CHAPTER 1

Vandalism: an assessment and agenda

W. VAN VLIET

The purpose of this chapter is to review the 'state-of-the-art' on vandalism. It aims to bring some order in the rather diverse literature, to distinguish the several different perspectives on vandalism while considering their relative merits in addressing the problem and, further, to suggest some work that needs to be done next. This review, therefore, is necessarily broad in scope, providing an organizing framework for the more specific theoretical, methodological, and substantive issues which are treated in greater detail in the contributions comprising the remainder of this volume. [1]

Below, the extent of the problem is indicated first in terms of young people's involvement in vandalism, the range of environments affected, and the magnitude of economic and socio-psychological costs. This is followed by a review of approaches taken to study and combat vandalism. Different programs are assessed with respect to their effectiveness in specific cases, and two general strategies are distinguished. The conclusion points out future directions for work on vandalism.

1. Involvement, targets, and costs

Vandalism is an activity primarily engaged in by young people. Statistics for the United States indicate that about 90% of all arrested vandals are white males under 25 years of age (U.S. Bureau of Federal Investigation, 1979). Figures reported by the Pennsylvania State Police (1980: 65ff) show that those under 18 account for some 60% of the vandals arrested, whereas four out of every five juvenile offenses are cases of vandalism. Marshall (1976) found ten years to be the most common age group among arrested vandals. Participation in vandalism by youths appears to be widespread. Clarke (1978) noted "extensive involvement" among urban boys, aged 11 to 15, without mentioning a precise figure. Such figures are hard to obtain, of course, as vandalism is very much an anonymous offense: some 90% of the reported incidents remains

unresolved (Pennsylvania State Police, 1980: 70). Nevertheless, in a few instances students have been asked for self-reports. Marshall (1976) cites a study conducted by Francis Gladstone in which between 30% and 40% of secondary school boys in Liverpool, England, admitted engagement in vandalism. Phillips and Bartlett (1976) found involvement by more than 50% of a sample of mid-western American teenagers. Similar outcomes are described by Richards (1979) for a sample of nearly 2,000 middle-class American adolescents and by Donnermeyer and Howard (1980) in an investigation of sophomore and junior-high students in five rural Ohio schools.

From the above one may conclude that vandalism, while variably defined, is a fairly common activity among (pre-)adolescents. Moreover, data for the U.S.A. point out a 70% increase in reported incidents during the 1970–79 period (U.S. Bureau of Federal Investigation, 1979, 1980; see also Bayh, 1977, for school vandalism). Although acts of vandalism are primarily committed by young people, the stereotypical profile of the vandal as a 'working-class, inner-city male adolescent' has been invalidated by various studies. Vandals come from urban and suburban as well as rural areas, from working-class and middle-class as well as upper-class families, and are of different ethnic origins (Herbert, 1980; Torres, 1981; Levine and Kozak, 1979; Richards, 1979; Bates and McJunkins, 1962).

Thus, vandalism is increasing and is not limited to specific socio-economic milieus or spatial locales. Consequently, a wide range of environments is affected, including private and particularly public property. A summing up of all vandalized settings and objects would result in a rather meaningless, long list. However, principal categories which subsume more specific environments are:[2]

(1) *parks and playgrounds* (e.g., Peuleche, 1976; Burall, 1980; Christensen, 1978; Damron, 1978):
(2) *educational facilities* (e.g., Mayer and Butterworth, 1979; Bayh, 1978; Arlan and McDowell, 1980; Howard, 1978);
(3) *public transportation* (e.g., U.S. Department of Transportation, 1980; Glazer, 1979; Bartholo and Milte, 1979; Klein and Feiner, 1980);
(4) *institutional settings* such as dormitories, libraries, correctional institutions, military installations, places of worship, museums, etc. (e.g., Sleep, 1982; Brill, 1977; Graham, 1981; Griffith, 1978);
(5) *housing* (e.g., U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1973; Newman, 1980; Jephcott, 1971; Larsson, 1982); and,
(6) *street furniture* (e.g., Zimbardo, 1973; Bennett, 1969; Torres, 1981; Ley and Cybriwski, 1974a)

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[2] For a more complete list of references, see *Vandalism: a selected bibliography*, no. 118, Chicago: Council of Planning Librarians.

Table 1. Indications of financial cost of repair and replacement of vandalized equipment.

