness to do detail.

*(Assaultive, aggressive, emotionally unstable, and homosexual behaviors, also indications of mental retardation or medical disabilities, and rule infractions; "truancies" or fights with others when they are seen as behavioral indicators.)

VI. Staff Factors.

A. Personalities.

1. Strong or weak.
2. Amount of commitment.

B. Degree of preparation of staff member making recommendation.

1. Prepared.
2. Poorly prepared.
3. Not prepared.

C. Mood--See II. D. 3.

D. Rivalries--See II. D. 4.

VII. Boy's Own Preference.

A. Desire for a particular unit.

B. Desire for a particular program--school, auto mechanics; those particular to one unit.

VIII. Characteristics of the Boy.

A. Age.

B. Medical problems.

C. Size.

IX. Boy's Ability to Manipulate Staff.

A. Ability to act within rules.

B. Ability to convince staff that a particular desired unit is best.

C. Ability to convince staff that he needs a program found only in a particular desired unit.

D. Ability to get preferential treatment from staff, positive recognition, or make friends with staff member who will then support his desire.

X. Physical Locations.

- A. Location of family with respect to a particular unit.
 - 1. Nearby placement if want to encourage visiting by family.
 - 2. Distant placement if want to discourage same.
 - 3. Distant placement if want to avoid boy running from unit to home.
- B. Location of brothers or other relatives in J.C.S. system--either encourage or discourage relationships.
- C. Location of peers or co-defendants in J.C.S. system--same.
- D. Location of important others outside system with respect to particular unit--friends, girl friends, etc.
 - 1. Nearby placement if want to encourage these.
 - 2. Distant placement if want to discourage.

QUALITATIVE RANKING CLASSIFICATION. 50

I. Determinative Factors Occurring Frequently.

- A. Space limitations (I-A)
- B. Assignment of boy to a counselor (II-A-2)
- C. Presence of his counselor (II-C-1)
- D. Make-up of the meeting (II-D)
- E. Order of names on agenda (II-B)
- F. School behavior in community (III-A)
- G. Behavior in community (III-B)
- H. Family and peer relations (III-C)
- I. Behavior in Reception classroom (V-A)
- J. Behavior in Reception recreation (V-B)
- K. Behavior with counselor or psychologist (V-C)
- L. Behavior on wing (V-D)
- M. Personality of significant people in decision making (VI-A)
- N. Degree of preparation (VI-B)
- O. Desire for a particular unit (VII-A)
- P. Age (VIII-A)

II. Factors Determinative but Rarely Occurring.

- A. Assignment of boy to a counselor (II-A-1)
- B. Presence of his counselor (II-C-2)
- C. Reports from community agencies (III-D)
- D. Social, psychological, peer group behavior in other institutions (IV-A)
- E. Truancy record at other institutions (IV-B)
- F. Boy's desire for a particular program (VII-B)
- G. Medical problems (VIII-B)
- H. Size (VIII-C)

III. Factors Frequently Occurring but Usually Not Determinative.

- A. Behavior in school in community (III-A)
- B. Behavior in the community (III-B)
- C. Family and peer relations (III-C)
- D. Behavior on work details (V-E)
- E. Desire for a particular unit (VII-A)
- F. Location of family (X-C)
- G. Location of peers or co-defendants (X-C)
- H. Location of important others on outside (X-D)

IV. Factors Rarely Occurring and Usually Not Determinative.

- A. Report from community agencies (III-D)
- B. Location of brothers or other relatives in J.C.S. system (X-B)

V. Factors Whose Importance is Not Assessable.

- A. Pressure from another unit (I-B)
- B. Pressure by individuals in the organization (I-C)
- C. Pressure by individuals outside the organization (I-D)
- D. Pressure by groups outside the organization (I-E)
- E. Staff's mood (VI-C)
- F. Staff rivalries (VI-D)
- G. Boy's ability to manipulate staff (IX-A through IX-D)

NOTES

1. The Juvenile Correctional School system (J.C.S.) as well as the units it encompasses are pseudonyms for the actual system studied.
2. During the observation period, only Units I and II were open. The opening of Unit III was delayed first by construction difficulties and then by difficulties in obtaining staff members.
3. Maxcon's name was changed toward the end of the observation period to a euphemistic title similar to "Rolling Meadows". For simplicity the unit will be referred to as Maxcon throughout the paper.
4. Social Service Department Memorandum dated September 21, 1966, pp. 10-11.
5. Undated J.C.S. statistical table.
6. Report of the Juvenile Correctional School, Social Service Department, June, 1965, p. 1.
7. Ibid., p. 1.
8. Apparently, no formally stated goals exist for J.C.S. The director of Reception was unaware of any, and the superintendent, when queried, said they had never gotten around to making any formal statement. However, at a later time, the Social Services Department released in a memorandum a list of the Department's "general objectives" in its delinquency program, which though not formally stated as goals of J.C.S. in particular, seem especially applicable. These included: "1. To help these youth gain insight for their unacceptable behavior.... 2. To assist them...to establish and maintain satisfactory relationships with other persons. 3. To change their attitudes toward authority and their responsibilities to society. 4. To offer opportunities for successful experiences.... 5. To provide activities whereby skills necessary for the completion of school and obtaining of employment can be developed. 6. To help the boy... develop controls over impulses.... 7. To provide custody and protection for the rebellious, aggressive, irresponsible youngster...."
9. Memorandum dated August 22, 1966, from the superintendent to the director of Reception.
10. All names used to designate the staff members are aliases drawn at random from a 1950 edition of the Chicago Telephone Directory, and have no relation to the parties involved.

