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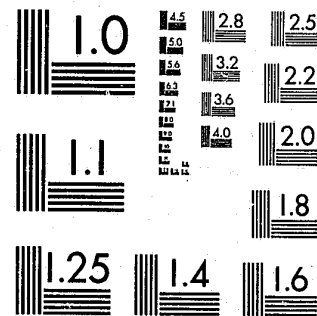
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THE POLITICS OF SECURE CARE IN YOUTH CORRECTIONAL

REFORM

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ACQUISITIONS

INTRODUCTION

If it is true that the basic contradictions of a society are most clearly reflected in its jails and prisons, then the inherent conflicts of a correctional system may be revealed best by its secure facilities. Even in a community based youth correctional system the secure care programs lay bare problems of the entire service system far out of proportion to the minority of youth actually contained.

Within a youth correctional system secure care is the threat or sanction of final resort short of waiver to the adult system. We can learn much about the larger system from the nature, frequency and duration of that sanction. A system which truly emphasizes therapy and reintegration will have a secure care system that does also. Conversely, if the secure care begins to look custodial, it is likely that the rest of the system is becoming that way too. Our most severe sanctions are thus likely to be our smaller ones writ large. A system which begins to use secure care more frequently and with longer duration is making a statement about its assessment of youthful offenders which colors for youth and staff the underlying assumptions of all the other programs as well.

Beyond these internal realities of the correctional system there is a related but additional reason for paying special attention to secure care in the study of correctional reform. The centrality of secure care in the functioning of the system is never lost from sight in the political conflict that guides and drives correctional reform. Secure care is the lightning rod of the system. Of course advocates of more security and control focus on it, but so do advocates of treatment and reintegration. It is the excesses and abuses of secure care that give the advocates of liberal reform their strongest ammunition to combat an overly custodial system, just as lapses in security provide conservatives with their strongest ammunition against a more open system.

In the Massachusetts youth correctional reforms of the early 1970's the scandals and exposés that triggered a mandate for reform occurred at the Institute for Child Guidance, at Bridgewater, the institution that was the ultimate disciplinary unit. During the implementation phases much of the controversy kept returning to its successor, Cottage Nine, the discipline cottage at the Industrial School for Boys at Shirley. The isolation cells in that cottage were ultimately demolished by youth wielding sledge hammers in a public demonstration involving Departmental officials, legislators, and the press. The Bridgewater institution was the first to be closed, followed by Shirley. Reform thus began at the secure end of the system.

With the dawn of the eighties we find a conservative counter-reform developing full steam. Again, the focus is on secure care with demands for more security for larger numbers of youth. Our aim in this article is to examine this counter-reform movement within the larger ebb and flow of correctional reform, and to consider likely responses to it during the next reform period. We will draw upon research conducted over a ten-year period by the Harvard Center for Criminal Justice, much of it reported in four volumes on youth correctional reform published

in 1978 and 1979.[1] Since 1978 the Center has been engaged in a
more focussed study of issues surrounding secure care in the new
community based youth correctional system.

The research prior to 1978 was organized into seventeen
interrelated field studies. Broadly speaking, they allowed us
to investigate the day-to-day operation of programs, to follow
the experiences of youth as we tracked them through the system into
the community, and to study the political and organizational
processes involved in the successive waves of reform and counter-
reform. Since 1978, the specific focus on secure care has led
to interviews with key decision-makers in youth corrections and
the courts about difficult youth, about actual and desired pro-
grams for them, and about disagreements over how to manage
these youth. We also tracked for nine months a cohort of youth
who entered the youth correctional system in the summer of 1978
to see how they were placed in programs. We were interested
in what the placements were, how the decisions were made, and how
the decision makers evaluated this process. A key issue was to
discover the characteristics of youth allocated to different
placements. Finally, this research included a program survey of
both secure and nonsecure programs to determine how they were
related to one another.

In the following account we will describe how successive
constituencies have driven forward the process of reform and counter-
reform in Massachusetts since the mid-sixties. We will then
examine strategic and tactical considerations likely to affect
the continuing flow of changes over the next few years. We see

change as a constant process that creates striking variations in
the incentives to which people respond in working with youth
and deciding what to do with them. These differences are crucial
in understanding how policies are shaped to deal with changing
circumstances.

TRENDS IN MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH CORRECTIONS AND SECURE CARE OVER THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS

In the 1960's Massachusetts youth corrections consisted
of five training shcools, a small forestry program, and four
detention and reception centers. A very few youth were placed
in privately operated group homes. Thus virtually all of the youth
were placed in what most observers today would classify as
secure settings. The detention facilities were actually more
secure than the cottage based training shcools built in rural
areas. However the latter were guarded and runners were chased
and found, usually very quickly. Consequently one frequently hears
the statement that the Massachusetts reforms resulted in a reduc-
tion of youth in secure settings from 90 percent of total place-
ments to 10 percent. These percentages do not include youth in
active or inactive parole status; only those in some type of program
placement.

