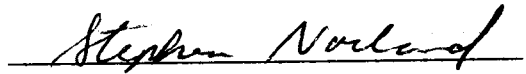
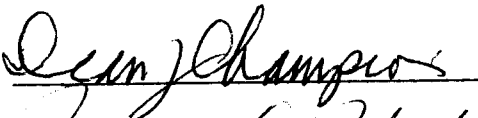
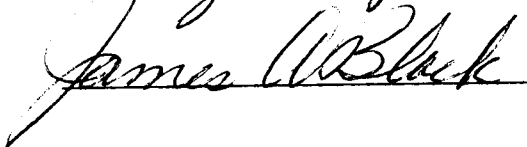


To the Graduate Council:

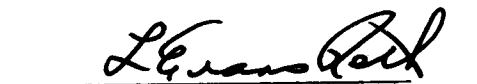
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Deborah H. Ward entitled "The Impact of the Women's Movement on Images of Female Criminals in Popular Magazines." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Sociology.


Stephen Norland, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

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THE IMPACT OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT ON
IMAGES OF FEMALE CRIMINALS IN POPULAR MAGAZINES

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Deborah H. Ward

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ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with the images of female criminals present in popular magazines before and after the emergence of the women's movement. The examination of sociological literature revealed that discussions of female criminality were based on "assumed" beliefs concerning females rather than on empirical evidence. It was expected that these beliefs were embedded in our culture. Thus, the study undertook to determine if these beliefs were existent in the popular media also, and if so, if they were less evident after the emergence of the women's movement.

The study examined articles on female criminals from 1959 to 1977. The study was divided into two time periods: 1959-1967, a period when the women's movement emerged, but before the movement could be expected to have any influence; and 1968-1977, a period when the women's movement began to be influential. Out of a universe of 75 articles, a stratified random sample was drawn of fifteen articles from Period I and 25 from Period II. The articles were coded for four categories: traditional-characteristics; traditional-theoretical explanations; nontraditional-characteristics; and nontraditional-theoretical explanations.

The data were analyzed by comparing references for each of the categories in Period I with those in Period II, to see if there were any significant difference between the two periods. The data were examined by the two time periods and by two-year intervals. Specific items in each category were also examined by two-year intervals. The author's sex and the type of crime reported on were also recorded.

The t-Test for Differences between Means and the t-Test for Differences between Proportions were used to test for significance, at a .05 level of significance for a one-tailed test.

The results showed some support for Hypothesis II which predicted that the image of female criminals subsequent to the women's movement would be more consistent with the movement. References to nontraditional explanations and characteristics showed an increase in the second period, although many of the items in the traditional-characteristics category failed to be significant. Hypothesis I, which predicted a decrease in the representation of the traditional approach in the second period, was not supported. There was an increase in Period II in the number of traditional explanations. Traditional characteristics revealed no significant change over the two periods.

The findings showed that the women's movement may be having some influence on the images of female criminals in popular magazines. The traditional viewpoint, however, was found to be still the dominant approach.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the emergence of the women's movement has influenced media portrayal of female criminals. Through content analysis one form of the mass media, popular magazines, will be examined for evidence of change in the image and description of females involved in crime over a period of eighteen years. The study assumes that the media reflect viewpoints already existing in our culture, while also exposing the audience to new ideas which are receiving acceptance among some segments of society. Therefore, the analysis of articles relating to females in crime will be undertaken to determine if the characteristics attributed to these females, and the explanations for their crime, are based on old assumptions surrounding female criminality or if they appear to be influenced by new beliefs consistent with the women's movement.

Interest in the proposed study developed after a review of sociological literature concerning females in crime which suggested that the knowledge of female criminals is based more on assumptions than on empirical evidence. Little data have been provided to support them. Because these beliefs have prevailed to our present time, they originate from a framework inherent in our culture: one which assigns males the dominant position. It is expected that if these beliefs exist as part of our culture, the popular media would be influenced by them, if one assumes that the popular media reflect the ideas and beliefs dominant in our culture.

Existing within society are negative stereotypes of the criminal. Negative stereotypes concerning women are also evident. It is the latter which has dominated discussion of female criminality in sociological literature, and it is with these stereotypes that this study is concerned. The involvement of women in crime has been thought to be infrequent and women have not been portrayed as "successful" in crime. Rather, they are portrayed as engaging in types of crime which do not require daring or planning. Stereotypes surrounding female criminals are based more on negative beliefs about women than on negative conceptions of the criminal.

The criminality of women has come under re-examination in sociological literature in recent years. Many of the ideas research has been based upon are being shown to be untested assumptions about women, stemming from a framework which is repressive and sexist in nature. The female has been portrayed in an oversimplified fashion. An effort is now being made to eliminate these untested assumptions from the literature, concentrating on assessing the complexity of the situations surrounding the female's involvement in criminal activity. The women's movement has been partly responsible for this re-examination taking place in sociological literature; the movement has also stimulated more discussion of female crime in the popular media.

The broad aim of the study is to determine how popular magazines portray female crime. Specifically, the objectives are:

1. To determine if the images of women in the mass media are dominated by traditional stereotypes.

2. If these stereotypes are dominant, is this stereotyped image less evident after the emergence of the women's movement?
3. Does there appear to be any indication of a new image of females consistent with the women's movement?

Thus, one can determine if the traditional conception is still dominant in our society or if it is beginning to be replaced by another one influenced by the women's movement?

Justification and Legitimation

The question might be asked, "Why study the portrayal of female criminals in the popular media?" The existence of stereotypes within the culture should be apparent in the media. Stereotypes are continually reaffirmed in social interaction and receive support from the media. The popular media often present a simplified view of the subject, conveying an image which is misleading and inaccurate.

" . . . the mass media by fanning up moral panics contribute to the misperception of deviants, the intensity of social reaction, and the extent to which deviance amplification occurs" (Young, 1974:256).

Nunnally (1961) has provided evidence that the portrayal of mental illness in the mass media is influenced by negative stereotypes of mental illness. Thus, one may expect that the media may reinforce negative stereotypes people have of female criminals. Stereotypes inherent in our culture are difficult to change, but with the re-examination of female criminals taking place in sociological literature and the changes throughout society brought about by a women's movement, a surrendering of old assumptions for a more accurate assessment of

female criminals might be occurring in the popular media. Thus, the popular media can play an important role in the process of labeling: they can promote already existing stereotyped images; contribute to the formation of new stereotypes; or advance a more accurate picture of females involved in crime.