YEAR	AMOUNT OF DAMAGE	PLACE	ENVIRONMENT	SOURCE
1967	1,941,000	New York City	Schools	Zimbardo (1973)
1967	100,000,000	New York City	Public Phones	Zimbardo (1973)
	4,400,000	U.S.	Cars	Goldemeir (1974)
	722,000,000	U.S	Construction sites	Goldemeir (1974)
1968	5,000,000	New York City	Public Trans.	Zimbardo (1973)
1968/9	870,000*	Liverpool, England	Corporation Housing	Pullen (1973:259)
1969	30,000	small U.S. city	Schools	Zimbardo (1973)
	61,000*	City of 500,000 in England	Schools	Burall (1980)
	122,000*	Berkshire Cnty in England	Schools	Burall (1980)
1972	2.55, (monthly cost per unit)	U.S.	60 federally sub-sidized limited dividend housing projects	HUD Challenge (1978:28)
1975	1 to 5 billion $	U.S.	Schools, parks, recreation areas, public housing, & transit systems	U.S. Senate Judiciary Sub-committee (1975)
1976	114,000,000*	England/Scotland/Wales	General	Ward (1978:203)
1978	460,000,000 or $13 per/student	U.S.	Schools	Commission on Crime and Delinquency (n.d.)
1978	14,000,000	U.S.	Small businesses	Commission on Crime and Delinquency (n.d.)
	853.08**	Canada	Small Univ. Library	Sleep (1982)
	44,000*	City of 500,000 in England	Housing	Burall (1980)
1979	1,000,000,000	U.S.	General	Anonymous (1977) Commission on Crime & Delinq. (n.d.)
1979	100,000,000	England/Wales	General	Burall (1980)
1979	$15.00 per resident	PA small town	General	Pietro (1980)
1982	130,000	U.S.	Dormitories in a state university	Gailey (1983)

All amounts are in U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated
*English pounds
**Canadian dollars

Incidents in these different types of environment include such acts as throwing rocks at passing cars, smashing windows, ripping off wires from and urinating in public phone booths; 'soaping' creeks with detergent; shooting street signs; pilferage of building sites; slashing tires; squirting ink and glue on or cutting out pages of library books; smashing marble statues; trampling flower beds; and countless more devious acts. The list could go on and on.

There have been few systematic attempts to estimate the financial costs resulting from repair and replacement of vandalized equipment. Such efforts are further confounded by the absence of unequivocal criteria as to what constitutes vandalism. [3] Nevertheless, some figures do exist (see table 1).

While reflecting on the data contained in table 1, several points should be borne in mind. To begin with, the figures are often estimates; it is seldom specified how they are calculated, and there is little possibility here to evaluate their accuracy. Further, the figures may be inflated by including as vandalism what is really negligent maintenance (see fn. 2); at the same time they are deflated by the rate of inflation and incomplete information. Therefore, the above data should be interpreted cautiously. However, even if taken only as indications of the financial implications of vandalism, the costs appear to be staggering.

In addition to the economic aspect, it is important to consider the less tangible socio-psychological costs and suffering in health. In this connection, some have been concerned with the effects of school vandalism. In a study of high school students, aged 16 to 18, in four schools in Michigan and Illinois, U.S.A., Rose (1978) failed to find a correlation between the official drop-out rate and an index of suspensions due to "depreciative behaviors" such as thefts, fights, and assaults. However, in another investigation of 321 students (about 13–14 years of age) in a large midwestern city, vicitimization – inherent in an atmosphere of violence and vandalism – was found to be related to lower self-esteem and stronger feelings of anonymity (Blyth et al., 1980), suggesting that the performance of the educational system may suffer qualitatively. In another context, Burall (1980) mentions accident records in Great Britain for 1978, indicating tens of thousands of injuries requiring hospital treatment as a result of accidents involving faulty and often vandalized playground equipment. Other unintended consequences may be elderly people and mothers with young children stranded in or out of their apartment because of an out-of-order

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[3] For example, in educational settings maintenance tasks may be classified as being the result of vandalism rather than regular wear and tear, so that they can be charged against students' general deposits, thus inflating the cost figure. Also, possible other beneficiaries on the benefit side of the ledger should be noted, as repair and replacement needs create an additional demand for labor and materials. Further, tax legislation often allows deductions for the cost of restoring property losses, thus shifting the burden from the private to the public domain. However, there are indications that much vandalism goes unreported, suggesting that the actual figures are much higher.

elevator; loss of life or property because of a vandalized fire-alarm; delay of medical help due to a vandalized public phone; traffic fatalities and injuries from accidents attributable to vandalized lighting, road decks, tires or navigational aids; lack of investment by financial institutions and refusal of insurance companies to cover losses in areas of high vandalism; increased turnover, vacancy rates, fear to leave the home, and distrust of neighbors; and so forth. In a nation-wide study in Ireland, the problem of vandalism, as perceived by a sample of 2,019 residents, was found to be the second most important predictor of neighborhood satisfaction (Davis and Fine-Davis, 1981).

Clearly, vandalism does not stand alone as a factor contributing to undesirable situations as those named above. This point will be argued later. For now, it suffices to note that vandalism, broadly defined, appears to be increasing and is associated with high monetary and social costs, mental anguish, and suffering in health. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that numerous programs and strategies have been formulated in order to combat vandalism. Before reviewing these, we will take a brief look at the various perspectives on and definitions of vandalism which underlie such programs.