However, it is important to realize that while the
system of the sixties was almost all secure by the standards of
the seventies, it had its own internal gradations as well. One
institution, the Institute for Child Guidance at Bridgewater was
the place where the most troublesome boys in the system were

assigned and only contained, of course, a small minority of the total, just as secure programs do today.

A Constituency for Reform.

In the mid 1960's a legislator and some colleagues visited Bridgewater to look at some of the programs for criminally insane adults. As they came out at the end of the day, someone suggested that they take a look at the juvenile facility across the street. They did, and thus began a succession of increasingly major investigations. In 1967 the Governor requested the Childrens Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare to conduct an investigation and make recommendations concerning the state-wide Division of Youth Services, looking at both treatment and administration. The report found many deficiencies which were confirmed in a subsequent investigation by a child advocacy agency, the Massachusetts Committee on Children and Youth and further inquiries by a legislative committee. These investigations were followed in 1968 and 1969 by the disclosure of scandals involving brutality in the treatment of youth at Bridgewater.

The constituency for reform that developed out of this increasingly public affair was led by the Massachusetts Committee on Children and Youth and the grass-roots Committee for Youth in Trouble, a local group that mounted demonstrations against conditions at Bridgewater. Eventually, as public criticism of Youth Services mounted the governor and the legislature were persuaded of the need for change. The Director of the Division of Youth Services was forced to resign, and legislation was passed in 1969 reorganizing the Division into a Department with a mandate for reform.

On the whole this broadly based constituency was not calling for radical reform. They sought to humanize conditions and to introduce more intensive mental health approaches to youth problems.

The new commissioner of the reform administration, Jerome Miller, tried to convert the training school programs into cottage-based therapeutic communities. His first year was spent in efforts to humanize the existing custodial patterns by abolishing traditional control techniques, such as disciplinary haircuts, uniforms, marching to group activities, and doing out or withholding cigarettes as reward or punishment. After closing the Bridgewater institution in the summer of 1970, and constantly testing staff on different assignments, Miller began to move in earnest to develop the therapeutic communities. Staff were instructed to share decision-making power with the young, particularly in the new group therapy cottages. Youth were encouraged to accept responsibility for rewarding and punishing each other, and confronting and dealing with personal problems. The programs stressed learning to cope with social demands and gaining insight into past and future problems leading to trouble with the law. There was much less concern than before with exacting outward obedience and deference to authority, or developing specific occupational skills.

There were problems. There seemed to be a limit on how far the reforms could go, given the entrenched resistance of the civil-service protected institutional staff. It seemed improbable that more than a fourth to a third of the institutional

cottages could be converted to therapeutic communities at any one time. Further, the reform constituency outside of the Department was fading into obscurity, as the reform activities concentrated on institutional practices within the Department. In addition reform oriented staff members were sorting into factions, each seeking to consolidate its control over some part of the system. The reform movement seemed to be running out of steam

A Constituency for Replacement.

Out of this situation arose a smaller reform constituency seeking to replace the institutions altogether with a system of services pruchased from private contractors. This constituency began with Miller himself, several assistant commissioners, a planner in the central office, and a number of other supportive staff members both in the central office and in the field. Its objectives were repeatedly summed up in the broad client-oriented injunction to "do good things for kids." The stress was on action accompanied by a willingness to let administrative concerns catch up later.

This group mobilized the Department to close the training schools quickly--within a few months. This involved bypassing most, although not all members of the legislature by closing the training schools while the legislature was out of session. The Governor was willing to let this happen though hesitant at first to get involved. However, as the new policies began to be implemented, he lent public support to the process. A key event in this transition was the University of Massachusetts conference. Youth were taken from the training schools to the University of

Massachusetts in a ceremonial motorcade, put up in dorms with volunteer college students during the semester break, and from there placed in community settings around the state. This event demonstrated that youth offenders could be handled in non-correctional settings, and that other agencies, such as universities, could play a major role. The campus security chief commented afterward that these youth had been less trouble than a convention of the American Legion.

The programs of the new community-based system were diverse. Half of the youth under the care of the Department remained on traditional parole as before. Of the remainder, ten percent were in secure care, twenty percent each in group homes and foster care, and fifty pervent in nonresidential settings, the biggest innovation of all. There was much more emphasis on linkages between the youth and the community, and more humane, normalized social relationships in the living units.

Programs established for the ten percent in secure care at this time were a pretty good indicator of the diversity that was available for other youth throughout the system. There were two main types of secure care. One type consisted of therapeutic communities, modeled on the drug-free, concept-house programs. The other involved a "straight-talk" program run largely by ex-cons. Security in the former was largely a matter of supervision and peer pressure, with little use of locks, while the other made use of the usual locking measures. The first concentrated on developing a community within the program, while the second concentrated on talking about and having contact with

the larger, surrounding community. The two types of programs between them provided a choice so that different types of youth could be sent where they would do best.

