INTRODUCTION
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Both in Minnesota and across the country, the Center for Youth Development and Research is regarded as the jewel of the Twin Cities Campus because of its innovation, creativity, and leadership. And today, more than ever, we need the kind of creativity and leadership in programs for youth that this Center has inspired.

These are hard times; there is every reason to despair. Things are not going well: buildings close, departments close, personnel are riffed; it is tempting to give up. But I'd like to remind all of us, when these thoughts and feelings flood, remember what this lecture series is all about, and remember who it is in honor of. This remarkable woman, Gisela Konopka, has battled all her life, in good times and bad. She had every reason to give up, to sell out, to compromise, to become co-opted, but she fought on, often a lonely, isolating, separate fight.

I won't recount all of the many episodes of her life, but just one example. During the late 1920s and the early 30s, she worked in a factory in Hamburg to support herself, campaigned against Fascism, and was studying at the University of Hamburg, all at the same time. That's a long, hard grind, financially, physically, and emotionally. Finally the day came when she was ready to take her final exams, to complete her University work. The year was 1933. She came in and sat down, but Storm Troopers appeared at the door and simply removed her exams. There followed a terrible period—camps, escape, the chase, Austria, France, with the Nazis always one step behind. And somehow, through it all, she maintained her faith and commitment to help others. I think her career is the best answer to us at these present moments of despair. Incidentally, in the 1940s she came to the United States and took her master's degree and passed—and this time there were no Storm Troopers.

She said in 1959, “So earthbound, clumsy as we humans are, unable to break the bounds created within us, and stamping the ground with slow and awkward feet, we find a way to join us to the stars and by so doing, jubilantly, we are free.”

It seems particularly appropriate today to hear Professor Rosemary Saari, who has been and continues to be a leader in the battle for social justice. Her background indicates that she is a real Minnesotan. Born in St Paul, graduate of Hastings High, an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota, a master’s degree from the University of Minnesota Before earning a Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, she had an array of impressive professional and academic experiences, a genuine mix of the real world and the academic, a mix, I think, that gives her work a very distinctive flavor. She has been a Girl Scout district director, an Extension agent, an associate state 4H director. More recently she has headed a prestigious doctoral program, been a Fulbright scholar, chaired a plethora of professional meetings, and she is a fellow of the American Sociological Association. Her publications cover five pages of titles. The major emphasis, the theme through all of her work, is the need for justice for young people. There are a few lines from the Minnesota Alma Mater: “Thy sons and daughters true; will proclaim thee near and far; they will guard thy fame and adore thy name; thou shall be their northern star.” Today Rosemary Saari is indeed our Northern Star.

JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM:
AGENDA FOR THE 1980’S
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Dr. Sarri has contributed extensively to the field of juvenile justice through her research, teaching, and publications. She is a Professor of Social Work at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and serves as chairman of the Social Welfare Policy and Services Committee, as well as chairman of the Committee for Gender Studies. Dr. Sarri's recent work has focused on the implications of gender and race on institutionalization and diversion of youth in the juvenile justice system.

It is truly a great honor for me to return to St. Paul and to the University of Minnesota for the Konopka Lecture. Gisela Konopka had a very profound influence on my career, my values, and my orientation to youth, as she did on many other youth workers in this and several other countries. Being here today is also a challenge because of the respect and admiration I hold for her. Therefore, I hope to be able to provide some insights into a few of the issues and problems facing the United States today in the area of social policy for youth. Parenthetically it should be noted that this lecture series is also important because, to the best of my knowledge, it is one of a very few that gives particular attention to chil-
children and youth. Despite its protestations to the contrary, this society gives little constructive attention to youth—their needs and problems.

As many of you know, I have long been interested in youth and social policy in the United States and throughout the world. It is my belief that serious attention to youth needs and problems are crucial if we are to ensure the future well-being of our society. In fact, I think it’s safe to offer the proposition that the manner in which a society attends to the socialization of its children is one of the best indicators of what the future of that society will be like. Thus, it is entirely appropriate to consider today a new agenda for youth wellbeing in the 1980s and the early 1990s since this is a period of very substantial change in social welfare and human services in the United States. Before offering this agenda, however, I would like to highlight what seem to me to be a number of the problematic aspects of our youth welfare system, giving particular attention to juvenile justice reform since it is an area with which I have been particularly familiar. Second, I would like to offer some information from our longitudinal research on adolescence which suggests the need for alternative approaches in our youth policy. Finally, I would like to offer for your consideration several alternatives to those presently being employed in the juvenile justice and youth welfare system—and to consider with you the factors that might affect the probability that one or another of these alter natives would be accepted and implemented effectively.