11. A psychiatrist is also employed on a part-time contractual basis to give specialized testing. Since he rarely attended decision-making conferences, he is not included further in this section.
12. Parts of this chapter are revised from an unpublished ms. by the author, "The Processing of Organizational Inputs: An Analysis of the Role of the Reception Center in a Treatment Organization."
13. See pages 16 ff.
14. As with the J.C.S. system, there exists no formally stated goals for Reception. The analysis which follows is based on observations.
15. Eventually, in the latter example, it was learned that one whole section of the report was never sent. While the director ascertained from the committing judge roughly what the reason for commitment was, the rest of the report never reached Reception.
16. Parts of this section were suggested to the author by Drs. Rosemary C. Sarri and Robert D. Vinter.
17. For a similar account in the military induction process, see A. B. Hollingshead, "Adjustment to Military Life," American Journal of Sociology, 51 (1946), pp. 439-450.
18. See page 6 ff.
19. Dr. Rosemary Sarri has suggested to the author that a highly efficient information-processing system might be dysfunctional to the organization since the organization could not handle or digest the increased volume it would produce.
20. Herbert A. Simon, Donald W. Smithburg, and Victor A. Thompson, Public Administration (1956), p. 55.
21. For an elaboration of this distinction, see Donald W. Taylor, "Decision Making and Problem Solving" in James G. March (ed.), Handbook of Organizations (1966), pp. 49-50.
22. R. Duncan Luce and Howard Raiffa, Games and Decisions (1957), p. 13.
23. Donald W. Taylor, op. cit., p. 50.
24. Hereafter we will not consider the "no go" alternative--the choice, exercised less than three per cent of the time, to not admit the boy into J.C.S. See page 17-18 for further discussion of this alternative.

25. Luce and Raiffa, op. cit., p. 15.
26. Ibid., p. 15 ff.
27. The placement conference where the placement for the boy who had committed the aforementioned well-publicized capital crime was discussed.
28. Primarily hold-overs for further testing and psychological examinations as well as some instances where the counselor was not prepared and wished to discuss the boy at a later meeting.
29. For a further discussion of the importance of time constraints, see page 69. For the composition of these cases, see note 34, this chapter.
30. Several recommendations were rejected in some cases.
31. Data from undated J.C.S. statistical report.
32. Data compiled from monthly Reception reports.
33. See page 67.
34. Excluded are four Camp decisions, three Center City decisions, four Stillwater decisions, and two Center City or Stillwater decisions.
35. All data following in this section are based on seventy-six cases, with those constrained by time limitations excluded.
36. See p. 54 ff. and Appendix I for a discussion of question 3.
37. The competition over who "knows the boy best" is also a factor here, cf. p. 24.
38. Untitled Reception unit memorandum dated November 23, 1965, p. 1.
39. Ibid., pp. 1-2.
40. Because of the obvious difficulties in separating social, psychological and behavioral factors without first learning what the staff meant by them and what their frame of reference was, these are grouped together.
41. David Sudnow, "Normal Crimes: Sociological Features in the Penal Code in a Public Defender's Office," Social Problems, 12 (Winter, 1965), pp. 255-276.
42. Thomas J. Scheff, On Being Mentally Ill (1966), pp. 178-187.

43. Sudnow, op. cit., p. 260.
44. Scheff, op. cit., p. 182.
45. Ibid., pp. 182-184.
46. For a more complete listing of organizational constraints, see Section VI.
47. See Julian Feldman and Herschel Kanter, "Organizational Decision Making" in March (ed.), op. cit., pp. 619-642.
48. See especially Chester I. Bernard, The Functions of the Executive (1938), pp. 139-184; Herbert A. Simon, Administrative Behavior (1947), pp. 123-153; and Peter M. Blau, The Dynamics of Bureaucracy (1963), pp. 207-228.
49. The details are found on the official placement criteria, pp. 52-54.
50. Some factors are repeated when they have been both determinative and not determinative and the observer cannot decide what is the crucial element, e.g., boy's desire for a particular unit. Group V consists of those factors which though known to exist, cannot be ranked by importance. Roughly, "rarely occurring" factors are those which occurred between one and five times. "Usually not determinative" factors cannot be so easily quantified, for they are more a percentage of the total occurrence of the factors than a raw number. Roughly again, these might be determinative about ten per cent or less of the total number of times they occurred. Of course, these are only estimations.