In addition, the Department was interested in exploring two other alternatives. One consisted of tracking programs in which staff members were responsible only for working with about two youth at a time in the community, since they were accountable for the whereabouts and activities of the youth at all times. The other alternative was intensive foster care[2], where the foster parents were employed full time in the home, backed up by professional support services for counselling and other services, much like an intensively programmed group home. However, as the Department's programs later became less diverse in general, so did its secure care programs.

The closing of the training schools was accompanied by other important reforms. Less use was made of prehearing detention but at the same time a greater diversity of detention options was developed. Instead of relying solely on locked detention, new alternatives were created, such as treatment detention (secure but with more programming) shelter care detention in YMCA's (still fairly secure but more home-like) and foster care detention, the most normalized setting of all. In addition, the use of the detention reception units to hold youth after court commitment was virtually eliminated by making placement decisions while the youth was still in the court process. Increasingly also efforts were made to involve the youth themselves in placement decisions.

Both of these innovations, more limited but diversified detention, and the abolition of post-commitment reception status in detention facilities were accomplished by working closely with the courts. Consequently the courts retained a greater sense of involvement despite the fact that the increased number of placement options available to the Department made the placement or detention choice less predictable and controllable by the court.

The closing of the training schools and the build-up of alternative programs in the community greatly reduced the factionalism emerging at the end of the phase controlled by the previous, broader constituency. An example of this increased unity occurred after Miller had already left in January 1973 to attempt similar work in Illinois. True to its priorities the replacement constituency had left administrative and fiscal detail, as contrasted with program development, to the last. However, bills were falling due that had to be paid to make the new system work. A Democratic speaker of the House, a Republican Governor, the Executive Office of Human Services, and the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration of the U.S. Department of Justice joined forces to build a sounder fiscal foundation under the reforms. They conducted a sympathetic investigation of the Departments fiscal affairs that turned up little corruption but a lot of ignorance within the staff and among the new private providers of services about how to keep books. The Department and its contracting service providers were accordingly taught better management practices. Within a few months the Department moved from

being on the verge of fiscal chaos to being held up as a model of how the rest of state government should manage its administrative and fiscal affairs. This episode marked a high point in cooperative efforts for "doing good things for kinds."

A Constituency for Consolidation.

Suddenly cooperation gave way to competition among staff. Career goals quickly became important as staff members realized that the reforms had probably gone as far as they were going to go. The structure of rank and position among staff, which had been extremely fluid and changeable at the height of the reforms, showed signs of rigidifying as the spirit of reform cooled. Now this awakened concern for careers began to control staff members' positions on vital decision. The highest priority ceased to be "what would be best for the kids?", and became instead "what will protect my career?" At one point an old time reformer accused central office staff members of being afraid to drive cabs--i.e., being more concerned about securing their jobs than about doing their jobs. The horrified silence of his hearers' lent credibility to his observation.

Under these circumstances, the band that had implemented the reforms gradually dissolved as many moved on to job opportunities elsewhere. They were not replaced with likeminded, task-oriented people, and this accelerated the drift toward dominance of concerns about career. As a consequence the Department began to make compromises with more conservative legislators on such matters as when to close the remaining cottages of the last training school, a process which now took several years, instead of

the projected several months. There came to be increased emphasis on professionalism which led in turn to more emphasis on the therapeutic community approach where stricter controls were possible, and less emphasis on work in the community. Solving problems in youth-community relationships had acquired a volunteer or paraprofessional cast, while direct treatment seemed more professional, and hence better for one's career.

There was also increased use of some facilities as lock-ups without programmed activities, as the Department began to respond to pressures from legislators for more security. Ironically, at the present time there is a tendency to see the Department's secure care program as having begun with these lock-up policies. They actually signaled a retreat from a more diversified and intensive set of secure care programs.

The Department's quality control monitoring of programs also began to deteriorate. The unit responsible for program evaluations, and the sometimes consequent modification, or ending of program contracts came to find its recommendations disregarded and even treated as an embarrassment to the department. The increasingly strident expressions of frustration by the evaluation unit members led only to further isolation. As a result the Department, without an effective quality control and monitoring system, began to lose control over the highly decentralized network of privately purchased program services.

A Constituency for Secure Care.

Juvenile court judges generally had supported the mandate for reform at the outset, though they were more divided in opinion

on the desirability or success in closing the training schools
and creating alternative programs. Now, however, the judges
coalesced, asking for more security and lock-up away from the
community, for a varying but ever increasing proportion of youth.
Thus a stronger measure of policy conflict and disagreement
arose between the Department and the courts. The Department
reinstated the practice of delaying placement decision-making
until after court disposition. This necessitated the re-
establishment of reception-confinement status for youth usually
in the detention centers, until the placement decision had been
made.[3] At present in more difficult cases this decision-making
process may take considerable time since the demise of quality
control monitoring has contributed to still more independence
on the part of the private programs. They now reject youth
more freely, so that the Department frequently has no options
for a difficult youth except secure care over which the Depart-
ment has assumed tighter control.