The Status of Youth in Contemporary American Society

It is often said that youth are our most valuable asset, and such statements are used to justify various sanctions, programs, and appropriations. Unfortunately, it appears today that we are much closer to George Bernard Shaw’s dictum, “Youth is such a wonderful thing—what a shame to waste it on children.” As a great national resource, America’s youth today are tragically undervalued and underutilized. One only needs to refer to the daily paper to obtain more than adequate information about the problems that youth are encountering in the employment, educational, health, and juvenile justice spheres. Youth do not have many of the types of protection that are afforded adults in most spheres of their life. They have no political power and few acknowledged civil rights. For all but a privileged few, our schools are more like warehouses than places for useful learning. In the employment sphere, youth today are almost totally excluded by law, by discriminatory practice, and through numerous informal mechanisms. Thus, young people can hardly gain a sense of usefulness or meaningful participation in the contemporary social arena. Yet, with appropriate social policies and programs, youth could contribute substantially to the development of our total society. Increasingly, large numbers of alienated and disaffected youth represent a serious danger, and this danger should be taken as seriously as any international threat that we face today. They are a threat not only because of aggressive or anomic behavior, but because responsibility for the society will rest in their hands in a few years. Socialization for that responsibility needs to be undertaken more seriously.

Advocates of social justice in recent years have challenged us to recognize and attend to the special needs of temporary American youth. They have suggested that, if we truly value youth, we will seriously attempt to meet a broad range of needs that are well known and recognized. This period of life is viewed as a time for experimentation with life styles, philosophies, modes of behavior, and challenges to the status quo by testing the agents of authority in schools, police, social welfare establishments, and in the family. Today, instead of encouraging and tolerating experimentation that may produce creative and productive adults, youth are subjected to more rigid authority in many community settings. Furthermore, in crowded urban communities, high levels of conformity to adult behavior are required. Thus, we’ve created an almost perfect setting for frustration and hostility. Although there is wide recognition that most youth experience substantial stress in the transition to adulthood, this recognition has not been translated into positive youth developmental policies. Instead, we continue to rely on policies that emphasize controlling undesirable behavior.

Although some have suggested that contemporary life styles of youth differ too radically from those of adults, students of history can point to numerous incidences in the past where similar differences in perspectives have prevailed. Perhaps of significance today is the observation that youthful expression is less tolerated because youth are not the economic resource that they once were. Thus, they tend to be undervalued by adults and those in power in the society. They are expected to be docile and conforming to adult requirements. Donzelot’s (1979) recent historical study of the relationship between industrialization and family structure is particularly provocative in this regard. He has pointed out that the juvenile court has come to control both the family and youth for general social control goals and that it really provides little assistance to parents who need support in child rearing and socialization, except psychological counseling to further their control. The development of the FINS legislation (Families in Need of Supervision) exemplifies this particular social control approach. The assumptions underlying such legislation have profound moral as well as political implications. Why should some families be selected out in an arbitrary manner by those in control as families to be subjected to supervision by the state? Certainly nothing in our experience with the juvenile court today suggests that such delegation of authority is warranted.

America has an almost hysterical concern with its adolescents, and its view of their behavior as abnormal can be traced to the changes in the character of American society brought about during and after the industrial revolution and by developments in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, and social work. Child labor was a significant problem during the industrial revolution and the subsequent abuse of children led to social policy reforms by Jane Addams, Edith Abbott, and many other early Twentieth Century social reformers. Demographic changes also affected our concern about adolescents because during the 1970s there was a tremendous growth in the size of the adolescent cohort. The growth was so substantial that the ability of the society to accommodate to this
rapid change was pushed to its limits, and this resulted in increased coercive control responses. Lastly, developments in the helping professions since World War II led to much greater emphasis on treatment, which was linked only to control rather than to rehabilitation and education (Lerman, 1980). Limited access to employment is perhaps the bitterest pill of all, since the highest rates of unemployment are to be found in the adolescent and young adult age group. Recently, the Bureau of Labor Statistics provided information which indicated that of all black youth 18-25 in the United States, only 17 percent are employed in any regular job, part-time or full-time (U.S. Department of Labor, 1982). It is not surprising that youth respond to this situation with great hostility and anger. But in turn, the society responds with even greater control rather than with increased legitimate opportunities. Lay as well as professional observers concur that there has been very little serious consideration of fundamentally new approaches toward adolescence and young adulthood (Dye, 1980). It must be recognized that substantial proportions of these youth can be expected to experience problems in growing up in a complex, unstable, and highly mobile society where social supports available for parents as well as youth are inadequate and inequitably distributed.

The majority of new services available to youth and their parents today are directed toward intervention after problematic behavior has surfaced. Youth are then said to require treatment under the auspices of the health, criminal justice and other social welfare institutions. If society, instead, assumed that adolescent youth were a population at risk because of characteristics of the society as well as attributes of the individuals, quite different policies and programs could be developed (Pearl, 1978). For example, in the case of the health of the Population we no longer wait until a disease epidemic has emerged (for example, measles, polio, cholera, etc.). Instead we have, through public health programs, developed vaccines, sanitary water supplies, and health education to prevent and control these diseases. A similar approach could be applied with respect to the socio-emotional health and well being of youth and young adults. Such an approach would require the use of quite different theories of human behavior, instead of assuming that there are individual attributes which produce illness or delinquency, it would be assumed that critical features of the social structure interact with certain characteristics of individuals to produce situations in which deviants can emerge. It then follows that modification of the social structural features would be at least as important as intervention with individuals. Moreover, structural features may well be as easy to change as are individual attributes (Sarri, 1980; Krisberg, 1978).

