

1-1-1982

## Strategic Styles: Coping in the Inner City

Suzanne Powers  
*Cleveland Clinic Foundation*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/csr>

---

### Recommended Citation

Powers, Suzanne () "Strategic Styles: Coping in the Inner City," *Clinical Sociology Review*: Vol. 1: Iss. 1, Article 18.  
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/csr/vol1/iss1/18>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@WayneState. It has been accepted for inclusion in Clinical Sociology Review by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@WayneState.

What is so unique about Jaques' work is that he takes both individual differences and social structure into account in this major advancement of bureaucratic theory. Jaques provides a blueprint, based on solid research and practice, for the organization and control of bureaucracy compatible with the needs of an open and democratic society. He is squarely in favor of small scale, step-by-step, deliberate design of social institutions as being crucial for a good society. Bureaucracy is inevitable, and the attainment of humanitarian bureaucratic systems is essential for human progress in industrial societies.

Jaques' book is invaluable for student, theorist, and practitioner alike, not only as a significant advance in organizational theory, but as an exemplary instance of theory growing out of practice - an example of clinical sociology at its very best.

STRATEGIC STYLES: COPING IN THE INNER CITY by Janet Mancini.  
Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1981. 330 pp.

Reviewer: SUZANNE POWERS, Cleveland Clinic Foundation

Janet Mancini has written a stimulating clinical analysis that is likely to become a landmark book in clinical sociology. Holding constant the variables of socioeconomic status, age, race and geographical location, the author studies the evolving identities of five young men. All five are black and live in poverty. The book addresses the basic issue of how five distinctly different personalities and coping styles can emerge with so many constants.

Taking the symbolic interactionist perspective, Mancini develops a typology of "strategic styles" — ways of interacting which are predictable and identifiable. Each of the five young men has his own strategic style: the cool guy, the conformist, the tough guy, the actor, the retreator. The cool guy is characterized by moving toward others, the conformist moves with others, the tough guy moves against others, the actor moves over and the retreator moves away. Mancini states, "The styles are tools with which the individual shapes and structures interaction with others in terms of controlling them (or allowing them to control him) and satisfying his needs for affection, approval, intimacy, status, and so forth. . . . The strategic styles are the products of two variables — activity/passivity on the one hand, and friendliness/hostility on the other."

Mancini selected five seventh grade boys ages 12-14. Transcripts were available for the entire set of boy's significant others who were interviewed at three different times: the late 60's, early 70's and near-to-mid 70's. The perceptions of each boy as well as each boy's significant others could then be integrated.

Each of the strategic styles was identified as having two sub-types. The five young men selected for this study were found to have the two extremes that occurred within each main category. The cool guy was seen to be both "the together guy" and "the super cool cat." The conformist was seen to be "the alright guy" and "the too-good guy." The tough guy was perceived as "the real tough guy" as well as "the troublemaker." The actor was seen as "the put-on" and "the con-artist." The retreator was perceived as "the withdrawn kid" and "the loner."

The interview of each child is very detailed. Questions are asked about the family at present, future family, peer group, school, work-related issues, self concept, race, neighborhood, house and travel. Intensive interviews with family and peer groups deal with the same areas.

I think Mancini's work will be a valuable sourcebook in sociological theory, social psychology, personality and social structure, and minority groups and race relations.