What impact could magazine portrayal have on individual criminals? The image conveyed by the article might affect the female's assessment of herself, thus possibly contributing to her acceptance of the label placed upon her. She may thus feel locked into a role, one representing only one aspect of herself. Matza (1964) points out how few people recognize that the criminal engages in conventional activities as well as illegal ones.

Mass media coverage may play an essential role in how society responds to criminals. For example, if people feel threatened by the media's portrayal of the extent and nature of female crime, they might be reluctant to support agencies such as alcohol and drug clinics and half-way houses. They might not be aware of real conditions relating to females in crime. Popular conceptions of the "dangerous" criminal might be reinforced by the media, causing people to pressure the government to keep these females institutionalized.

Negative stereotypes surrounding female crime have significance for all women because these stereotypes are based on "assumed" beliefs regarding women which have survived to the present. The stereotypes stem from society's conception of women in general, not just women involved in crime. Women's conception of themselves can thus be limited or expanded by the images of females provided by the popular media.

The popular media are major sources of information for many people. Unless people were to come into direct contact with female criminals or read the literature in criminology, much of their information would probably be received from the media. Nunnally (1961) found that the public's image of mental illness was "less" stereotyped than the media's although "more" stereotyped than mental health experts. The public seems to be influenced by both experts and media, although probably more by the media. James Davis offers some support to this belief though some of the evidence was inconclusive. His study on public opinion regarding trends in crime concluded that "public opinion reflects trends in the amount of crime news rather than in actual crime rates . . ." (1952:530).

Limiting the study to popular magazines poses a problem for generalizing to other branches of the media. This study assumes that portrayal to other branches will be similar. Only further research on the other areas can provide a check as to the generalizability of the study's results. It is expected, however, that even though different areas of the media may handle news items differently, they are still bound by the same assumptions existing as part of the beliefs in our society.

The study can point out the existence of stereotypes in a source which many rely on for information. It may also show how the media can, by responding to current issues, help abolish these stereotypes through more accurate portrayals. " . . . because of the vast audiences which they attract, the mass media could serve a highly important function in purveying information and softening the harsh attitudes held by the public" (Nunnally, 1961:77).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Traditional Approach

Klein (1973), Millman (1975), and Klein and Kress (1976) discuss sociological literature on female criminality and show how negative stereotypes concerning females evident in earlier literature (Lombroso, 1920; Thomas, 1923; Pollak, 1950; Glueck and Glueck, 1954) can still be detected in the literature in later periods (Payak, 1963; Konopka, 1966; Cowie, Cowie, and Slater, 1968; Vedder and Somerville, 1970). "The stereotypes have limited both the forms of female deviance that have been recognized" (Millman, 1975:265) and the way in which female deviants have been characterized. Both early and later writers represent a tradition by sharing many of the same assumptions on which their theories are based, even though there are obvious differences between each author's approach. The authors often try to pass as scientific distinction that which is really a moral evaluation.

The writers see criminality as the result of individual characteristics that are only peripherally affected by economic, social, and political forces. These characteristics are of a physiological or psychological nature and are uniformly based on implicit or explicit assumptions about the inherent nature of women. This nature is universal, rather than existing within a specific historical framework. (Klein, 1973:4)

Explanations are given a psychological or physiological basis. The literature connects criminal activity to women's sexuality. All explanations seem to be based upon this connection.

"Women's behavior must be sexually defined before it will be considered, for women count only in the sexual sphere. The theme of sexuality is a unifying thread in the various, often contradictory theories" (Klein, 1973:27). For example, Kingsley David (1961) gives prostitution, an economic offense, a sexual interpretation.

Most theorists extend this idea of sexual connection with crime by stating that the female's illegal act is linked to a failure to establish personal relationships, especially with males. For example, Konopka (1966) characterizes female delinquents as lonely individuals incapable of making friends. The crime is thought to be an expression of personal needs rather than a desire for social and economic status.

Many theorists also contend that female crime is increasing and connect this to the social emancipation of women (Pollak, 1950; Vedder and Somerville, 1970; Adler, 1975). Adler devotes an entire book to this belief.

Females . . . are now being found not only robbing banks singlehandedly, but also committing assorted armed robberies, muggings, loan-sharking operations, extortion, murders, and a wide variety of other aggressive, violence-oriented crimes which previously involved only men. (Adler, 1975:14)

Female criminals are characterized as emotional (Pollak, 1950; Payak, 1963), passive (Lombroso, 1920; Thomas, 1923; Pollak, 1950), deceitful (Pollak, 1950), manipulative (Thomas, 1923; Payak, 1963), dependent (Payak, 1963; Konopka, 1966), strange and secretive (Pollak, 1950; Payak, 1963), and dull (Lombroso, 1920). The literature often treats women with condescension as exemplified in the Glueck's characterization of them as a sorry lot, feeble-minded, psychopathic and emotionally unstable (1954:299). An example of

this in more recent literature is Adler's remark: "Increasing numbers of broken gears and bits of flying debris will be found leaping from bridges, wandering desolate city streets, and entering banks with pistols in their pockets" (1975:24).

Our understanding of female criminality has been limited by a belief that crime is a masculine phenomenon. Females are thought more as behaving in an "abnormal" manner rather than as simply behaving "illegally." While this perspective has lately come under attack, it has by no means been abolished.

If women occasionally become socially deviant, their deviance is understood as only secondary and politically uninspired. It is derivative of their acting like women: falling in love (with a deviant man), being a little too out of control of their emotions (becoming mentally ill), using their sexuality exploitatively but not that differently from other women (becoming a prostitute), or exhibiting some other neurotic weakness or impulsiveness common to women (as becoming a shoplifter). (Millman, 1975:253)

The Women's Movement

A women's movement emerged in the 1960's challenging traditional conceptions of the female's role in society. This movement has made women, as well as the general public, more conscious of the negative stereotypes surrounding females. The movement comprises two groups: an older, more conservative group consisting of organizations such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), and Federally Employed Women (FEW), known as the Women's Rights group, and a younger, radical group known as the Women's Liberation Movement.