The judges have countered their loss of role in
placement by increasing the number of youth subject to hearings
to determine if the youth should be bound over to adult court,
and not tried as a juvenile at all. While the number of result-
ing bind-overs has not increased, many youth in secure care have
been placed there under a judge's threat of bind-over if the
Department does not provide a secure placement. A few judges
have experimented with setting bail for outstanding charges
against committed youth, thus preventing the youth from
participating in the more open aspects of program activities,
such as week-end passes, despite what the youth's progress or

the program plan may call for. The Department has belatedly
attempted to enlarge participation in placement decisions.
However, court personnel feel they have only had token represen-
tation in "staffings", i.e. meetings where placements are decided,
and that this has not really given them a meaningful voice in
decisions, since they may easily be outvoted.

Since 1978 we have been interviewing key participants
in courts and youth corrections about the problems of working
with difficult youth. We have also collected data on a large
number of youth going through the correctional system to discover
who gets placed in secure settings, and have surveyed a sample
of programs to determine patterns of service in secure and non-
secure programs.

We interviewed 73 officials in courts (probation
officers and judges) and 97 staff members in youth corrections
(regional office, central office, and program staff). Both
contending groups were quite clear about their own and each
other's roles in the placement decision. Ninety-six percent of
the court and corrections samples said that DYS decides placement
of difficult youth, while between fifty and sixty percent of
each group mentioned the courts as influencing this decision.
We tried another approach, asking who had more power in the
placement decision despite the formal allocation of responsibility.
Both groups thought DYS was more powerful in this decision-making
process than the courts. However there were differences. Among
the corrections sample the vote was divided and very close, but
there was a strong consensus among the court respondents. This

contrast probably reflects the fact that the courts are the challengers, and the corrections staff are the ones threatened by the challengers. The court respondents were considerably less likely than the corrections staff to agree that DYS formally consulted the courts on these decisions.

Over two thirds on both sides felt that the issues in the disagreements between courts and corrections concerned what was best for the youth. In addition, however, 85 percent of the corrections staff and 64 percent of the court staff saw the conflict as being over the issue of security. Almost half of the corrections sample, but not of the court sample, saw conflict over issues of turf--who gets to make the decision. Again, perhaps this is because it is the corrections staff whose turf is threatened. Methods of coping with the conflict mentioned by the court respondents as being practiced by one side or the other included particularly "staffings", informal cooperation, and refusal to communicate, while corrections staff stressed bindovers, "staffings", reports to courts, and informal cooperation. The courts were more likely than corrections to mention refusal to communicate, which is a way the corrections can respond to the courts' challenge and corrections was three times more likely than courts to mention bindovers and reports to courts, respectively a major form of the courts' challenge, and corrections' most public response to that challenge.

Turning to perceptions of the youth themselves, corrections staff seem to be particularly concerned compared to the courts about difficulties serving youth with mental health problems, while

the courts seem particularly concerned about difficult youth who are neither mental health problems nor violent offenders. Seventy-three percent of the corrections groups as opposed to 39 percent of the court sample mention youth with mental problems as being among the most difficult youth. Sixty percent of the court staff, as opposed to 52 percent of the corrections staff say that difficult youth who are neither mental cases nor violent are a danger to the community. Thus corrections defines problems in terms of its own special skills, and the courts define them in terms of their own challenge to corrections. Further, while both groups prefer secure settings for mental cases and violent youth, and both prefer group homes for the other difficult youth, corrections, but not courts, are as likely to mention treatment for mental cases as security.

Both groups tend to feel that correctional experience generally harms more than helps difficult youth. Secure programs are considered harmful by both groups, when they are specifically mentioned. Group homes, when mentioned, are, by a slight margin, more likely to be considered beneficial, especially by the correctional staff, who of course have more of a professional investment in them. It used to be that youth were frequently placed in secure care because they were difficult to manage elsewhere despite the nature of their committing offense in the community. More recently demands for more secure care have been justified on the basis of a "just deserts" model of punishment, where dispositions are determined mainly by current offense and offense history.[4] We wished to explore the extent to which

the struggles we have been describing in Massachusetts reflected this trend. We examined the connection between many personal and relational characteristics of youth and the severity of disposition, given a commitment to corrections. We report here the youth characteristics which emerged as most strongly related to disposition.