Recapitulating the main points of this first section, the available data indicate that (1) acts of vandalism are increasing and predominantly committed by youths under 25 years of age; (2) many youths engage in vandalism at one time or another – more than 50% according to some self-report studies – and participation is not restricted to particular socio-economic milieus or spatial locales; (3) a broad range of environments is affected, the chief categories being parks and playgrounds, educational facilities, public transportation, institutional settings, housing and street furniture; (4) direct financial loss due to repair and replacement is very high and in addition to perhaps more important intangible socio-psychological costs and suffering in health.

2. Perspectives on vandalism

The literature on vandalism shows little consensus as to what constitutes vandalistic behaviour. To begin with, there is a judicial perspective. In the U.S.A., for example, the FBI has defined vandalism as "the willful or malicious destruction, injury, disfigurement, or defacement of any public or private property, real or personal, without consent of the owner having custody or control, by cutting, tearing, breaking, marking, painting, drawing, covering with filth or any such other means as may be specified by law or ordinance" (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1979). According to the British Criminal Damage Act of 1971, a vandal is "a person who without lawful excuse destroys or damages any property belonging to another, intending to destroy or damage any such property or being reckless as to whether

Table 2. Types and definitions of vandalism.

SOURCE	TYPES OF VANDALISM
Cohen (1973)	Ideological: Property destruction characterized by (1) rulebreaking toward some explicit and conscious ideological end, and (2) challenge of content of the rule being broken; Acquisitive: Damage done in the course of or in order to acquire money or property; Tactical: To advance some non-material end in a planned fashion. May be inspired by ideological motives (e.g., slogan painting) or personal ones (e.g., sabotage to relieve job monotony or get a rest); Vindictive: As a form of revenge; Play: Form of institutionalized rulebreaking without malicious intent, inspired by curiosity and a spirit of competition and skill; Malicious: Hostile actions enjoyed for their own sake at the victim's expense, inspired by feelings of boredom, despair, exasperation, resentment, failure and frustration.
Farmer and Dark (1973)	Smashing things with considerable strength and determination for the sheer satisfaction of smashing them.
Zimbardo (1973)	Mindless, wanton destruction of property. Prototype of a behavior pattern characterized by deindividuation, assaultive aggression, senseless destruction and efforts directed towards shattering traditional norms and institutionalized structures.
Goldmeir (1974)	Retaliation by a person who believes he had been done wrong. Wanton vandalism involves property destruction purely for excitement, usually without an ulterior motive.
Pablant and Baxter (1975)	Number of forcible entries with consequent theft and/or damage to school property or equipment reported to the security officer of the district.
Greenberg (1976)	Editing simple worded letters to the editor.
Zeisel (1976:11-12)	Malicious vandalism: Instantaneous damage demanding immediate attention. Conscious motive. Primarily (part of) social, educational and legal problems. Designer can do little.
Zeisel (cont.)	Misnamed vandalism: Accidental damage identical to malicious vandalism with one crucial difference: no purposefulness. Could be avoided by better prediction of use of the environment and designing accordingly. Non-malicious property damage: Conscious modifications of the environment without malicious intent, e.g., in the course of a game. Hidden maintenance damage: A cumulative condition not resulting from intentional acts, but requiring eventual attention, e.g., wear and tear. May be avoided by materials and designs accommodating frequent and rough use.

Table 2 continued

SOURCE	TYPES OF VANDALISM
Cornacchionne (1977)	Predatory: damage caused during stealing; Play: No intent to destroy; Vindictive: motivated by revenge; Wanton: variety of motives
Mawby (1977)	GPO records on incidents of kiosk vandalism. Definition of vandalism left to repairmen.
U.S. Dept. of Justice (1979)	The willful or malicious destruction, injury, disfigurement or defacement of any public or private property, real or personal, without consent of the owner having custody or control, by cutting, tearing, breaking, marking, painting, drawing, covering with filth or any such other means as may be specified by law or ordinance.
Becker (1980)	Damage (in university dormitories); may be the result of purposeful destruction as well as neglected maintenance.
Griffiths and Shapland (1980:11)	According to the British Criminal Damage Act of 1971, a vandal is "a person who without lawful excuse destroys or damages any property belonging to another, intending to destroy or damage any such property or being reckless as to whether such property would be destroyed or damaged."
Wilson (1980:20)	Damage to property owned by others (whether or not they are perceived to "belong" to someone), and to be mended by others.
Graham (1981)	The breaking of cell windows at a remand centre.
Mayer and Butterworth (1981:499)	The presence of broken glass, equipment theft, fire damages, and property damage such as graffiti or damaged furniture.
Torres (1981:21)	Destruction of property, or the mischievous marring, painting, or defacing of same with willful malicious intent.
Sleep (1982)	Mutilation and theft of library periodicals.
Wise (1982:31)	Alteration of the physical environment without consent of its owner or manager.

such property would be destroyed or damaged" (Griffiths and Shapland, 1980: 11). Quite clearly, formal circumscriptions such as these are open to multiple interpretation; statistics collected on this basis may mirror as much of the behavior of law enforcement personnel as activities of vandals, and they convey no information regarding the motives for and meaning of engaging in vandalism. The usefulness of a judicial perspective is limited because it focuses on legal aspects of vandalistic incidents rather than on their social context and their behavioral and psychological antecedent circumstances. This focus may be problematic because differences in these factors may require a different classification of an identical outcome. For example, an unearthed shrub may in some instances be the result of malicious intent of teenagers, whereas in other

instances it may be due to exploratory behavior of toddlers. This ambiguity in classification is a perennial problem in the compilation of vandalism statistics, since a large majority of the reported offenses goes unwitnessed and few offenders are apprehended.