The women's movement argues that, in the past, too much emphasis has been placed upon biological differences between the sexes. Socialization has assumed a more critical role in the observed behavioral differences than has been realized. Institutions are seen as especially contributing to the socialization of women "into an unreasonably narrow role" (Carden, 1974:11). Because of socialization, women suppress a great part of their potential.

The mass media has especially been criticized by the women's movement for reflecting and reinforcing unfair and distorted images of females. For example, Carden mentions how the traditional conception of women is upheld in the media, while women who show initiative and independence are portrayed as unhappy. NOW's statement of purpose includes the necessity of changing the false image of females prevalent in the media and throughout society. "Such images perpetuate contempt for women by society and by women for themselves" (Friedan, 1963:91). Carden (1974) suggests that a structural, legal, and attitudinal change are all needed.

The women's movement aims to replace negative stereotypes concerning women with a more positive image of females. As examples of positive characteristics of females, Friedan (1963), Thompson (1970), Hole and Levine (1971), Carden (1974), and Freeman (1975) mention confidence, dignity, independence, ambition, competitiveness, initiative, and intelligence. The movement places an emphasis upon self-development, education, increased social responsibility, and the creation of new roles for women.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Content Analysis

Content analysis was chosen as the method of research to study the portrayal of female criminals in popular magazines. Content analysis has been defined in a number of ways. That used in this study is F.E. Barcus' definition:

The term "content analysis" is used here to mean the scientific analysis of communications messages. . . . The method is broadly speaking the "scientific method," and while being catholic in nature, it requires that the analysis be rigorous and systematic. (Quoted in Holsti, 1969:3)

Holsti states three requirements that content analysis must satisfy:

1. "Objectivity stipulates that each step in the research process must be carried out on the basis of explicitly formulated rules and procedures" (1969:3).
2. "Systematic means that the inclusion and exclusion of content or categories is done according to consistently applied rules" (1969:4).
3. "Generality requires that the results have theoretical relevance.

Sampling

Popular magazines were chosen as the medium to be studied because they usually provide more in-depth coverage on an important issue, plus magazines are more accessible for a study concerning a number of

years. Magazines can be monitored, television cannot. Magazines also have a nationwide distribution where newspapers are, for the most part, local. Magazines should therefore respond more to changes and experiences involving a large segment of society.

The period of time chosen for the study covers the years from 1959 to 1977. Although the emergence of the women's movement cannot be given a specific date, issues of concern slowly built up from the early 60's until the movement gained enough momentum to achieve popular recognition.

The women of America underwent soul-shaking changes in the 1960s. By the end of that decade, the drive which began as sporadic protests had become a trend - "women's liberation" emerged as a well-publicized, well-organized movement Such a trend did not gain its popularity or momentum because of a sudden, spontaneous recognition of the oppression of women. Rather, the new, broad-based awareness of women's place and potential developed side by side with the civil-rights and antiwar movements (Adler, 1975:25)

The Women's Liberation Movement began to receive attention in popular magazines around 1969-1970. This group's emergence marked the period when the movement began to gain widespread recognition and support. The movement received the greatest coverage during 1970-1971.

The study delineates two time periods: (1) 1959-1967 - before the effects of the women's movement could be felt; and (2) 1968-1977 - when the movement had been present long enough to have an influence on the portrayal of female criminals in popular magazines. All articles listed in the Reader's Guide pertaining to females in crime during the period from 1959 to 1977 were taken as a universe, and a sample

was drawn from each period. The universe consisted of 75 articles: 19 in the first period and 56 in the second. Using a stratified random sample, 15 articles were taken from the first period and 25 from the second. The sample was arrived at by numbering all the articles in each period and selected by referring to a table of random numbers.¹ The selection of the sample size was arbitrary, but each sample is large enough to show trends in media coverage.

Since this study is concerned with how popular magazines portray females in crime, all types of reports pertaining to female criminals listed in the Reader's Guide were included in the analysis, whether the report was an autobiographical account, covered one event, provided statistics for female crime, or provided general coverage of females in crime. Only the articles surrounding Patricia Hearst were eliminated due to the large volume written. This particular case is exceptional in the attention it received; therefore, its inclusion would bias the results.

Of the fifteen articles included in the first period, four provided no codable material. Only one article in the second period included no codable material.

Hypotheses

With the emergence of the women's movement, stereotypes which have surrounded women in the past are being challenged.

¹The table used was from Methods and Issues in Social Research by James Black and Dean Champion (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc, 1976).

"The direct pressure by feminists on the media and the indirect pressure created by the growth of the women's movement have caused some changes in the image of women in the media . . ." (Hole and Levine, 1971:265). There is also evidence of a re-examination of female crime taking place in sociological literature (see, for example, Klein, 1973; Millman, 1975; and Klein and Kress, 1976). One would expect the popular media to respond to both the changing images of females in general, and the attention sociology is devoting to female criminality, with a change in the way female criminals are portrayed.

Hypothesis I is: The traditional stereotypes of females will be less evident after the emergence of the women's movement than before the movement.

Hypothesis II is: The image of female criminals subsequent to the women's movement will be more consistent with the movement.

Measurement and Procedure

During analysis, one basic means for determining evidence of "myths" or untested assumptions influencing the articles is through the existence of stereotypes. Where it is fairly difficult to document stereotypes, the task can be approached if a standard is supplied. The articles by Klein (1973), Millman (1975), and Klein and Kress (1976) provide such a basis by specifically mentioning and showing how terms based on a sexist ideology are evident in early sociological work and continue to be in existence in present day literature. This provides a framework against which to set articles appearing in popular magazines. Characteristics of female criminals and explanations for their crime appearing in sociological literature were used as a basis for constructing categories.

The categories used were: traditional-characteristics; traditional-theoretical explanations; nontraditional-characteristics; and nontraditional-theoretical explanations. Fifteen items were included in the traditional-characteristics category, eight items in the traditional-theoretical category, fourteen items in the nontraditional-characteristics category, and four items in the nontraditional-theoretical category. (For a list and description of these items, see Appendix A).