APPENDIX I

Staff Perceptions of Boys Sent to Receiving Units.

The professional staff members were interviewed in January, 1967. They were asked how they felt about the placement conferences, what improvements, if any, could be made, and then they were asked to describe a typical boy sent to each receiving institution; e.g., "What kind of boy goes to Camp?" The responses to this last question are arranged by unit and by staff member in the following order:

1. Miss LaPeer, counselor
2. Miss Walters, counselor
3. Mr. Scott, teacher
4. Mr. Clark, teacher
5. Mr. Tanner, coach
6. Mr. Packard, director
7. Dr. Samuelson, psychiatrist
8. Mr. Lawson, part-time counselor
9. Mr. Black, psychologist

Because of personnel changes, not all of the original staff could be contacted. Respondents 7, 8, and 9 were not part of the Reception staff when the observations began. Dr. Samuelson was hired in the summer of 1966, the others in the fall.

I. CAMP.

1. "...responsible for their own behavior...not the acting out or aggressive type...hold own with other kids... experience outdoors or would like to have it...generally not good academically...truants O.K...."
2. "...white...more neurotic type...the type that can't achieve in school...or are afraid to...need closer relations with adults..."
3. "...white...older...usually 16...non-academic...social skills...non-urban..."
4. "...the select boy...the best ones we have...not much of a school program...for the type of boy that needs a group working experience...no truants..."
5. "...definitely not for those with school motivation... able to control himself...responsible for own actions... need to have orientation to that type of work situation, that is, conservation...not the disturbed kid...sound..."
6. "...white...not academically motivated...not truant... O.K. in a group setting...no sex problems..."
7. "...outdoor boy or experience in the outdoors...not necessarily the emotionally stabler type though...may send emotional problems if we feel the setting will help...usually older..."
8. "...depends on build...age...not aggressive...not immature...the semi-independent worker...15 years old... non-school type...no truants..."
9. "...Camp is the other extreme (from Maxcon)...emotionally strong...well adjusted...can hold his own in a group setting...can function in a relatively unstructured situation..."

II. CENTER CITY.

1. "...can't handle all-day school...need some school but not high school graduate material...the drop out type... can handle group living...socially less skilled...needs dorm mother and group living...needs more structure, less pressure...needs athletics..."
2. "...the immature, more dependent types...trade skill needs aren't that important...but also the more aggressive types...more need of controls and structures setting...those less able to act by themselves...need the cottage parents..."
3. "...Negro...aggressive...non-achieving...inner-city...athletic..."
4. "...for the type that needs a half-day school program... for those who need vocational training..."
5. "...non-school types...those that can be reached through athletics..."
6. "...trade school boys...duller..."
7. "...younger...vocation-oriented...more dependent...less mature..."
8. "...younger...15 and below...low ability...vocational type..."
9. "...cottage parent not that important...the type that can't handle school..."

III. MAXCON.

1. "...needs protection...understanding...can't take care of themselves...sick...kids with shells, you try shock treatment on to reach...con artists...real aggressive types...types that can't take another failure..."
2. "...used to be for the aggressive and truants...the potential aggressors were sent there from here...not now...now it gets the sick kids...unstable...psychotic...highly disturbed...anxious..."
3. "...aggressive...anxious...uncontrollable...acting out...runners...psychotic..."
4. "...used to be for the aggressive, now for the ones that have mental problems...the almost-psychotic or schizophrenic...the ones that almost could go to a mental institution...also for the mental retarded..."
5. "...for the aggressive kid...the type that needs physical controls...those that can't handle themselves..."
6. "...aggressive...needs lots of supervision..."
7. "...for the hyperactive type...the borderline psychotic rather than just aggressive..."
8. "...those with aggressive behavior...truants...those who acted out at Reception..."
9. "...the type that needs a heavily structured situation...not necessarily the aggressive type, though certainly this type goes there...those who just need constant supervision...those who need someone to hold their hand and guide them through a door, or help them dress..."

IV. STILLWATER SCHOOL.

1. "...those who can handle school and want to...socially skilled...know how to get along with each other...more mature...those who need the protection of their own room..."
2. "...the school types...those who want some trades, especially auto mechanics...those need to withdraw... need privacy...do well in high school...more mature... older..."
3. "...white...bright..."
4. "...needs school...high school type or the type that won't finish but needs the school program..."
5. "...school motivators, that's it..."
6. "...brighter...school oriented..."
7. "...older...more abstract...those who can handle school..."
8. "...older...fifteen to seventeen...brighter, but not always so...some vocational types...own room is important...not for those who need a group setting..."
9. "...own room not important...academics is the big thing..."