A large portion of the literature on vandalism is opinionative and characterizable by a lamentable lack of scientific rigor. The divergent conclusions and recommendations are, in large part, based on ad hoc interpretations and attributable to differences in (or the absence of) definitions of vandalism and the operationalization of contributing factors, the variety of data gathering techniques employed (if any), the lack of control for influences of extraneous variables, and the absence of systematic considerations concerning theory, research design, and sampling procedure. The evidence brought forward in support of a given viewpoint is more often than not informal in nature and based on casual observations and personal professional experiences of, for example, educators (Irwin, 1976), police officers (Cornacchione, 1977), administrators (Stormer, 1979), and civic leaders (Torres, 1981).

Apart from a judicial perspective and attestations of concern as referred to above, a third perspective is provided by concentrating on the vandalized environment. While narrowing down the environmental dimension, this kind of approach has so far not produced a coherent explanation of vandalism. In the extensive literature on schools, for example, vandalism has been attributed to such diverse factors as deficient design and construction materials, lack of discipline, bureaucratic anonymity, and administrative incompetence and mismanagement. Clearly lacking is an integrated theory capable of explaining the phenomenon of school vandalism.

Similarly, one might focus on types of vandalism such as arson or graffiti. However, then also there is ample room for widely different views. Graffiti, for example, has been seen as a phenomenon to be curbed by setting loose police dogs (New York Magazine, 1977), as an established means of expressing one's identity (Brown, 1978), as territorial markers functional in the regulation of a social system (Ley and Cybriwsky, 1974b), and as semantic cues to different sex-role perceptions (Bruner and Kelso, 1980; Bates and Martin, 1980). Again, a unifying theoretical explanation of graffiti is lacking.

A number of authors have recognized the diversity of vandalistic acts and have come up with different typologies. Zeisel (1976:11) distinguishes between malicious vandalism (where conscious acts cause instantaneous damage demanding immediate attention), misnamed vandalism (not purposely done, but otherwise identical), and, further, non-malicious property damage and hidden maintenance damage both of which are cumulative conditions demanding eventual attention; a distinction which suggests that vandalism really subsumes a set of rather different behaviors. Cohen (1973), who has perhaps presented the most considered approach, identifies six different types of vandalism

including, among others, acquisitive vandalism aimed at obtaining money or goods, vindictive vandalism of a selected target for revenge on the owner or representative, play vandalism occurring in the context of a game, and ideological vandalism intended to advance some ideological cause (see table 2).

The above review of perspectives on vandalism is certainly incomplete and excludes some attempts at more theoretical approaches (e.g., Allen and Greenberger, 1978, 1980; Abel and Buckley, 1977; Arlan and McDowell, 1980; Fisher and Baron, 1982). However, the purpose here was not to be exhaustive, but to indicate the mixed taxonomy and lack of unanimity in defining vandalism. The broad spectrum of views found in the literature as to what vandalism is has given rise to a corresponding variety of approaches intended to reduce or eliminate vandalism. These anti-vandalism programs and strategies are reviewed in the next section.

3. Programs and strategies

The literature abounds in recommendations on how to combat vandalism. They include suggestions to improve building lay-out and design (Leather and Matthews, 1973); to use enhanced construction materials (Miller, 1973); to install indestructible play equipment (Burall, 1980), and better locks (Spalding, 1971) and lights (Dukiet, 1973); to upgrade schooling and leisure opportunities (Gladstone, 1978); to develop participatory management in housing for low-income residents (Pietro, 1980) and students (Becker, 1980); to institute block watches (Burich, 1979) and tenant patrols (Miller, 1979); to increase the effectiveness of surveillance by security personnel (Graham, 1981); to implement juvenile restitution projects (Oswald, 1981) and family therapy programs (Reilly, 1978); to set stricter limits on the number of destructive acts shown in films (Fuellsgrabe, 1978); and to organize 'smash-ins' (McCann, 1980) (see table 3).

The diverse approaches to vandalism represent different levels of generality at which the problem may be tackled. They range from overall strategies (e.g., target hardening) to more specific tactics and techniques that may be derived from such strategic frameworks (e.g., installing locks). At the more general level, it seems possible to divide the available strategies into a global dichotomy: one strand oriented to various planning and design aspects of the *physical* environment and the other directed at a range of personal, behavioral and organizational facets of the *social* environment. The former is typically characterized by an emphasis on short-term solutions and has resulted in, for example, the development of detailed checklists and guidelines intended to alert architects and planners to designs and site plans likely to evoke vandalism (Zeisel, 1976; Sykes, 1980). In the second major approach, which concentrates on individual and socio-structural factors, the solutions tend to be more

Table 3. Programs and strategies against vandalism.