All articles were read through once to get a general idea of what each article contained. The articles were then read a second time to note any references made to characteristics of female criminals or explanation for their crime. This list of characteristics and explanations were recorded on a coding sheet according to whether each supported the traditional or nontraditional point of view (see Appendix A for an example of the code sheet). An item was recorded only once for each paragraph it appeared in, even though several references were made to this item in a single paragraph. Beside recording the fact that an item appeared in a paragraph, the specific item was also recorded as an example. Once all the articles were coded, a coding sheet was devised to list the number of references per article for each item by category and time period. This code sheet provided the data for the analysis (see Appendix B for an example of this code sheet).

The data were examined in several different ways. First, to get a general idea of the results, a percentage was taken of the number of articles coded for a particular category and period. Second, to get a

more specific look at the results, the mean for the number of references for each category in Periods I and II was determined. A third approach examined the number of references per article for both the traditional and nontraditional approaches to determine which approach was dominant in the article. This determines the direction each article took and the general trend for each period. Fourth, each item was examined to see which appeared most for each period, which changed from one period to the next, which were added, or which dropped out in the second period. With this procedure those particular items contributing the most to the support or nonsupport of the hypotheses can be identified. Fifth, the authors' sex and the type of crime discussed in the articles were recorded.

Six articles were randomly chosen for recoding to test the reliability of the coding. These were recoded after a sufficient passage of time to reduce the effect of memory of the first coding. The percent of agreement between the two codings was determined for each article by dividing the number of items which showed complete agreement for the two codings by the total number of items. The results revealed high agreement for each article: 90%, 82%, 95%, 100%, 95%, and 78%.

To test for significance, the t-Test for Differences between Means and the t-Test for Differences between Proportions were used with a .05 level of significance for one-tailed tests.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data were analyzed by several different methods to get a more accurate assessment of the results. There were three general ways of looking at the data by the two time periods. The data from these methods are presented in three tables: Table I shows the mean number of references present in each category for Periods I and II; Table II indicates the degree each category is represented for Period I and Period II; and Table III shows the percentage of articles coded for each category by time period. These three methods revealed the changes, if any, in the media image of female criminals that occurred overtime and in what direction these changes occurred.

Another means of examining the data was to divide the entire time span into two-year segments. This provides evidence of trends during the period studied. Specific items of the four categories were also examined by two-year intervals. These procedures identify which items were important throughout the period studied, which were significant during only a part of this period, and which were not significant at all.

Table I shows the mean number of references each category has for Period I and Period II. To determine the significance of differences by time period, a t-Test for Differences between Means was used, testing at the .05 level of significance for a one-tailed test. In order for the results to be considered significant at a .05 level of

TABLE I
MEAN NUMBER OF REFERENCES FOR EACH CATEGORY BY TIME PERIOD

Categories:	Traditional Characteristics	Traditional Theoretical Explanations	Nontraditional Characteristics	Nontraditional Theoretical Explanations
Period I	3.73	1.80	.66	1.00
Period II	3.00	5.12	2.76	2.80
	t=.50 p>.05	t=-1.92 p<.05	t=-2.14 p<.05	t=-1.86 p<.05

TABLE II
PROPORTION OF REPRESENTATION FOR EACH CATEGORY

Categories:	Traditional Characteristics	Traditional Theoretical Explanations	Nontraditional Characteristics	Nontraditional Theoretical Explanations
Period I	.60	.33	.06	.33
Period II	.44	.56	.36	.28
	t=.94 p>.05	t=-1.35 p>.05	t=-2.14 p<.05	t=.33 p>.05

TABLE III
PERCENTAGE OF ARTICLES CODED FOR EACH CATEGORY BY TIME PERIOD

Categories:	Traditional Characteristics	Traditional Theoretical Explanations	Nontraditional Characteristics	Nontraditional Theoretical Explanations
Period I	.66	.40	.33	.53
Period II	.68	.68	.48	.64
	t=-1.00 p>.05	t=-1.74 p<.05	t=-.94 p>.05	t=-.69 p>.05

significance for a one-tailed test, the t must equal or be greater than 1.684. To arrive at a mean, the references in each category for each period were added and divided by the number of articles in each period.

Hypothesis I predicts there will be less evidence of traditional stereotypes in the second period. Hypothesis II predicts an increase in the number of nontraditional explanations and characteristics in the second period.

Examining Table I, a decrease in the mean number of references to traditional characteristics is evident in the second period. This decrease is in the expected direction. Applying the t -Test for Differences between Means, a t of .50 is obtained. Since t must equal or be greater than 1.684, a t of .50 cannot be considered a significant difference. The decrease of references, while in the expected direction, was not significant enough to provide support for Hypothesis I.

Table I shows that the traditional-theoretical category increases in mean number of references in the second period. This is not in the expected direction. Testing for significance, a t of -1.92 is obtained, which shows the difference to be significant. This provides support against Hypothesis I.

A definite increase in mean number of references occurs in the second period for the nontraditional-characteristics category (see Table I). This result supports Hypothesis II which predicts an increase in the second period. Applying the t -Test for Differences between Means, a t of -2.14 shows that this increase is significant.

Table I also shows that the nontraditional-theoretical category increases in mean number of references in the second period. A t of -1.86 shows that the difference between the two periods is significant. This increase in the predicted direction provides support for Hypothesis II.

Some findings fail to support Hypothesis I: that traditional stereotypes will be less evident in Period II than in Period I. While there was a slight decrease in the mean number of references for the traditional-characteristics category in Period II, a pattern which would support Hypothesis I, the difference was not significant. The traditional-theoretical category clearly provides support against Hypothesis I. The two nontraditional categories both provide support for the second hypothesis. Each showed a significant increase in mean number of references in the second period.

Preliminary conclusions can be drawn concerning the categories' support of the hypotheses. There is no significant change in the number of references to traditional characteristics in the second period, while much more attention appears to be given to traditional explanations. The nontraditional categories seem to be gaining some support in the second period: more nontraditional explanations are being given as reasons for female crime and characteristics are more positive.

A second method of looking at the data was to determine which categories were most represented for each period. This showed whether traditional or nontraditional categories dominated a period. The proportion each category was represented in each period was arrived at by comparing the number of references in a traditional category

with the number of references in the corresponding nontraditional category for each article in a period and getting a difference. The total number of times each category received the most references was divided by the number of articles for that period to get the proportional representation of that category.