**Juvenile Justice and Issues for Reform**

The social and economic costs of juvenile delinquency are high in the United States and for nearly two hundred years we have been experimenting with a variety of approaches to deal with this social problem. Historically there have been two basic ways in which we have dealt with juvenile crime: prevention and control. The former was action taken to preclude the illegal behavior before it occurred, while control was the reaction to an infraction after the act had been committed. Most of our efforts during the past two centuries have been focused on control rather than on prevention, and it is estimated in the current year that more than one billion dollars will be spent on juvenile justice control programs but only a few million on prevention. Moreover, support for prevention programs comes largely from private organizations, while control programs are supported almost wholly from public sources (Hawkins & Weis, 1980).

The period of the late 1960s and 1970s represented a time of substantial change in juvenile justice nearly comparable to the changes that occurred at the beginning of this century with the introduction of the juvenile court. Dissatisfied with the operation of the juvenile court and corrections many states sought to develop structural alternatives since they agreed that the original hope, for the court had not been met. Some favored increased use of formal control mechanisms through the Court thereby de-emphasizing its role as a rehabilitation and treatment organization. Changes in this direction have been fostered by the decisions of the Supreme Court in Kent (1966), Gault (1967), Winship (1970), and McKiever (1971). Most of these decisions dealt primarily with court processes. The Supreme Court decisions appear to have contributed substantially to statutory change at state and federal levels, but their impact on local court practices seems to have been minimal for the majority of youth involved despite the utilization of vastly increased resources by the courts (Sarri & Hasenfeld, 1976). It seems, therefore, that we are dealing with far more rigid social structures than many had anticipated. The vast discretion of the juvenile court, the lesser status of youth in the society, and the lack of superior court surveillance all have contributed to the maintenance of the status quo.

Because of dissatisfaction with the impact of these decisions on court practices, alternative approaches in recent years have advocated punishment and detention (Wilson, 1976; Zimring, 1982). At the same time, others have encouraged restriction of court domain to violations that are legal violations for adults. From this point of view, status offenders and children in need of care and control should not be targets for the juvenile court at all (Sandhu & Beasley, 1981; Teitelbaum & Gough, 1978). New programs reflecting these perspectives were implemented by several states and were incorporated in the 1974 federal juvenile justice legislation (The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974). Correspondingly, many advocated that only the most serious offenses should be the responsibility of the courts, and in courts of general jurisdiction rather than having specialized juvenile courts. Our earlier study of juvenile courts in fifty states found lower rates of commitment from courts of general jurisdiction than from specialized juvenile courts and far lower rates from courts where judges were appointed rather than elected. The former courts were far less likely to assume jurisdiction over status offenses and other nuisance behavior.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the United States increasingly formalized juvenile justice processing while in many western European countries and Australia, movement was in the opposite direc-
tion. The latter moved toward greater informalism and also sharply restricted the jurisdiction of the court. In Scotland and South Australia, as well as in Sweden, juvenile panel mechanisms were developed and evaluative results indicate that relatively positive outcomes were achieved. I would like to examine some aspects of this mechanism later because it seems quite appropriate for application in this country today (Bruce & Spencer, 1976; Sarri & Bradley, 1980).

Passage of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 provided financial incentives for states for the deinstitutionalization of certain classes of offenders, for avoidance of adult jails and secure detention as a placement alternative, and for the development of community-based programs. Senator Birch Bayh (1974), the author of the act, described its purpose as follows:

*It is designed specifically to prevent young people from entering the failing juvenile justice system, to assist communities in developing more sensible and economic approaches for youth already in the juvenile justice system.*

The original act provided for grants to states which would remove status and minor offenders from secure facilities. Use of the “carrot” approach proved to be popular, and more than forty states quickly “signed-on” to participate. Incentives for community-based programming were increased in the 1977 and 1980 amendments when the act was authorized for an additional five years—with very strong prohibitions against the placement of youth in adult jails. The statute contained many laudatory approaches for intervention in juvenile delinquency control, but relatively small amounts of money were made available to each of the states for implementation. In contrast, much larger amounts were available for institutionalization and foster care under various child welfare provisions as Lerman (1980) has noted. As so often is the case, far too few resources were provided to achieve the goals that were sought. Because juvenile delinquency is politically marginal in the majority of states, most were unwilling to contribute additional local resources for a sound program of prevention and community-based program

It is impossible here today to evaluate fully the impact that this legislation has had on juvenile justice in the states. I would only illustrate that impact by referring to an area where there has been extensive evaluation. Thus, we can ascertain something about the general impact of this far-reaching legislation. The area I’ve selected for consideration is that of detention, which is clearly one of the most problematic aspects of juvenile justice. Analysis of population distributions in juvenile justice indicate that in any year, nine out of ten youth processed by residential facilities will be found in detention units or adult jails (Sarri, 1974). It is estimated that nearly one million youth spend one or more days in a lock-up, jail, or detention facility each year. Comprehensive information about detention and jailing has been lacking until recently because most of these programs were operated under local control. However, the monitoring provisions of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act greatly increased the accumulation of routine information about detention and jailing so that we can ascertain the impact.