SOURCE	STRATEGY OR PROGRAM	SETTING	EFFECTIVENESS
Leather and Matthews (1973)	Extensive architectural design guidelines	Liverpool, England, especially housing	No information on implementation
Reid (1975)	1. Legislation of basic sanitary and maintenance standards and monthly inspections of residences' interiors; 2. Occupants with inadequate cultural level must be trained or rejected; 3. Security force	USA, low income housing	No information on implementation
Graf and Roberts (1976)	Two-way radio communication for bus and subway, and helicopter track surveillance for commuter rail	Trenton, NJ, USA, public transit system	No information on implementation or evaluation
Petty (1977)	Security force	Dallas, USA, 3 public housing projects	$1,000 reduction weekly in losses due to vandalism and theft. Problem: Funding.
Broski (1978)	Exterior and interior lighting; unbreakable glass; night custodians; electronic detectors	Ohio, USA, 360 schools	Not reported
Christensen (1978)	Increased user involvement by encouraging through verbal and printed appeals to intervene in or report rule violations	USA recreation and camping ground	After appeals, 3 reactions to (staged) littering increase: reporting (10%) intervention (7%) litter pick up by witness (17%)
HUD Challenge (1978)	Conversion to co-operative form of management	1,523 housing units in Baltimore, USA	Reduction in extensive teenage vandalism (also less vacancies, turnover, and rent delinquency)
Sensenig et al. (1978)	Environmental: security personnel, alarm systems, unbreakable glass, etc. Social: contingency fund for vandalism repairs, surplus for students; offenses tried by jury of peers; police officers teaching courses to improve ties with students. Psychological: making students or parents pay for damage; enhancing self-esteem by professional peer couseling & extra-curricular activities.	Urban schools	Not reported
Becker (1980)	Increased involvement of students in procedures regarding maintenance, damage reporting; awareness meetings. Faster response by administrators and repairmen to requests for information and repair	Dormitories at The Pennsylvania State University, USA	One year after implementation 45% reduction in vandalism cost in target buildings with cost in non-target buildings going up. Problem: sustaining student interest.

Table 3 continued

SOURCE	STRATEGY OR PROGRAMS	SETTING	EFFECTIVENESS
Sykes (1980: 95-99)	Checklist of improved design features and construction materials	England, educational buildings	No information on implementation
Graham (1981)	Increasing detection rate to near 100% while maintaining small punishment only	Low Newton, England remand center	Reductions in broken window panes after experimental period from 60% to 85%. Results sign. at $p < .001$ (X^2). Concern: possibility of displaced vandalism
Mayer and Butterworth (1981)	Visits and counsel to project classrooms by trained teams of graduate psych. students, model teachers, and principal. Teams plan and assess school needs, e.g., cafeteria, playground, community relations, based on social learning and operant theory	20 elementary and junior high schools in Los Angeles County, USA	Average monthly vandalism cost per 100 students decreased sign. In Treatment Group as compared w/Non-Treatment Group in 1st and 2nd year of 3-yr. program. Savings maintained in 3rd year. Effects generalized from model teachers' classrooms throughout project schools. Also decrease in students yelling, hitting, throwing objects, not doing assigned work, etc.
Torres (1981)	Poster & slogan contest among 6-18 yr. olds w/ monetary prizes, certificates of achievement and increase community recognition by involvement of police, parents, school administration, small business, and civic organizations	Montville, NJ., USA; suburb of 16,000 primarily residential w/ small business and little manufacturing	Reduction in 1980 Halloween vandalism as compared to previous year. No specification.
Sleep (1982)	Inserting sensitized strips in periodicals as part of electronic theft prevention security systems	Library of Brock University, Canada	Two years after implementation of the system the periodical loss rate was basically the same and mutilations had increased

long-term in nature. Here, gradual processes such as changes in values and attitudes with respect to the environment and the people with whom this environment is shared are stressed as being important (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1978, 1979). Corresponding to the distinction between a 'physical' and a 'social' tack is a distinction which contraposes a 'product' with a 'process' approach. Architects and planners naturally attempt to produce a perfect environment, a ready-made, vandal-proof package (see fig. 1) delivered to the user and meant to last a lifetime or more. In

"The council were worried it might get vandalised"

Figure 1. Target hardening and an emphasis on delivering 'vandal-proof' products (reprinted with permission of *Private Eye*).

comparison, proponents of a process approach (not necessarily excluding design professionals) stress the significance of social organization, arguing that no building or neighborhood can ever be guaranteed to be free of vandalism without continuous user concern about and involvement in the environmental maintenance and management process.