Examining Table II, the traditional-characteristics category shows less representation in Period II than Period I. This supports Hypothesis I. The difference between the two periods fails to be significant, however. Applying the t-Test for Differences between Proportions, a t of .94 is obtained, which is much less than the t of 1.684 required for significance.

Table II shows an increase in representation in the second period for the traditional-theoretical category, which does not support Hypothesis I. However, in testing for significance, a t of -1.35 is obtained. The difference was not significant.

In looking at nontraditional characteristics, Table II shows that a change in the expected direction occurs in Period II: representation of this category increased. Testing for significance provides support for Hypothesis II. With a t of -2.14, the difference between the two periods is significant.

Table II shows that the nontraditional-theoretical category decreases in representation in the second period, which fails to support Hypothesis II. However, in testing for significance, a t of .33 shows the results are not significant.

In comparing these findings with the findings from the first method (Table I), there is evidence of some agreement. In both

cases, even though traditional characteristics showed a change in the expected direction, the results failed to be significant. The findings for the traditional-theoretical category agree in both incidences to some extent. Both showed increases in the second period, but only the increase in mean number of references for each category by time period was significant. Thus, Hypothesis I is clearly not supported in the analysis of the mean number of references for each category.

For the nontraditional-characteristics category, both findings supported Hypothesis II. The proportional representation of the nontraditional-theoretical category, however, failed to support Hypothesis II. A decrease (providing no support for Hypothesis II) was evident, but was not significant. The mean number of references for the nontraditional-theoretical category increased enough in the second period to be significant and provide support for the second hypothesis.

Comparison of these two methods shows that the nontraditional approach is beginning to have some influence in the second period although the traditional approach still dominates. Traditional theoretical issues dominate nontraditional theoretical issues in Period II. The mean number of references increased in the second period for all categories except traditional characteristics, which showed a slight decrease.

The third method looked at the percentage of articles coded for a category by time period. This method counted the number of articles in each period in which a category had references. This number was divided by the total number of articles in that period to obtain the percentage of articles coded for each category.

Table III (page 18) shows that the percentage of articles which referred to traditional characteristics increased slightly in the second period. This does not support Hypothesis I, which predicts a decrease. Testing for significance, however, a t of -1.00 shows the increase is not significant.

Table III reveals an increase during the second period in the percentage of articles referring to traditional explanations. This finding does not support the first hypothesis, which predicts a decrease. Testing for significance, a t of -1.74 is obtained. The difference between the two periods is significant; the traditional-theoretical category provides support against Hypothesis I.

Applying the test for significance for nontraditional characteristics, a t of $-.94$ is obtained. While the nontraditional-characteristics category in Table III shows an increase in the second period, which would support Hypothesis II, this increase is not significant.

Table III shows an increase in the second period in the number of articles coded for the nontraditional-theoretical category. However, after testing for significance, a t of $-.69$ is obtained, which is not large enough to support Hypothesis II at a significant level.

The results for the percentage of articles coded for each category, show that the difference between the two periods is significant for only one category: traditional-theoretical. This category was significant but failed to support Hypothesis I.

Certain conclusions can be drawn after examining the results of each method and comparing these results with the other two methods. References to traditional-characteristics did not change significantly

during the second period when compared to the first. No support was provided for Hypothesis I by the traditional-theoretical category in all three methods. Only the proportional representation of this category did not change enough to be significant. All three methods revealed an increase in the nontraditional-characteristics category in the second period, which supports the second hypothesis. Only the percentage of articles coded for each category failed to show a significant change. For the nontraditional-theoretical category, only the mean number of references supported Hypothesis II at a significant level.

Analysis of the Number of References in Each Category for Every Two Years

Analyzing the number of references for each category by every two years reveals a pattern. The traditional-characteristics category shows an increase between 1961 and 1967. After this, there was a sudden drop in the number of references. An increase was again evident between 1970 and 1975. Comparing the traditional-theoretical category with the traditional-characteristics, the findings are similar. The number of references for the traditional-theoretical peaks in 1961-1962 and again from 1970-1975, with a decline in number of references between these years.

The nontraditional-characteristics category shows an increase between 1970-1975. The nontraditional-theoretical category has a small number of references until 1970. After that it increases through 1975.

The small number of references for each category in 1968-1969 occurs probably because 1969 provided no articles, and only one article was selected for 1968. Eliminating this two-year period shows a continual increase in the references for the nontraditional-theoretical category until 1975. Elimination of these two years also affects the degree of decline in number of references experienced by the other categories, although not to a great extent.

Examination of Specific Items by Two-Year Intervals

The number of references for specific items were examined by every two years to see if any kind of pattern emerged. This analysis indicates which particular characteristics and explanations are emphasized at particular times but not at others.

Traditional-theoretical explanations. Since the results of this category were significant in the two-period analysis, each item in the category is discussed.

Examination of the references connecting sexual behavior to crime reveals the presence of this stereotype in current popular literature. This has been one of the most dominant stereotypes in sociological literature, both past and present. The number of references connecting sexual conduct to crime decline between 1965 and 1969, but emerge again in 1970-1971 and continue to increase for the next four years.

Except for 1965-1969, the number of references attributing the cause to a desire for personal relationships increased through 1975. The fact that this explanation, which has also dominated sociological

literature, has prevailed through the years, provides further support that traditional explanations are still widely held.

Attributing the cause to a desire for glory and excitement, or a desire to gain attention, presents an exceptional case. In only four periods was any reference made to this explanation at all. However, two years (1970-1971) referred to this explanations eighteen times - an unusual amount compared to the other years which referred to this explanation. The reason for this increase in references in 1970-1971 is mainly due to the unusual attention this explanation received in one particular article.

References emerged in 1972-1973 attributing the cause of increase in crime among females to the influence of the women's movement, and continued to increase through 1975. Traditionally, female crime has not been considered to be that important in comparison with male crime, because of the supposedly small incidence of females involved in crime. Now that female crime appears to be increasing, an explanation is needed for this increase. An explanation based on traditional stereotypes might assume that the current rise in female crime statistics is due to the influence of the women's movement, disregarding the possibility that more female crime is now coming to the attention of the authorities, that perhaps authorities are being more strict and arresting more females than before, or that more coverage is given it by the media than before.¹

¹The universe of articles for the period studied shows an increase in articles on female crime in the second period. Out of 75 articles, nineteen were in the first period and 56 in the second.