The JJDP Act explicitly stated that alternatives to detention were to be developed for status and other minor offenders, and that the use of secure detention facilities was to be minimized. Recently, Spergel (1982) and his associates evaluated the alternatives to detention that were developed and implemented in the state of Illinois. Their observations are particularly relevant for they considered the impact on individuals, on social agencies, and the larger community. With respect to individual effects, they observed that regardless of the type of program, the results were the same in terms of subsequent behavior of youth. These findings would support our earlier assertions that most adolescent youth can be expected to experience behavioral problems in maturation and that what is needed are programs and policies which facilitate maturation rather than hinder it. They also observed that there was a widening of the system control net. More youth were referred to the juvenile justice system than had been expected, especially by probation officers and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Females were particularly susceptible to referral and to deeper penetration into the justice system than was the case prior to the implementation.

They also observed that the greatest negative impact fell on the lower socio-economic families and communities which had high levels of fragmentation. In contrast, middle class communities experienced far less impact and the results were considerably more positive. There was a greatly increased use of out-of-home placements generally, and for extended periods of time. It was observed that 65 percent of all youth referred to alternative agencies were placed out of the home within the first day after referral and subsequently approximately 30 percent received relatively long-term placement. Black youth were far more likely to receive placement in custodial programs and foster home care; younger, rather than older, youth had a higher probability of being placed outside the home. In ascertaining some of the reasons for these undesired results, Spergel (1982) and his associates point out that the development of a highly specific and limited policy change without attention to other system processes such as labeling and diversion resulted in unexpected, negative consequences for youth. They also note that the Department of Children and Family Services desired to obtain increased federal resources and this particular program was one avenue for increased resources. The program thus enabled an expansion of services within a framework of specific agency and professional ideologies, interests, and needs, independent of the needs of the particular youth. The dilemma of the juvenile justice system involves restructuring policy at many decision points and persuading decision makers to choose strategies that sustain and enhance desired values represented in the legislation, rather than more self-serving approaches.

When one examines the other area of detention, namely the actual placement of children and youth in facilities where they will be held prior to trial, the results are equally problematic. About 20 percent of all court referrals are held in detention in any given year—nearly double the recommended national standard of 10 percent.
Approximately one half million youth are held in detention on any given day in the United States and this number has not changed substantially during the past decade despite sustained efforts from the legislation and despite the fact that the youth population has actually declined by approximately 6 percent during this same period of time (Sarri, 1974). In the case of detention, it clearly seems to be the case that the availability of beds in institutions means that those beds will be filled by youth.

A small number of states have a large number of detention facilities, and thus it is not surprising that five states have more than fifty percent of the youth held in public detention. For example, the rate of detention in California is 4734 per 100,000 juveniles as contrasted with 44 in the state of North Dakota. Overall, the rate of admissions to detention nationally was 157 per 100,000 juveniles in 1979, and that was a substantially lower rate of admissions to detention than we had had earlier in the decade. (The explanation for the seeming discrepancy between the admissions rate and the census count can be explained by increases in the length of stay in detention.) But when both public and private facilities are considered together, the decline is estimated to be considerably less.

Variability within and across jurisdictions in states remains as one of the most significant characteristics of detention practice. This variability is of long-standing duration as considerable research has demonstrated (Poulen, Levitt, Young and Pappenfort, 1980). Nearly 60 percent of the admissions occur in five states where less than 20 percent of the population resides. In attempting to ascertain reasons for this persistence of practice and variability among states, a number of factors appear to be influential in decision-making. State rates of admission to detention facilities are correlated with the degree of urbanization, number of detention centers, and rates of referrals to the courts, whereas the rate of jailing is correlated with rates of arrest, particularly for status offenses. Offense behavior influences detention practice, but not always in the expected direction because seriousness of offense is less important than are sex, race, and family characteristics. Having a prior record increases substantially the likelihood of placement regardless of charge.

Thus, it can be seen that initiatives taken under the JJDP Act led to many state efforts to deinstitute juveniles, especially status offenders, but that impact has been far less and more complex than was expected.

Evaluations point to a complex and changing picture. In most instances status offenders were removed from long-term residential care, but in the local community referrals to juvenile courts often increased. Thus, detention populations remained the same or grew. Moreover, substantial numbers were recycled into mental health and private residential facilities. For example, in Connecticut, social services became available to status offenders only if the youth were detained. Spengel, et al. (1982) noted in their assessment of practice in Illinois: "BOSS (Illinois Status Offenders Services) may also have contributed to a further weakening of natural support and control systems in lower socio-economic states and fragmented communities... In future social reform, greater attention should be directed to the development of comprehensive, rather than partial, policy affecting deviant youth." (449).

Most observers concur that it has been extremely difficult to develop policies which reduce coercive intervention by the juvenile justice system, provide for effective services, and also avoid unintended and negative secondary effects. Juvenile courts profess to assist troubled youth to obtain needed services, but they tend to be isolated from the community network of youth serving agencies and thus communicate very infrequently with them. They develop complex decision-making structures, presumably to identify the needs of the child and to determine the best approaches for meeting them. Yet nearly 70 percent of all cases referred to the courts are sent away with little more than a friendly warning. Most of the rest are put on probation which simply means occasional surveillance (Sarri & Hasenfeld, 1976). But prior to that decision, youth may have been held in detention or some other type of residential program and had numerous negative experiences.