The two general strategies sketched above – directed at the physical and social environment, respectively – and their more specific derivatives are not, of course, mutually exclusive or contradictory. Like many environmental 'real world' problems, vandalism too is a multifaceted problem; therefore, it would be myopic to cut up its composite elements along 'artificially' set boundaries delimiting the domains of design professionals and social behavioral scientists. Instead, it would be more profitable to view the alternative perspectives on vandalism as supplementing each other, each in itself providing potentially valid, yet *partial* answers to the questions asked. Unfortunately, there is little evidence in the extant literature for such theoretical and methodological triangulation of the problem.

4. An agenda

While at times commenting upon the literature, this review has so far been a predominantly descriptive ordering of available data and existing research on vandalism. This last section will pull together the previous parts of this paper and point out remaining lacunae and gaps in the literature. What follows is not intended as a complete research agenda or an ideal anti-vandalism program but rather a listing of some issues which need to be addressed in further work on vandalism.

4.1. Triangulation

The complexity of the problem indicates a need to experiment with the simultaneous adoption of various supplementary anti-vandalism measures. By way of illustration, the background and nature of one proposal along these lines are described below.

In recent years, the cost of damages due to vandalism in dormitories has become of serious concern to the administration of The Pennsylvania State University. To combat the problem, a damage reduction model program was instituted. It is based on a theory of residence 'hallativity' according to which students view the university as a large and impersonal structure, "ripping you off if it can find a way to do so" (Becker, 1980). Frustration generated by the inability to make an impact on this bureaucracy would manifest itself in aggression against the most immediate and direct extension of the university, the dormitory environment. The damage reduction model attemps to reduce vandalism by increasing, in a variety of ways, student involvement in the maintenance of dormitories.

In an initial evaluation of the effectiveness of the program, a senior class of students majoring in Man–Environment Relations at Penn State identified several more specific components and various other factors which seemed relevant but which had not been included in the original model. For example, the model had appeared to be oblivious to the role of the physical environment and the composition of the dormitory population. The students also deemed it important to develop some form of dormitory self-management in addition to the implemented more limited participation in maintenance of the dormitory environment. In recognition of the need for a broad-based approach, including these and other considerations, the students formulated recommendations for the simultaneous adoption of multiple interventions in the physical and social dormitory environment. Numerous specific measures were proposed as derived from general strategies addressing generic 'social' issues such as user participation in environmental decision making, behavior modification of vandals, and increasing social cohesion in dormitories in conjunction with environmental attitude restructuring. These social strategies were to be implemented in

tandem with physical strategies such as 'target hardening' and developing 'defensible space' characteristics. Also, Merry (1981) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (1978, 1979), have recently stressed the need for coordinating social and physical factors in achieving residential safety. While the effectiveness of the proposed measures has to await their implementation, they represent a rudimentary but orchestrated attempt illustrating triangulation of the problem of dormitory vandalism.

Experimentation with this kind of approach is warranted, but it should be noted that triangulation may not be appropriate in every case. More systematic and comprehensive assessments than those contained in table 3 should clarify which programs are most effective alone and in combination and under which conditions.

4.2. Evaluation

An extension of the last point is the need for sound evaluation research. There is certainly no lack of recommendations on how to deal with vandalism. [4] The problem is that a substantial number of proposals does not reach the stage of implementation and that a still smaller number is ever assessed with respect to their effectiveness in reducing vandalism. However, systematic evaluation of anti-vandalism programs should be an integral component of such programs and may take several forms (cf. Freeman, 1977; Schnelle et al., 1975; Suchman, 1967). First, the *program itself and its implementation* need to be scrutinized. What are the objectives of the program? Has the appropriate target population been selected? Have the intervention efforts been undertaken as specified in the program? These and similar questions serve to assess the soundness of the organization of the program and to determine whether it has been implemented in accordance with stated guidelines and criteria. A second type of evaluative questions concerns the *impact* of the program. Did it achieve its goals? In which ways are changes attributable to the program? Could an alternative program be more effective? And what are possible side effects, negative (e.g., simple displacement of the problem to another area) as well as positive (e.g., recreation functions which are legitimate and worthy in and of themselves without necessarily also reducing vandalism – the provision of recreation facilities, for instance).

The above two types of evaluation research are rather technical in nature. In comparison, a third set of questions is more value-laden. It identifies the ideological system and values from which the program's principles are derived and examines these vis-à-vis the available evidence. For example, anti-vandalism programs may center on fostering social cohesion among adolescents by

[4]   In the U.S.A., an extensive listing of proposals and projects is available from the Smithsonian Information Exchange and the National Criminal Justice Referral System.

establishing a neighborhood community center on the assumption that a lack of local ties leads to alienation manifesting itself also in vandalism (Byrne, 1977; Mergen, 1977). Such programs raise at least two critical issues. First, there is the question to what extent social cohesion inhibits vandalism. Criminal mischief by delinquents is often committed by close-knit gangs (Herbert, 1980; Bogert, 1980); Phillips and Bartlett (1976) report that 93% of the cases of vandalism they studied were group actions. It is likely that promoting social cohesion is effective only to the extent that it reinforces concurrently transmitted 'right' values. Second, the function of the local neighborhood for the social integration of adolescents would need to be examined. Some studies indicate that adolescents' social frame of reference may extend far beyond the neighborhood (Bernard, 1939; Heinemeijer and De Sitter, 1964).