Psychological explanations, which do not receive much attention from 1959 to 1967, become a popular explanation in later years, particularly in 1974-1975, which has sixteen references to this explanation.

Attributing the cause to the situation at home receives little mention. This is unexpected considering the emphasis sociological literature has given this explanation.

The influence of others as a cause receives few references, except in 1974-1975, where an unusual amount of attention is devoted to this explanation. This increase is probably due to the large number of times one article referred to this explanation.

The last traditional explanation attributes the crime to a lack of standards and values. While this explanation implicates society, traditional theorists emphasize that the individual is to blame. This item receives no references except in 1965-1967 and 1970-1971. Although this item shows a trend towards increase, this increase is of minor significance.

In general, the years 1970-1975 reveal a heavy emphasis on traditional explanations. Most traditional explanations were referred to in these years and many had a large number of references. This analysis further supports the conclusion that in the later years, the articles make more references to traditional explanations than in the earlier years.

Traditional-characteristics. The years 1965-1967 and 1974-1975 reveal an emphasis on traditional characteristics. During 1965-1967, the item referring to the sloppy appearance of the female receives an

unusual amount of references. Few references occurred in any of the other years (there was a total of three references for the other years).

The emphasis on being feminine, and negative remarks about masculine traits in a female, is consistently referred to over a number of years (1963-1975) although the period from 1968-1973 receives a small number of references. This particular item has been fairly dominant in sociological literature.

Sexist description, one which particularly depicts the traditional viewpoint, receives less mention than was expected. References of this type showed no consistent pattern.

Another item which was expected to be dominant, at least in the first several years, received very little mention. It was expected that females would be characterized as promiscuous, especially with the emphasis given to the link between sexual behavior and crime. This happened very seldom, however. Only during 1961-1962 and 1965-1967 did this characteristic appear.

Deceit, another trait emphasized by early sociological literature, received mention only in 1965-1967, with a total of two references.

The traditional approach connects female crime to the issue of morality. This issue underlies discussion of female crime in sociological literature. References concerning morality and values reveal a pattern similar to that for the traditional-theoretical item which attributes the cause to a decline in standards and values. These references were evident especially from 1970-1975. Traditional proponents seemed particularly concerned with the moral issue during this period.

This emphasis on morality in more recent years is unexpected. One would expect less emphasis on moral issues and a greater concern for accurate portrayals of female criminals.

References to "typical" crimes of females, or remarks about something being characteristic of females, appears in 1972-1973 and increases in 1974-1975. This is clearly not in the expected direction. One would think that with the increase of female crime in areas once dominated by males, references to crimes as being typical of females would be less frequent. However, this item shows the traditional viewpoint is still present in current magazines.

Another item which appears in 1970-1971 and increases through 1974-1975 is females characterized as "abnormal," "irrational," or "neurotic." This item matches the emphasis given to psychological explanations during this time period. However, its absence from earlier years is unexpected.

Nontraditional-theoretical explanations. The years 1970-1975 show a great emphasis on nontraditional explanations. Social and political explanations both show increases during this period, but economic explanations remain about the same. Economic explanations are the only nontraditional explanations which had consistent representation over the period studied. Explanations attributed to technological change are not referred to except during 1965-1967. In 1976-1977, two items show decreases in the number of references (economic and social) while the other two items are not represented. The increase from 1972-1975 in three out of four items is in the direction predicted in Hypothesis II.

Nontraditional-characteristics. References to increased violence, or females engaging in once typically male crimes, received a large amount of attention from 1972-1975. The other years revealed no mention of this item except for 1961-1962 and 1976-1977.

The term "well-educated" did show a slight increase from the time it first appeared (1970-1971) until 1974-1975. This increase is in the direction predicted in Hypothesis II.

The item which expresses awareness of traditional stereotypes and their influence, or refers to general nontraditional descriptions, reveals an increase from 1970-1971 through 1974-1975, with a decline in 1976-1977.

All other items were judged insignificant for the support of the hypotheses. Either they were seldom referred to or they were not represented at all (those included in the latter consist of females characterized as expressive, ambitious, creative, alert, and articulate).

While a general pattern can be drawn from the analysis by every two years, the actual number of references a particular item or category receives, must be viewed with caution. Particular years had more articles represented in the sample than other years (1963-1964, 1972-1973, and especially 1974-1975).

Analysis by Author and Type of Crime

Sex of author. Analysis of the authors for the articles by sex failed to support the expected results: that there would be more female writers in the second period. The results show no real

difference in the number of female authors between the two periods. In fact there is an increase in articles written by males. With a number of articles included where the author is unknown, no specific conclusions can be drawn concerning the representation of authors by sex.

Type of crime. The type of crime coded for the articles included prostitution, delinquency, political crime, violent crime, shoplifting, drug-related crime, robbery, and a general category which included mention of no specific crime or included a discussion of crime statistics. The first period discusses mainly prostitution and delinquency. This agrees with the emphasis given to these two crimes in early sociological literature. One would expect, however, that shoplifting would also be emphasized during this period since it is traditionally considered to be a female offense. This is not the case. Only one article refers to shoplifting in the first period.

In the second period, political crime dominates. Violent crime is second in the amount of attention it receives. Prostitution and shoplifting are also represented in this period. Thus, it can be seen that the traditional approach is still influential. Shoplifting and prostitution are still being discussed. The increase in articles on shoplifting might be explained, however, by the growing concern among businesses of the increase in shoplifting in recent years.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of different methods of analysis, the data provide some support for Hypothesis II. Nontraditional explanations in particular increased during the second period, especially political and social explanations. Economic explanations, however, were influential throughout both periods. Explanations due to technological change were not represented much during either period.

The increase in social explanations in the later period expresses the changes society has been undergoing during this time: a change in women's role in the family and increased opportunities and involvement of women in the work force. An example of a social explanation which appears in an article: "The increase in crimes by women parallel women's exodus from the home to the outside world. 'More women are suffering the same pressures as men'" ("Woman's Touch," Newsweek 85 Jan 6, 1975, p.35).