Social Influence on Adolescent Norms and Behavior

An adequate theory of human behavior for effective social policy requires attention to individual level variables—norms, attitudes, and behaviors—as well as to social structural variables. One of the important questions to ask today is: what are the sources of influences that shape adolescent attitudes, norms, and behavioral patterns?

Do teenagers conform more to peer group pressure than to behavioral expectations of parents and other adults? Can parents influence teenagers toward pro-social values and behavior? Does society on the one hand encourage officially prescribed behavior but also provide easy and low risk opportunities for delinquency? Do males and females respond differently to social structural patterns and influences? Do minority versus majority group youth manifest behavioral patterns which suggest variable types of interaction with social structures?

In a study of some 1700 youth in nine public and parochial high schools in a Midwest metropolitan community, we gave particular attention to gender and race similarities and differences in delinquency behavior and in processing by the juvenile justice system (Figueira-McDonough, Barton, & Sarri, 1981). These youth were interviewed when they were fifteen and again one year later at the age of sixteen. In addition to information provided by the youth, we also examined police and court processing in the respective communities in which the youth attended school. Some of the findings from this longitudinal survey of youth in their mid-adolescence have particular relevance to our discussion here as we consider opportunities and issues for reform in juvenile justice.

Self-Reports

Parental relationships A prevailing generalization is that pre-adolescent and adolescent youth move away from parents and toward peers as their primary reference group. Many research findings appear to support the view that peer influences peak during
this period of time and that parental and peer influences are negatively correlated. However, Britain and others have more recently observed that adolescents tend to refer to peers in situations that have implications for their current status and identity but to parents in situations that have implications for their future status and roles (Brittain, 1963).

Our findings both direct and behavior, thus hypotheses. In indicated that parental attachment had indirect effect on delinquency norms and providing some support for the Britain several areas of behavior its importance was greater than that of peers. Youth who reported close attachments to parents who disapproved of delinquent behavior were themselves less delinquent. In the case of females this influence was even greater. The more females perceived that parents disapproved of delinquency, regardless of their own norms, those that were close to their parents seemed to shy away from delinquency. When one considers that substantial numbers of females are referred to the juvenile court because of family disruption, these data take on new meaning for staff and others working with adolescent females and their family. Overall, they clearly indicate that intervention approaches need to take into consideration parental relationships. About half of the youth reported positive relationships with their parents although, as expected, far lower levels of identification with parents were observed when they were asked if they would like to be like their mother or father. Although there was some indication that relationships were more positive with mothers than with fathers, patterns of identification were closer for the same sex parent.

School Attachment Attachment to school was a strong inhibitor of delinquency for females, but had relatively little effect on males unless it was coupled with other variables. Overall, the majority of youth were positive toward their school experience and their attitudes grew more positive as they grew older, but this may partly be due to the fact that youth with more negative attitudes are likely to have dropped out of school by the end of their junior year. The vast majority of youth had high aspirations with respect to post-secondary education and most desired an interesting job more positive with material resources. Gender differences were apparent with respect to aspirations in that males tended to place more value on material resources.

Delinquency Nearly all youth reported participating in behaviors that we have termed adolescent cultural deviance. In fact, between half and 85 percent of youth reported relatively frequent use of alcohol or marijuana, school truancy, running away, having intercourse, and so forth. Youth do not participate in all of these behaviors, but the majority report some involvement in one or more. We found that frequent peer involvement in a normative system which encourages such activities was associated with engaging in these behaviors. Far lower percentages reported serious delinquencies such as assault, robbery or other major crimes, and these latter were substantially more likely to be committed by males than females. Crimes such as burglary, theft, vandalism, fighting and assault, extortion, robbery, and rape were reported by between 5 and 30 percent of the youth. The number of serious personal crimes was extremely small, less than 1-2 percent, which is not dissimilar to other national data. It should be borne in mind that this sample was interviewed at a time in which serious delinquency was relatively high.

We also inquired about other types of illegal behavior such as driving while intoxicated selling drugs, and prostitution; here, too, relatively small proportions of youth reported engaging in such behaviors (between 5 and 10 percent).

There was a high correspondence between norms and behavior such that disapproval of delinquency was the strongest predictor of non-delinquency. Correspondingly, those who perceived ease of access to delinquent behavior were likely to report higher rates and, if they had permissive parents, they reported considerably higher rates of delinquency. As one said, “If it’s easy to do, it must be okay.” Youth who were unemployed or out of school were at greater risk, for up to two-thirds reported that it was easy to obtain stolen goods, a weapon, drugs and alcohol. In sharp contrast, fewer than half thought it were easy to obtain any type of employment.