We classified a sample of 447 youth (who entered the Department of Youth Services between July and October 1978) by the most secure classification and disposition they had received during their current commitment. Most had stayed in the general population. Others had been judged by caseworkers or probation workers as in need of more security, but had not actually been placed accordingly. Some had been put into secure care, others into Mental Health Regional Adolescent Program (RAP) units, and some had been bound over for adult court. A youth classified in one of these categories might also have experienced a less severe classification first. In Table I we can see that Blacks are strikingly over represented among the bindovers, and somewhat over represented in the other categories beside general population (in the first row of the table Blacks are 37.5 percent of the bindovers and 14.0 percent of the general population). Women are over represented in the RAP units. Older youth are found disproportionately in the more extreme categories, and youth with two parent families (including step parents) are disproportionality in RAP units. Those whose fathers have skilled or higher work also show up more often in the RAP's.

Over half of the bindover, RAP, and secure categories

have a history of being runners. Particularly serious current offenses are most strongly represented in the bindover and secure care placements. Offenses involving injury are also concentrated in these placements and even more strongly in RAP's. Offenses involving a weapon are particularly prominent among the bindovers. Youth in the bindover and secure categories are also most likely to have a self-reported history of serious crimes, committed both alone and in the company of other youth. Bindover and RAP youth are particularly likely to have been detained, and bindovers are especially likely to have been to court again during the nine months after the commitment in the summer of 1978 that brought them into our sample. Looking at the offense for which they were committed in the summer of 1978 and any additional offenses in the nine months following, we find that those whose most serious offense was homicide, rape, arson, or armed robbery are particularly over represented among the bindovers.

In sum, serious crimes are most overrepresented among bindovers, followed by secure care. Lower socioeconomic status youth and minorities are overrepresented among bindovers and secure care, while higher socioeconomic status youth and women are over represented in RAP. RAP youth are noticably less likely than secure or bindover youth to have serious offenses. The offense data thus suggests that the decision-making process is sensitive to this information. The social class differences are more disturbing. While such characteristics as race and social class are clearly related to official offense records, it is less clear in the literature that they are as strongly related to actual

Table 1   PERCENT YOUTH WITH SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS
BY DISPOSITION

Youth Characteristic	Disposition				
	Bindover	RAP	Secure	Need Secure	General Population
Black	37.5	18.2	24.0	24.3	14.0
Female	00.0	27.3	4.0	10.0	10.6
16 years and over	84.4	90.0	72.0	64.7	55.1
Two parent house	25.0	63.6	24.0	35.7	45.2
Father skilled worker or higher	35.5	72.7	24.0	45.7	46.3
Have run	62.5	54.6	68.0	49.3	31.5
Up for Homicide, Rape, Arson, or Armed Robbery	41.9	9.1	40.0	8.6	11.8
Injury	38.7	45.4	31.8	20.6	18.9
Weapon	51.6	27.3	30.4	14.5	25.4
Used to do Alone					
Armed Robbery	25.9	00.0	23.5	6.9	3.2
Robbery	37.0	11.1	38.9	25.4	16.8
Aggravated Assault	25.9	00.0	27.8	3.5	4.5
Assault	29.6	11.1	26.3	17.5	12.5
Burglary	70.4	40.0	75.0	47.4	39.6
Injury	24.0	10.0	40.0	14.8	14.5
Weapon	33.3	30.0	50.0	16.4	17.3
Used to do with Others					
Armed Robbery	32.1	11.1	38.9	10.0	9.0
Robbery	33.3	22.2	50.0	31.2	18.2
Aggravated Assault	14.8	0.0	16.7	5.0	8.1
Assault	32.1	11.1	38.9	11.7	16.7
Burglary	55.6	44.4	65.0	55.0	60.3
Injury	29.6	20.0	26.3	13.8	17.4
Weapon	37.0	40.0	47.6	20.7	18.2
Detained	90.0	90.9	68.0	52.9	61.6
Court since Committed	74.3	46.2	53.8	51.5	36.4
Most Serious Crime Homicide, Rape, Arson, Armed Robbery	45.4	27.3	27.8	12.2	10.8
Approximate Number (varies with characteristic)	32	11	25	70	265

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behavioral differences. Multiple regression analysis has indicated that in this data the race, sex, and class variables have distinct effects over and beyond what can be accounted for by the crime variables. It is also clear that the RAP units do not have the most difficult youth as reflected by offense behavior, although same caution is necessary since only a small number (11) of the youth in our sample found their way into the RAP units.

Thus the need of the caseworkers to resort to secure care to obtain services for difficult youth has not resulted in this category being filled with youth who have not committed serious crimes. Secure care youth are clearly more serious offenders than the general population. What then are the case workers reacting to when they say they want service placement in order to get service? Probably two things. At the height of the reform many of these serious offenders would have been satisfactorily dealt with in less secure settings. Also, many of these difficult youth are known to the caseworkers as having had histories of less serious offenses. In part what the caseworkers are expressing is their frustration that they can not get adequate services for a youth before he gets into serious crime. The result in their view is an escalation into more serious crime and subsequent need for secure care in part, at least, attributable to the earlier lack of adequate service.