With the cases of Lynette Fromme and Sara Jane Moore, attention to political explanations increased. Before these particular cases, political explanations received little mention.

Nontraditional characteristics did not receive as much attention as expected in the second period. Representation of this category was dominated by a few items, particularly references to increased violence and less passive crimes (many of the references to this item were discussing crime statistics for females), females characterized as well-educated, and demonstrated awareness of the existence of traditional stereotypes or general nontraditional descriptions and

explanations. In one article, the only references referred to this last item. Examples of these items would be:

References to increased violence. " . . . women are beginning to resemble men in their criminal behavior" ("Woman's Touch," Newsweek 85 Jan 6, 1975, p.35).

Demonstrated awareness of traditional stereotypes.

It has frequently been observed that standards applied to female behavior are stricter than those applied to male comportment, and that a degree of criminal involvement which might appear rather modest for boys is seen as quite serious for girls.
("Molls; Corner Gang Girls," Society 11 Nov, 1973, p.34).

The inclusion of "references to increased violence and less passive crimes" as an item in the nontraditional-characteristics category reveals what may be a new stereotype. Increasing opportunities for women include opportunities to commit more violent crimes. An increase in female violence has been highly publicized and often exaggerated. The large number of references to increased violence among females may be attributed more to the "belief" that female crime is increasing and becoming more violent than "actual" increases in violence. Examples of this item which seem to indicate development of a stereotype include:

" . . . as criminals and revolutionaries - women may easily outdo men in ruthlessness" ("Deadlier Than," Nation 218 June 29, 1974, p.805).

"Female street gangs are a new and particularly terrifying aspect of present day urban life . . ." (Ibid).

"More women are committing more serious crimes than ever before in our history" ("Gentle Sex? I'd Rather Meet a Cougar!" Today's Health 50 July, 1972, p.47).

The publicizing of a rise in female violence may generate another negative outcome. Some may attribute this "excessive" or "sudden" increase in violence to the women's movement. Testing for this belief was the reason for the inclusion of "references to the women's movement as cause" in the traditional-theoretical category.

Traditional explanations especially increased in the second period, which failed to support Hypothesis I. Explanations linking sexual behavior to criminal activity, those attributed to a desire for personal relationships, psychological explanations, explanations attributed to the home situation, those attributed to the influence of others, or those attributed to a desire for glory, excitement, or attention, are all represented in sociological literature to a great extent. Examples of these explanations include:

Sexual connection. " . . . but there was no race problem here - she would sleep with anyone who had heroin" ("People vs Baby," New York Times Magazine Jan 17, 1965, p.41).

A desire for personal relationships. " . . . lost children in search of a family they never had . . ." ("White Slavery, 1972," Time 99 June 5, 1972, p.24).

Psychological. "If these opportunities are not realized, crime is very often an outlet for that kind of frustration" ("Women Catching up with Men in One More Field: Crime," US News 77 Sept 23, 1974, p.48).

Influence of others. "Almost every drug-related crime has some man in the background pushing the woman to commit a crime" (Ibid).

Home situation. "Almost certainly, too, her parents need to consider what, in the atmosphere of their home, has made possible the child's deviant behavior" (Brothers, Joyce. "Why Girls Steal," Good Housekeeping 176 Feb, 1973, p.69).

Glory, excitement, or seeking attention. " . . . both women wanted to attract attention more than murder the President" ("Now, the Violent Woman," Newsweek 86 Oct 6, 1975, p.29).

The continual dominance of these traditional explanations, especially when considering their prevalence in sociological literature, shows how deeply embedded in the culture these explanations are.

The presence of traditional characteristics in the second period remain about the same as for the first. "Emphasis on being feminine or negative remarks referring to masculine traits in a female" receives consistent representation over a number of years. An example of this item would be: " . . . judges are shocked by women's 'unladylike' violence" ("Woman's Touch," Newsweek 85 Jan 6, 1975, p.35).

Another traditional characteristic which was referred to quite often was references concerning morality and values. An example of this: "As for the cost of shoplifting in human terms, in the erosion of values and standards, the spread of moral disease . . ." (Maynard, Fredelle. "Housewives' Crime and What makes Them do It," Good Housekeeping 165 Oct, 1967, p.157).

An item which first appears in the early 70's is "references to typical crimes of females or remarks about something being typical of women." An example of this: "Women don't as a rule steal practical items . . . they slip into their handbags frivolities . . ." (Brothers, Joyce. "Why Girls Steal," Good Housekeeping 176 Feb, 1973, p.66). Another item which appears in 1970-1971 and increases through 1974-1975 is "females characterized as abnormal, irrational, or neurotic." An example: "manic bookkeeper" and " . . . has always lived in a fantasy world" ("Two Faces of Sara Jane Moore," Newsweek 86 Oct 6, 1975, p.23). Other traditional items were not that prevalent throughout the period of study.

In conclusion, support was provided for Hypothesis II, which predicts an increase in references to nontraditional explanations and characteristics in the second period. However, support was not provided for Hypothesis I, that traditional stereotypes will be less evident in the second period. On the contrary, traditional explanations seem to be increasing. Thus, one must conclude that the traditional approach is still largely dominant in current popular literature, but that the nontraditional approach is beginning to show some influence.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The present study was undertaken to examine images of female criminals present in popular literature before and after the emergence of the women's movement. Examination of female crime in sociological literature, both recent and earlier work, revealed that the literature was dominated by "assumptions" concerning women rather than beliefs based on empirical evidence. It was suspected that these assumptions were embedded in our culture since they had dominated sociological literature for so many years. Since this study assumes that the media reflect ideas and beliefs existing within the culture, while also exposing the audience to ideas which are just beginning to emerge, traditional stereotypes about females existing within the culture should be apparent in the popular media. Any new beliefs regarding female criminals which were consistent with the women's movement would also be apparent.

The purpose of the study was to find out how influential negative traditional stereotypes were before and after the emergence of the women's movement, and to what extent ideas consistent with the women's movement were present during the second period, after the women's movement had time to achieve some degree of influence.