Gender Except for the use of alcohol and marijuana and hitting parents, females were significantly less delinquent than were males, both in terms of seriousness and in frequency of delinquent behavior. We do not have evidence for the assertion of gender specializations in minor types of delinquent behavior, but rather found support for the general finding of lower levels of crime of all types by females, and particularly far lower rates for serious crime. One interesting area of considerable concern today is that of adolescent prostitution and pregnancy. Females are dealt with stringently for engaging in this behavior; yet our findings, like those of other researchers, indicate those males, overall, are more than twice as active sexually than are females. James ascertained from her study in Washington (Boyer & James, 1982) that even in the case of adolescent prostitution, males constituted approximately 50 percent of the cases. Males also reported attitudes of opportunism and irresponsibility with regard to their sexuality while females reported high levels of fear and concern about sexuality and its consequences for their present and future lives. In this instance females with strong school attachments appeared to be able to handle the pressure more successfully by concentrating on their future careers and its demands. These findings are significant when one considers who is processed by the police and court for sexual acting-out: males are seldom, if ever, processed for such behavior. In general, the findings from this survey of adolescent delinquency are in accord with those of Hindeland & Hirschi (1981), Ageton (1981), and Elliot & Ageton (1980) from their national surveys of youth.

Overall, our research indicated youth encounters with the law changed little from year to year, but they were far higher than would be deemed necessary or desirable. More males than females reported such contacts: 30 percent of the females reported being stopped by police at least once during the year, whereas the comparable statistic for males was 60 percent. Seventeen percent of the males and six percent of the females said that they had been...
referred at least once to juvenile court during the year. Twenty-one percent of the males and 13 percent of the females had been suspended from school at least once. Clearly they reported a high level of contact with the law.

**Juvenile Court Processing**

Part of this study also involved a study of processing by the juvenile court and by police in this particular county. Information from the court included the following:

- Approximately 12 percent of the youth in the schools surveyed had some contact with the juvenile court—not significantly different from other youth reports or other studies, but the percentage of youth processed varied greatly by school from 2 percent in one school to 17 percent in the school with the highest rate.
- Over 80 percent referred to the court were male and 20 percent were reported to be non-white. However, the juvenile court lacked data on race for 56 percent of the youth so the race data are not at all reliable.
- Offenses for which youth were processed to the court included: larceny 26 percent; burglary 16 percent; truancy 11 percent; assault 5 Percent; Other 42 percent. Females were generally younger than males and were referred overwhelmingly for status offenses and larceny. Most referrals originated with the police (70 Percent) although 11 percent were referred by schools, 7 percent by business, and 5 percent by parents. Females were most often referred by parents and businesses with notable race differences. Blacks tended to be referred more often by police and businesses and for more serious charges.
- Of all the youth referred to the court, 60 Percent of the cases were dismissed or diverted early in the processing, with white males having the best chance for dismissal; white females for diversion; black females for probation; and black males for the most formal Processing and the severest sanctions. Non-whites tended to be referred more often by police and businesses and for more serious charges.
- Given the fact that vast differences were observed in the rate of referral by school and the type of behavior that brought referral, substantial differences in disposition were not surprising. Black youth, particularly males, tended to receive the severest sanctions and middle class white youth were far more often referred to their parents and to private treatment agencies.

What then are the import of these data for juvenile justice reform? Clearly it seems to me that they point to the need for fundamental reform in our whole system. It appears that society has will-nilly determined that a relatively stable percentage of youth (12-15 percent overall) will be subjected to some type of formal coercive control each year, regardless of behavior. Given the vast differences in referral rates among communities, youth are obviously at far greater risk depending upon where they live rather than upon what they do. Communities with many alternative resources for processing will process more youth overall, whereas those with more local voluntary resources to serve youth will use those and depend less on formal processing.

However, the lack of legitimate opportunities for youth continues to grow in magnitude and seriousness and perhaps the area that should be of greatest concern. Family attachments and relationships are clearly important factors in the prevention and control of delinquency. They need to have far greater priority in planning intervention than has been the case in the past. These findings are certainly in accord with those of Spargel and his associates in Illinois, who also noted that there was a tendency for organizations and professionals to serve their own interests rather than to act in ways which enhance youth well-being.

**Policy Reform**

Many of us who have worked for years for juvenile justice reform have learned that the relationship between social research and social policy is far more complex and obtuse than we once thought or would prefer to be the situation. Like many social scientists trained in the 1950’s, I accepted many of the arguments of positivists and pragmatists. We believed that if we had good social science evidence about social problems, we could design the appropriate intervention, implement it, and then systematically evaluate the outcomes. Following that, the evidence would then be used to redesign the programs to achieve a higher level of effectiveness. All in all, this was a very rational approach. The only problem was that things didn’t work out that way. Moreover, an additional complication occurred. We were often able to affect the passage of new federal or state legislation, as in the case of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, only to learn subsequently that the impact was far less than we had anticipated and that unanticipated consequences arose to frustrate the original goals. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in our efforts in the area of diversion policies and programs or in the case of deinstitutionalization.

Before proposing some alternatives which appear to me to be appropriate and desirable for the next decade, I would like to raise a few questions about the policy process that deserve at least as much attention as the proposals themselves.

**The Key Questions**

- What are we really trying to accomplish with our juvenile justice system? What are we trying to achieve for youth for parents for the Professional establishment, and for the community?
- Why have past policies failed? What went wrong and where did it go wrong?
- Why do we fear the acknowledgment of individual right for youth for the poor, for minorities and for others who differ from the majority status quo?
- Why are some solutions that are preferred less likely than others to be implemented for example, the right to appropriate and excellent education, the opportunity for appropriate employment, or community programs which involve youth and are not patriarchal, paternalistic, or dominated by coercive control mechanisms?
- Why is it so difficult to have people see the need for long run as well as short-run solutions? It is already clear that there will...
be a relatively serious labor shortage in the 1990s and many of the actions that we are taking today with respect to youth increase the likelihood that that labor shortage will be even more problematic than is presently anticipated.