To probe these issues and also to address our hypotheses that you can know a correctional system by its secure care programs, we conducted a program survey. Two questions seemed central. We wanted to know what secure care programs were like in comparison to other programs. Even more importantly we

simply wanted to know what programs were like in general, because
the character of programs in general is crucial in determining
which youth the system will be forced to allocate to the secure
care, RAP, or bindover categories. Inadequacies in the system
as a whole will increase the number of youth abandoned to the deep
end. We interviewed 97 staff and 104 youth in 38 programs.
Fourteen staff and fourteen youth were in secure programs. We
were less concerned with individual programs than with the
general scope of the state wide system of programs assembled and
administered by DYS. We found staff of individual programs working
hard at their assigned tasks, according to their resources. But
we found some problems in the system as a whole. One does not
expect one program to be the answer for all types of offenders.
The program system, on the other hand, with its possibilities
for diversity and flexibility, should come much closer to doing
this.

In Table 2 we can examine the staff assessments of the
practicality, desirability, and likelihood of various program
practices, and the youth assessments of the actual occurrence of
those practices. Assessments could range from 0 to 5. Slight
numerical differences can thus represent considerable substantive
differences. In the top row we see that staff in secure programs
assign a mean rating of 4.2, out of a maximum of 5, to the realistic
possibility of keeping the youth informed, in secure programs.
Youth assign a mean rating of 4.3 to the actual occurrence of
this practice. (Youth ratings have been transformed to the 0-5
scale from an original scale of 1-3.)

We can see that differences between secure care and other
programs are slight, except for the security aspect itself. What
differences there are involve a little more rewarding and punish-
ing by staff in secure care and an expressed interest by staff
in getting youth involved in rewarding and punishing each other.
Perhaps this latter interest will manifest itself in the future
in more developed therapeutic communities in secure care.

The much larger and more important patterns in Table 2
have to do with the comparative character of all programs. Start-
ing at the top of the table, one notices progressively lower ratings
as one moves down to the bottom. The assessments at the bottom
are about half those at the top. At the top we find activities
such as keeping the youth informed and counselling the youth.
In the middle of the table we have the involvement of youth in
the responsibility of making decisions about each other. At the
bottom we have staff getting people in the community to participate
in relating consequences constructively to the youth's behavior.
The table tells us that the system is using programs to manage
youth directly, but not to give them much responsibility for
decisions in the programs, and not to try to change the community
environment. Thus the total system of programs appears designed
for youth who are not extreme problems in the first place. Youth
who are problems will tend to be pushed out with apparently
increasing frequency into the deep end of secure care.

Thus the nature of secure care does indeed tell us the
nature of programming in general. We can hardly tell them apart
except for the degree of security. And in the lack of work to

Table 2 MEAN STAFF AND YOUTH ASSESSMENTS OF PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Program Characteristic	Staff Say Realistic R=0-5		Staff Say Want To R=0-5		Staff Say Likely R=0-5		Youth Say Actual R=0-5	
	Secure	Nonsecure	Secure	Nonsecure	Secure	Nonsecure	Secure	Nonsecur
Staff inform	4.2	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.6	4.1	4.3	3.8
Counselling	4.2	4.0	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.4	3.3	3.3
Staff reward	3.8	3.7	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.3
Staff punish	3.2	3.3	2.7	3.2	3.0	3.4	4.0	2.8
Staff encourage confrontation	3.5	3.0	3.7	3.4	3.6	3.1	2.3	2.3
Staff encourage youth to reward	3.5	2.3	3.4	2.7	3.2	2.5	2.0	2.0
Staff encourage youth to punish	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.6	1.2	1.0	0.8
Staff reward in community	3.7	3.6	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.0
Staff punish in community	3.4	2.7	2.8	2.8	3.2	2.8	2.0	2.5
Staff encourage comm. reward	3.4	3.4	3.6	4.1	3.1	3.7	1.3	1.8
Staff encourage comm. punish	2.2	2.0	1.9	2.2	1.8	2.0	0.8	1.0

solve the youths' problems in the community we see some explanations of why the caseworkers feel they can not find adequate services for youth.

In Table 3 we find that youth consider such everyday straight activities as dances, school activities, neighborhood and competitive sports, and fixing up cars to be possible, desirable, and something they are likely to do. They have decided that vandalism, stick-up, joy-riding, and robbery are things they do not want to do are are not likely to do. But they are quite aware that these things are just as possible as they ever were. When the youth leave the shelter of the programs these activities will probably also regain their attractiveness. These results thus reflect clearly the program system's failure to alter the community environment.

We also note in Table 3 that the programs have not diminished the possibility or even the desirability and likelihood of drug and alcohol use. On the other hand the youth are emerging with the idea that a reasonable education and job are possible, desirable, and likely, despite the lack of these in their prior experience.