4.3. Theory

A large majority of the vandalism programs and studies lacks theoretical underpinnings and is simply based on spontaneous reaction to, and ad hoc interpretation of, a given vandalism problem. However, vandalistic incidents do not, of course, occur in a vacuum as if they were episodes in and of themselves which can be studied in isolation from the broader behavioral context surrounding them. Reade (1982: 37) has rightly argued that vandalism is best understood not as a phenomenon *sui generis*, but as merely one aspect of, or even as a consequence of, a wider syndrome of attitudes and behavior. This point has been noted by several authors (e.g., Griffiths and Shapland, 1980: 16; Wilson, 1980: 21; Blaber, 1980: 41) and indicates the need to go beyond purely empirical observations and narrow positivistic explanations, instead situating vandalism within a more encompassing theoretical framework. One such framework is provided by a developmental perspective according to which vandalism and related behaviors may be seen as responses of young people to a normative system which denies them opportunities for engaging in responsible and constructive social and environmental tasks. Theory indicates that the 'fourth environment' outside the home, school, and playground, fulfills important functions regarding, for example, the development of a self-concept and the acquisition of skills facilitating children's gradual integration into the adult world (Van Vliet, forthcoming). There are indications in the literature that chances to become involved in and help shape one's social and physical environment heighten one's sense of responsibility toward it (e.g., Turner, 1976). The question for planners and designers then becomes to understand children's developmental needs and to deduce from them guidelines for the provision of opportunities for meaningful participation. [5] The concept of the adventure playground fits in here (Bengts-

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[5]   Also pertinent to the issue of participatory development is the notion of (perceived) control

son, 1972), as does the contribution of children to the design of a school yard (Moore, 1980), and the self-management of dormitories (Becker, 1977).

This participatory development approach is premised upon suppositions concerning children's competence and the total community repertoire of social, political, and economic roles deemed appropriate for them. Therefore, this approach cannot remain confined to 'patches' set apart specifically for young people but, quite to the contrary, has to concern itself explicitly with ways of integrating settings which accomodate young people's special needs in the 'real' world. A developmental perspective on vandalism seems worthy of further exploration for two reasons. First, because a large proportion of vandalism is committed by teenagers and adolescents and, second, because vandalism is so common in these developmental stages.

Earlier it was already stressed that vandalism really is an umbrella label covering a set of widely different behaviors. Consequently, the foregoing conceptualization which relates developmental needs to developmental opportunities in the environmental and community context (see sections 4.4 and 4.5 below) can supply a partial view only. At quite another level of analysis, vandalism can be seen as a reflection of changes in social order resulting from interactions between broad societal processes such as industrialization, urbanization and bureaucratization (Pearson, 1978). In this view, vandalism is not mindless, wanton destruction characterized by de-individuation (Zimbardo, 1973), but instead it is a pattern of *purposeful* and *organized* behavior protesting against prevailing institutional structures and inequalities generated by existing resource allocation mechanisms (Tilly, 1978).

This is not the place to develop these theoretical perspectives on vandalism more fully. The aim here is to offer some thought on starting points for possible conceptualizations of the problem, not excluding alternative views (see, e.g., Allen and Greenberger, 1978; Abel and Buckley, 1977; Arlan and McDowell, 1980; Richards, 1979; Fisher and Baron, 1982). Testing of theoretically derived hypotheses is essential to develop these and alternative notions further so as to avoid narrow anti-vandalism programs directed at symptomatic manifestations of much broader issues.

4.4 Environmental context

To the extent that studies of vandalism have examined environmental aspects of vandalistic behavior, the concern has commonly been with the environment

which has been more fully addressed in research on density effects (e.g., Rodin, 1976), and which seems to underlie findings in the literature linking vandalism to age-status conflicts (Richards, 1979), attempts at identity expression (Brown, 1978) and territorial control (Ley and Cybriwsky, 1974b), and engagement in passive recreation (Csikszenkmihalyi et al., 1977). See also Allen and Greenberger (1980) for a useful discussion of the relation between destruction and perceived control.

where the incident occurred. Thus, features of defensible space and target hardening have been subjects of research (Booth, 1981; Mawby, 1977). It would seem worthwhile to expand the environmental focus of research on vandalism by including fuller consideration of the environment of the of-fender(s). In this regard, the neighborhood in particular is important to the extent and in the ways that it provides opportunities for alternative preferential behaviors. Environmental analyses of offender neighborhoods, such as inventories of land uses and available behavior settings, are beset by such difficulties as the small proportion of offenders that are actually apprehended and hindrances in obtaining access to confidential data. Nonetheless, such research may well be worth the effort because the *spatial* shift from the environment of the vandalized object to the environment of the vandal(s) also means a *temporal* shift from the product of vandalistic behavior to the producer(s) of that behavior, suggesting a little explored but potentially fruitful locus of environmental intervention. It should be noted, however, that the offender's local environment acts mostly as an intervening variable between the offender and a more encompassing social, economic, and political system which pro-duces an unequal distribution of environmental opportunities for both socially desirable and undesirable behaviors.