**Policy Alternatives**

There are six major policy alternatives that I would like to offer for consideration and study which I believe would, if implemented, produce a fundamental reform in our present juvenile justice and youth welfare systems.

**National Youth Policy**

Urgently needed is a national youth policy which promotes institutional change to enhance youth well-being and to reduce our commitment to policies and programs which focus on control, suppression, and behavior modification. Zimring (1982) has noted that the legal status of adolescents in the United States is most unclear despite the changes that have taken place since the 1960s. He argues for a new, distinct legal conception of adolescence as a foundation for more effective youth policies. He asserts that this conception must be one that pushes youth toward moral and legal accountability but still recognizes that they should be protected from full responsibility.

Criteria for such a national policy would include at least the following: a) youth involvement; b) integration of programs across sectors and comprehensively for the community; c) a concern for all youth; d) programs directed toward opportunities for productive participation of all in the mainstream society; e) programs which serve positive national goals; f) policies which break down barriers between education and employment; g) programs which treat youth as a resource, not a collection of problems. I believe that we have an example of such national legislation in the Older Americans Act, which was first passed in 1966 and has been subsequently amended several times. Legislation similar to that is currently needed for younger Americans.

**Conflict Resolution Mechanisms**

We have stressed the fact that there has been far greater formalization of the juvenile justice system than is necessary or desirable and that far too many youth are processed through that system. Needed are mechanisms to facilitate conflict- and dispute-resolution in such cases in our schools and local communities (Garafalo & Connelly, 1980). There is a considerable amount of interest today in the development of new conflict resolution mechanisms and only recently a national center for conflict resolution has opened with the support of several national foundations. Earlier I mentioned the development of the juvenile panels in Scotland and South Australia for a decade with positive results. They are at least as effective as juvenile court hearings in terms of recidivist behavior and are far more humane than the usual court proceeding. New Jersey and Connecticut have experimented with a variant of the panels for several years, but apparently they are the only states to have done so systematically. The development of new mechanisms for conflict resolution offers many opportunities for more adaptive handling of juveniles. Evaluation of the operation of the various conflict resolution mechanisms that have been tested to date suggest that the following elements are important: a) there is a need for well trained community mediators to manage the panels; b) community understanding and acceptance of mediation must be developed and cannot be taken for granted; c) voluntary participation is most effective but subtle coercion must be recognized as an inevitable element; d) mediation must facilitate communication between disputants and provide services to both parties as needed; and e) youth must be involved in all stages of the resolution.

**In-Home Care**

Our research findings, and those from other recent studies, indicate that more effort needs to be directed toward services to youth and their families in their own homes. One strategy for such programming is now, strangely enough, referred to as “in-home care.” In-home detention has been successfully tested in several metropolitan communities and is now widely accepted although the extent of the practice is still relatively minimal. In contrast, in-home care of adjudicated delinquents, even serious offenders, has developed only recently in the United States. It has been extensively tested and evaluated in England, in South Australia, and in several European countries.

The Kent Project, begun by Nancy Hazel (1981), provided one of the most effective models for the placement of serious offenders with foster families for intensive care. This model also incorporated involvement of the natural family wherever that was possible in the treatment program along with youth and foster parents. A similar program for intensive intervention developed in South Australia emphasizes three basic elements: self-responsibility and direction by youth and their families; community involvement; and normalization principles in the development of the program. There is also extensive training of all staff who are involved in any aspect of the program, careful program monitoring, 24-hour back-up support services, and respite care for families. Results from the evaluation of both of these programs suggest that they can be successfully implemented and provide far more positive outcomes than traditional foster care services. Moreover, the involvement of natural parents can be accomplished to a far greater extent than many professionals presently assume.

**Job Creation and Youth Employment**

The level of youth unemployment in the United States today
should be viewed as a serious crisis, but obviously it is a matter of minimal concern to most adults. It is already quite apparent that the private sector alone will not be able to resolve the problems of youth unemployment and subsequent deviance, although it is recognized that a serious labor shortage can be anticipated for the 1990s. Needed today is a long-term proactive strategy with primary initiative from the public sector. Unless effective programs in employment and career development are implemented now, we will not have a cohort of adults who can carry out necessary adult responsibilities in the years ahead. The recent proposals for a National Service Corps in which all youth at about age 18 would spend one year in an organized public service program is a positive social policy directed toward rectifying the current situation (Sherraden & Eberle, 1982). Our past experience with a variety of service corps programs provide ample support for the viability of such a program. In addition, more extensive career-oriented apprenticeship training programs, systems of job sharing, and legislation to ensure the right to employment are necessary to meet the particular needs of adolescents and young adults. All youth should have a reasonable expectation that, given appropriate behavior on their part, they will be able to participate in the regular labor force of the country. The need for employment is more urgent for the youth and young adult age group than for any other population in our society, despite adult protestations to the contrary.