IMPLICATIONS

Thus we have traced a succession of constituencies, each of whom has built upon the work of the preceeding one. In each case the prior constituency begins to relax when it achieves its immediate goal, and, at the same time, a new constituency perceives an opportunity to carry certain policies further. Thus,

Table 3   MEAN YOUTH ASSESSMENTS OF ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY

Activities	Youth Say Doing R=1-3		Youth Say Possible R=1-3		Youth Say Want To R=1-3		Youth Say Likely R=1-3	
	Secure	Nonsecure	Secure	Nonsecure	Secure	Nonsecure	Secure	Nonsecur
Dances	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.6	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.2
School activity	1.7	2.0	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.1	1.9	2.2
Neighbor sport	1.7	2.2	2.9	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.4
Compet, league	2.0	1.8	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.1	2.4	2.1
Fix Cars	2.4	2.1	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.4	2.5	2.4
Vandalism	1.9	1.8	2.5	2.3	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.4
Stick up	2.3	1.2	2.1	2.0	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.2
Joy riding	2.6	2.1	3.0	2.5	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.6
Robbery	2.1	1.6	2.3	2.1	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.2
Drug-Alcohol	2.7	2.4	3.0	2.6	2.4	1.8	2.4	2.1
Col.-Col. Prep	1.2	1.6	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.4
Skilled job	1.6	1.7	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.4

therapeutic community programs showed that one could "do good things for kids " and the anti-institution advocates wanted to do more. Deinstitutionalization showed that one could manage a system in the community, and the consolidators wanted to manage it more systematically. Consolidation showed that more emphasis could be placed on security and the secure care constituency wanted to carry that further.

These various constituencies faced different problems in their political relationships. The reform constituency had to mobilize citizen and official groups against the treatment inadequacies of the training school system in youth corrections. The biggest battles were directly or indirectly with the old line staff of the training schools who did not want to change things. In contrast the replacement constituency benefited from the fact that the training school staff policies had been seriously discredited. To a greater extent than before the political problems of the system involved coping with community relationships. The issues ranged from working out relationships with community agencies and operating community-based programs to dealing on the other hand with a community stake in having access to traditional, patronage-controlled jobs associated with the operation of the training schools.

In addition, one of the most crucial problems in implementing the deinstitutional policies was to work out viable relationships with the courts. A community-based correctional system works with youth in the community, which is defined by court staff as their "turf", rather than dealing with youth on rural

campuses. Under the court liaison program developed to deal with this issue a wide variety of alternative relationships emerged. Some were cooperative, with the correctional agency providing resources to be used in case dispositions jointly agreed to by corrections, the court, and the youth. Others were competitive, with the courts developing their own programs as part of their probation systems. In such situations the court staff perceived corrections as primarily responsible for locking up youth that the court could not deal with in its own community based programs. This variety of relationships still exists under the secure care constituency. However, many courts fall in between these extremes by not providing much in the way of community based services, but still pressing corrections to become more responsive in providing whatever amount and type of secure care the courts define as essential to community safety.

A new reform movement, oriented to reasserting the community based emphasis, would have to readdress these problems of developing cooperative and/or competitive relationships with the courts where both corrections and the courts were bent on working with youth on a continuing basis in the community. This would be very different from the competition for placement authority and the demands for more security that have been characteristic of the system under the constituency for security. Thus advocates for the community-based system of the future must work for programs, possibly sponsored both by the courts and corrections, which feature continuing involvement and accountability for youth. Such programs should probably offer a more finely graded continuum

of sanctions than that provided by traditional probation and incarceration. Our justice system and its associated social agencies must make commitments much like those of good parents-- to work continuously with individual youth, in their own natural settings, and with the expectation that problems will be persistent during the critical adolescent years. At the same time this must be done without widening the net of official intervention and terminating that intervention as soon as the legal and practical justification for it has ceased.

Working for such a goal is complicated by the fact that as the succession of constituencies continues the key actors change-- so that one has to deal with new agencies and groups in the communities, new policies in corrections and new varieties of court-sponsored programs and sanctions. Related to this parade of different actors and policies one should expect significant changes in vested interests, goals and strategies. During the height of the reforms concerns about the needs of youth were paramount. Later during the consolidation phase these concerns became less central in comparison to concerns about stake in careers. Under the emerging secure care constituency, it may be essential to address people's concerns about their careers, if one wants to promote more emphasis on work in the community. In part this issue arises because the advocates of work in the community are rapidly losing influence and are finding their careers as community workers seriously threatened.

In our program survey we asked not only what was happening, but what people thought was possible and desirable.

The secure care constituency is making secure programming more possible and more desirable to many workers. How would an advocate of community work try to counter this? There are many things such advocates could work for to increase the possibility and desirability of community work. We mention only a few prominent examples.

Advocates could work to get funding arrangements changed to make working with runners more feasible. At present, in most Massachusetts programs if a youth runs, the program loses funding for his placement slot, and is requested by caseworkers to accept a new youth in his place. When the runner reappears under official control he ordinarily goes to detention to await the placement process over again. The program is thus effectively prevents from working with the youth and his associates in the community in connection with the running problem when it occurs.