4.5. Community context

It appears that, by and large, studies of vandalism have given passing notice at best to possible effects of community characteristics on vandalism. This level of analysis may be quite relevant, however, in directing attention to contextual variables which form an essential component of the total constellation of factors that need to be considered in explanations of vandalistic behavior. Support for this viewpoint is provided by a number of studies which have found property crime to be related to such community characteristics as composition of the population (Bates, 1962), per capita income (Blaber, 1979), transportation routes and pattern of commercial land uses (Hakim, 1980), population density (Cohen et al., 1980), number of permanent residences (O'Donnell and Lydgate, 1980), and proportion of female-headed households (Phillips and Bartlett, 1976). In a related vein, in a number of cross-sectional studies various socio-economic and demographic community characteristics have been found to define ecological contexts associated with child maltreat-ment (Garbarino and Crouter, 1978) and Steinberg et al. (1981) have shown in a longitudinal study how increases in child abuse were preceded by increases in the unemployment rate. A more intangible, but certainly no less important contextual factor is the value system embraced by a community and the norms embodied by its members, making up an essential component of the macro-system surrounding growing children (Bronfenbrenner, 1978).

While it is quite clear that vandalism is not an exclusive function of

community characteristics, there can be little doubt that supra-individual conditions such as those named above increase or reduce opportunities for vandalism and influence young people's propensity to 'use' those opportunities. Furthermore, community characteristics may be seen as parameters defining the range of feasible anti-vandalism strategies and as enhancing or decreasing the effectiveness of more specific ameliorative measures.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the state of the evidence on vandalism. It has indicated that vandalism is a pervasive and costly problem. Different approaches to this problem were pointed out and an agenda outlining remaining issues was proposed. The chapters that follow will provide a fuller coverage of several of the questions that were identified as salient ones and will add insights from case studies. In reflecting upon the foregoing review, two related matters stand out as meriting special attention.

The first concerns the circumstances under which a given behavior gets classified as vandalism. For example, grounds, shrubs and trees in an urban park may get damaged within the context of games, largely because of a lack of adequate opportunities for play elsewhere; the children and teenagers doing the damage may be considered criminal offenders and be punishable as such (Harvey, 1982); however, within the context of urban renewal vastly more destructive acts (often depriving children of play space) are officially sanctioned. This issue of what gets labelled as vandalism, and what does not, is nicely captured in the observation: 'If a car hits a child, that is an accident, but if a child damages a car, that is vandalism', [6] and discussed more extensively by Cohen elsewhere in this volume.

Questions regarding *who* defines vandalism, and *why*, lead to the second point which concerns the increasingly accepted view that vandalism is *not* meaningless, senseless, wanton and willful damage and destruction. Rather, vandalism may be seen as constituting purposeful conduct, devoid of a mature vocabulary of interaction; put otherwise, vandalism is often a manifestly destructive behavior as well as a 'political statement', a latent form of an attempt at communication and participation. Therefore, relevant questions ask about ways to create opportunities and to develop procedures for more appropriate behaviors to achieve objectives of social interaction.

[6]   *Fair play for children*, National Playing Fields Association, England; cited by Patricia MacKay, p. 21 in: W. Michelson, S.V. Levine and E. Michelson (eds.), *The child in the city: today and tomorrow*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1979.

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Abstract: W. van Vliet, Vandalism: an assessment and agenda

The literature shows little consensus as to what constitutes vandalism and how it might be dealt with. Numerous reports have been written and conclusions formulated without the benefit of knowledge of other studies on the topic. Research has been scattered rather than cumulative, and a synthesis of the work on vandalism is lacking. This chapter attempts to address this gap. After a brief prelude – indicating the extent of the problem in terms of young people's involvement in vandalism, the range of environments affected, and the magnitude of economic and socio-psychological costs – various perspectives on vandalism are reviewed.

It appears that much of the work on vandalism is opinionative and lacks scientific rigor. The divergent and often inconclusive statements are, in large part, attributable to differences in the definition of vandalism and the operationalization of contributing factors, the variety of data gathering techniques, the lack of control for influences of extraneous variables, and the absence of systematic considerations regarding research design and sampling procedure. The evidence brought forward in support of a given viewpoint is more often than not informal in nature and based on casual observations and personal professional experiences.

Two general approaches to vandalism are distinguished. The first is primarily concerned with features of the physical environment (e.g., locks and lights); the second focuses especially on characteristics of the social environment (e.g., peer interaction and housing management). These approaches are seen as leading to different ameliorative strategies based on the delivery of environmental products for social groups and the organization of social groups vis-à-vis their environment, respectively. Following a discussion of future directions for work on vandalism, the chapter's conclusion raises questions concerning the definition and functions of vandalism.