Negative stereotypes about female criminals present in the popular media can have a number of consequences: First, the public may attach labels to females involved in crime on the basis of what they read. These labels may be hard to escape. For example, the individual may

be unable to get a job because she is considered a "criminal" or the public may pressure the government to keep these females institutionalized because they are considered "dangerous." Also, proposed programs, such as half-way houses and drug clinics, which are designed to help the females re-enter society, may not receive support because some may feel these "criminals" to be "worthless." These labels may also contribute to how the female criminal views herself. Thus, she may feel locked into a criminal role and begin to act accordingly.

Existing negative stereotypes of female criminals have implications for women in general. These stereotypes derive from assumptions concerning all women, not simply women involved in crime. These stereotypes support a system which assigns women a second-class position in society while placing males in the dominant position.

Because the media reach a large segment of society, their portrayal of female criminals can influence how the public reacts to those females. The media can support stereotypes already existing in the culture, contribute to the formation of new stereotypes, or promote a more accurate assessment of females involved in crime.

To examine popular literature for the presence of traditional and nontraditional beliefs, a content analysis of magazine articles from 1959-1977 was undertaken. The study was divided into two periods:

1959-1967. A period which marked the emergence of the women's movement, but before it could be expected to have any impact.

1968-1977. A period when the women's movement began to be influential.

Out of a universe of 75 articles drawn from the Reader's Guide (19 articles in the first period and 56 in the second), a random sample was drawn of fifteen articles from the first period and 25 from the second. These articles were read and coded according to categories concerning explanations of female crime and characteristics attributed to females involved in crime. Several items were constructed to represent each category.

After coding, the data were analyzed by a number of methods:

1. The mean number of references for each category by time period.
2. The proportion of representation for each category.
3. The percentage of articles coded for each category for both periods.
4. Analysis of the number of references in each category by two-year intervals.
5. Examination of specific items by two-year intervals.
6. Number of articles in the study which were written by females and the type of crime discussed in the articles.

To test for significance, the t-Test for Differences between Means was used for the first method, while the second and third methods were tested using the t-Test for Differences between Proportions. All tests used a .05 level of significance for a one-tailed test.

The findings provided some support for Hypothesis II, that the image of female criminals subsequent to the women's movement would be more consistent with that movement. Hypothesis I, which predicts a

decrease in the representation of traditional stereotypes after the emergence of the women's movement, was not supported. There was an increase in both traditional and nontraditional explanations in the second period. This showed a greater interest in explaining female crime and also revealed that less attention was given to characteristics of female criminals, which would provide some support for the second hypothesis; one would expect that ideas consistent with the women's movement would place less emphasis upon attributes of female criminals which were unrelated to the crime.

The increase of traditional explanations in Period II shows that the traditional approach is still present, and the greater increase of these explanations than nontraditional ones show that the traditional approach is still dominant, although the nontraditional approach is beginning to be influential.

The inclusion of the item "references to increased violence and less passive types of crime among females" revealed what may be the emergence of a new assumption: that female crime is increasing at a fast rate and becoming much more violent. While violent crime among females is no doubt increasing, the extent and degree of this increase is questionable.

This increase in violence among females is also attributed to the social emancipation of women, without any evidence to support this assumption. While this may possibly have some influence on increased crime among women, other possibilities should also be considered, especially the reporting of official crime statistics and also changes in the actual arrests of women.

The findings show that the women's movement may be having some impact on society's beliefs and ideas concerning women. The movement has, to some extent, influenced the media directly, through the movement's insistence of its recognition as a viable group in society, but the movement has also influenced the media indirectly through the changes society has undergone in response to the movement: new laws requiring equal treatment of females; new opportunities for women in the work force; more daycare centers which allow women to be absent from the home; more chances to participate in activities which were once closed to women; and general awareness, and to some extent, acceptance, among groups of people of the ideas surrounding the women's movement.

The present study was concerned with trends in popular magazines' portrayal of female crime. Since the study examined only a small sample of articles from popular magazines, care must be taken in generalizing the results to other areas of the media. However, since other areas of the media would also reflect ideas and beliefs existing in society, while also introducing new beliefs, it is expected that study of these areas would provide similar results.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INITIAL CODING SHEET

LIST OF ITEMS BY CATEGORIES

Traditional-Characteristics

1. Females characterized as enemies or competitive with one another.
2. Emphasis on being feminine; negative references to masculine traits in a female.
3. Females characterized as dim, dullwitted, stupid.
4. Females characterized as inarticulate.
5. Females characterized as sullen.
6. References to a sloppy or inappropriate appearance of the female.
7. A sexist description of females (references to tight skirts, for example).
8. Females characterized as promiscuous.
9. Females characterized as spiteful or revengeful.
10. Emphasis on morals and values.
11. Females characterized as deceitful, devious, sly.
12. Emphasis on "typical" crimes of females or references to something as characteristic of females.
13. Females characterized as abnormal, irrational, or neurotic.
14. References to general bad behavior of the female (showing off, mocking people, for example).
15. General negative remarks about female criminals (a miscellaneous category to include negative remarks about females not included in other items).

Traditional-Theoretical Explanations

1. Connection of sexual behavior with crime.
2. Cause attributed to a desire for personal relationships.
3. Cause attributed to a desire for glory, excitement, or a desire for attention.
4. References to the women's movement as cause.
5. Psychological explanations.
6. Cause attributed to the situation at home.
7. Cause attributed to the influence of others.
8. Cause attributed to a lack of standards and values.

Nontraditional-Characteristics

1. Females characterized as articulate.
2. References to increased violence among females; discussion of crimes once considered to be committed only by males.
3. Females characterized as well-educated.
4. Females characterized as expressive.
5. Females characterized as ambitious.
6. Females characterized as showing initiative, being creative.
7. Expression of female's involvement in crime without an emphasis on the appearance of the female or references to traditional characteristics; awareness of the presence of traditional stereotypes and their influence.
8. Females characterized as alert, aware.
9. Females characterized as confident.
10. Females characterized as independent.
11. Females characterized as having self-control, courage.

12. Females characterized as being competent.
13. Females characterized as resourceful.
14. Females characterized as intelligent.

Nontraditional-Theoretical Explanations

1. Social explanations.
2. Economic explanations.
3. Political explanations.
4. Explanations attributed to technological change.

APPENDIX B.

EXAMPLE OF CODING SHEET USED FOR ANALYSIS BY TWO PERIODS AND TWO-YEAR INTERVALS

[illegible]

VITA

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