**Right to Education**

Although lack of success and involvement in education is one of the strongest predictors of delinquency, far too little has been done to enhance the educational experience and performance of thousands of youth in this society. Today's secondary school programs must address the needs of working class and blue collar youth far more directly than they have been doing in the past. Attention has been directed to the needs of middle class and upward bound students, but far too little toward working class youth. Alternative school programs provide a variety of models for the development of nontraditional secondary education. Here in Minnesota you have successfully implemented a variety of these models and could see that they are adopted throughout the state. Some years ago, Robert Havighurst (1976), the noted educational psychologist, recommended that greater attention be focused on achievement of equality of educational outcome for all students rather than focusing our attention only on equal access to education. He further argued that the vast majority of American adolescent youth could successfully complete all of the educational competencies that have been established for secondary school programs. Clearly, then, the need is to pursue more seriously implementation of the proper types of educational programs.

**Income Maintenance and Well-Being**

Finally, and perhaps most important, this society must reverse the policies that are being stringently implemented by the present Reagan Administration but were initiated earlier by both the Nixon and the Carter Administrations. These policies are rapidly increasing the poverty population of the United States. Moreover, that population is now composed primarily of children, youth, and their mothers. Clearly, it is utter folly for a society not to care for its children adequately, since the perpetuation of a vital society requires the health and well being of those who are its future adults. The system of child support currently operating in the United States does not furnish a reasonable standard of living for children living with single parents, and it encourages family dissolution. In the past, the institution of marriage served to protect children, at least to some extent, but marriage is no longer a permanent and involuntary commitment. As Keniston and other noted child psychologists have argued, children are the primary victims from the changes in marriage and family patterns that have occurred in this century in the United States.

Legal enforcement of parental responsibility will fail without strong social norms as backup support. Yet today we find a variety of economists proposing that child support be coercively enforced through the internal revenue system. Few of these advocates appear to have examined some of the unanticipated negative consequences that occurred under previous programs. Obviously, all of us desire to have parents assume full responsibility for their children. But if parents do not do so voluntarily, can the state enforce that responsibility without, at the same time, creating situations in which child abuse, domestic violence, and other problems emerge? Given the rate of adolescent pregnancy, of pregnancy outside marriage, and of unemployment at the present time, it is difficult to see how a coercive enforcement of parental financial responsibility can work effectively. The county in which I reside in Michigan is one of the more affluent in the state and one with one of the lowest rates of unemployment. Nonetheless, our county jail continues to hold large numbers of fathers who fail on child support and the use of jailing does not appear to be a deterrent as others have suggested in the past. Thus, it seems to me that we need to examine our whole approach to child support.

The proposal to turn responsibility for AFDC over to the states will only add to the existing inequality. Support for a national policy of child support is also necessary to rectify some of the tremendous inequality that exists because thousands of persons are being terminated from AFDC despite the fact that these grants provide income support far below the poverty level. Moreover, states with the highest percentage of black AFDC caseloads have the highest percentage of clients below the poverty level. For example, in the state of Mississippi, 88 percent of the caseload is black and the average grants there are at 47 percent of the poverty level, whereas here in Minnesota the caseload is only 10 percent minority and the average grant is at 89 percent of the poverty level.

Recently a group of Chinese child welfare specialists, educators, and physicians visited the University of Michigan to confer with researchers and faculty there. Their observations about the status of children and youth in the United States were highly informative. They noted that in China children are viewed as the responsibility of the whole society, whereas in the United States they are seen as primarily the responsibility of their natural parents. As a result, poor children here suffer extreme deprivation and affluent children benefit disproportionately. These Chinese observers
noted that such a situation would not be tolerated in China today. Instead, they attempt to implement through social policies their perspective that children are the responsibility of everyone in the society. Such a perspective should be considered for adoption in the United States, but it would undoubtedly take substantial action over a long period of time for such a change to occur.

**Conclusion**

We began this lecture with a series of observations about the status of youth in contemporary American society. Analysis of the operation of the juvenile justice system and proposals for its reform must take that status into careful consideration, since societal conditions influence much of what is possible in terms of juvenile justice outcomes.

Juvenile justice today is an overworked, disjointed, and haphazard system of coercive social control. It processes far too many youth and families. As a result, it does not enhance the well-being of youth, their families, or the society as its founders intended.

Delinquency is really a property of the social system in which people are enmeshed rather than a characteristic of those persons called delinquents by agents of social control. Today in the United States we urgently need to develop constructive, community-based social control systems in which families, friends, neighbors, businesses, and schools are engaged cooperatively with youth in the development of policies and programs to enhance youth wellbeing. In so doing, they will improve the society.

All of the recommendations proposed here will require organizational advocacy as well as very strong support and perseverance if they are to be accepted and implemented. Obviously, priorities among them are necessary. Such priorities need to be established at federal, state, and local levels, in the public and private sectors. This is an opportune time to begin this effort, since there appears to be an emerging concern in many spheres of society about social policies and programs for youth and their families.

Gisela Konopka has devoted her life to enhancing opportunities and well-being for children and youth. I believe that the greatest honor that we could bestow on her would be to take up this effort to fundamentally change existing juvenile justice policies and programs in the United States toward ones which are in accord with the values and policies she has espoused.

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