Advocates could urge the Department to provide evaluation and technical assistance-- on program, not just contract compliance. We have repeatedly had the experience of asking program staff to tell us who evaluated their program and having them reply in puzzled fashion that we were the only ones. A Department that does not evaluate and assist its program providers obviously has little control over what happens in programs, and hence can not respond effectively to the advocates demands concerning the content of programs.

Advocates also could try to get the Department to pay for after care, and make it part of a program's contract. We have observed a number of secure programs make frustrated efforts

to arrange aftercare, only to fail for lack of supportive funds. The directors of some of these programs have told us they think their whole programs are having no real effect because of this lack of aftercare. In most secure programs, if there is no aftercare there will be little work with the youth in the community where ultimately his family, work, education and peer group problems must be resolved.

The efforts of the Department and other agencies that contract with the same private vendors of program could also be better coordinated. As it is, the various state Departments of human services undercut one another by paying at different rates or providing a more manageable clientele. From the point of view of the program providers it becomes difficult to justify to their board of directors the acceptance of more difficult youth to work with at lower rates.

The development of accountability in the relationship between the Department of Youth Services and the courts would also increase feasibility of community based work with youth. As long as courts feel that the Department's major responsibility is to provide youth with intensive treatment in secure care away from the community, the development of collaborative programs of community based work will be difficult. It is important to negotiate an understanding that the Department and the courts will undertake a continuing effort to work with the youth to solve problems between himself and the community. Then the program providers attempting to do their job, would not find themselves fighting the very system they work for.

Similarly, there are many ways to go about making community based work more desirable from the point of view of program staff. Again we suggest only a few examples.

Advocates could strive to define community based work as a highly professional occupation. It presently tends to be seen primarily as volunteer or paraprofesional work. While this may be useful in the social movement phase, it does not serve well in the consolidation phase in comparison to professional status that can be gotten by doing counseling and clinical work. Program staff seeking a career naturally gravitate toward higher status and financially rewarded professional work. Community work could be elevated professionally by providing more formal training for it, making it more central in the contract obligations, and paying adequately and competitively for it.

It would also help if this type of community work was not perceived as a dead end job. Career lines should be developed within the Department and its contracted programs to allow people whose major forte is community work to advance to higher levels of organizational policy and responsibility.

Professional clinical work is currently among the most expensive of human services. To make community work more desirable, the current levels must be modified through the rate-setting mechanisms for programs. The new rates must make community work as professionally attractive as clinical work.

Finally, there are still a large number of program staff who even in the consolidation and secure care phases, are motivated by what seems best for youth. If all they can hope to accomplish

of value is to provide a warm, safe interlude for youth in trouble, then that is what they will try to do. One of the obligations of a Department purchasing services is to draw together evidence from the whole system about what really helps youth. The department's research and evaluation staff, as well as some of the program development staff, are in a position to see and demonstrate what kind of assistance a youth really needs. Again, this means much more than simply monitoring contract compliance. If the need can be clearly demonstrated, many program staff will want to respond to it.

How much success should we expect for advocacy consistent with the foregoing examples? Probably we should expect only marginal gains in the immediate future, since the dominant constituency for secure care is trying to control resources and developments for quite different purposes. The advocate for community programming today can probably hope only for small victories. However those small victories may signal a new beginning. As part of its study of reform and counter reform the Center has developed a theoretical model of change in correctional and other systems. That model is capable of producing projections of possible scenarios for the future, assuming that observations to date have alerted us to the relevant, determinative factors. From that model we now expect a continued and increasing concern for security and a declining emphasis on community based services during the next few years. However, we also expect a new series of reforms oriented toward therapy and community-based services in the not-too-distant future.

If these new reforms are to happen, work must begin now to lay the groundwork for them. Judging by investigations now being conducted by individual legislators in Massachusetts into brutal conditions within institutional programs, and by private organizations into secure detention practices,[5] that work has begun. So far it consists largely of publicly exposing inhumane practices and thus making their continuation a little less possible. If that work can be expanded to make constructive community alternatives more readily available and desirable to correctional staff, the foundations of a strong future movement toward these ends may be established.

CONCLUSION

A correctional system can indeed be known by its secure care programs, and those programs, like the systems they characterize, never cease changing. Those who work for more community services, or for more security, must live with the fact that their successes may never be permanent. On the other hand, they can be comforted by the fact that their losses may never be permanent either.

What happens to the youthful clients during all of this pulling back and forth? It seems in fact that the best prospects for the youth are in periods of most radical change. These are the times when their needs become central, when everyone is interested in what should happen to them. That was certainly true during the actual process of closing the training schools. Perhaps, in this constant flow of change, the children may win more in the end than their advocates.

FOOTNOTES

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