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THE RECORD AND THEIR PROSPECTS

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INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, a new vocabulary emerged around juvenile delinquency, its treatment, and control. "Diversion," "deinstitutionalization," "decriminalization," and a host of other new terms swept into being, practice, and policy. Nestled in among these was the youth service bureau. The words, and the programs, can be viewed as one of many results of the turmoil of the 1960s.

Much was amiss in the decade of the 1960s. Delinquency rates rose steeply, at the same time that the baby boom precipitated the heightened concern for youth problems. The traditional juvenile justice system seemed incapable of stemming the tide of youthful trouble and misconduct. Not only were recidivism rates appallingly high for young persons who penetrated this system, but even the experimental approaches developed within it were ineffective. Along with the general concern for civil rights, activist attorneys began to question the "over-reach" of the juvenile court, and to express grave concern for protection of due process guarantees of children caught up in a system notable for its violation of fundamental procedural rights. Social scientists began to advocate for new approaches to the problem of delinquency, in particular raising questions about the negative effects of labeling and stigma that might accrue from exposure to the justice system.

At the height of this turmoil, the President's Crime Commission produced its monumental report in 1967 calling for sweeping changes throughout the adult and juvenile justice systems. This document became a virtual blueprint for hosts of changes that served in many ways to transform the appearance, and vocabulary, of law enforcement justice and correctional agencies as the 1970s unfolded. One specific recommendation of that document called for the creation of a new kind of child serving agency to be called "youth service bureaus."

As the Commission (1967) viewed these agencies, they were to be community based, providing a broad range of educational, employment, recreational, counseling, and other service functions. Locating these apart from the justice system was seen as a way of avoiding the harm that might accrue as a result of the stigma of being processed by an official crime control agency. It was assumed that referrals would come both from the justice system and from parents, schools, and other sources. It was stipulated that the services should be voluntary, in order to avoid the dangers and disadvantages of the coercive power of the court. By involving local residents, both a sense of awareness and responsibility would emerge in the community for the problems of delinquency and troubled children.

Even more important than the blueprint (which, as it turned out was distressingly vague), the Federal government provided money to support the creation of YSBs throughout the nation. By the early 1970s, literally hundreds had been created. An evaluation (YDDPA, 1976) conducted in the early years of the 1970s was able to locate a minimum of 175 such organizations. While the authors of this report point out the dangers of composite descriptions, the "typical" program is described in the following terms (YDDPA, 1976: 284-285):

Typical programs had five to six full-time staff and either had or were developing programs utilizing the services of from one to fifty volunteers. The annual budget was from \$50,000 to \$75,000. The objectives were diversion from the juvenile justice system, delinquency prevention, and youth development.

Individual counseling and referral were the most important services for at least 75 percent of the programs responding. Included were referral with general follow-up; family counseling; group counseling; drug treatment; job referral; tutoring and remedial education; recreation programs; medical aid; and legal aid.

At least two-thirds of the programs were located in an urban, core city, or Model City neighborhoods. Socioeconomic conditions for the areas were usually considered lower income with a high crime rate, unemployment, and limited facilities most often noted. The target group was adolescents (fourteen-seventeen years of age).

The ethnic distribution of programs...was: predominantly white, 25 percent; predominantly black, 15 percent; predominantly Latin, 5 percent. In addition, 20 percent of the programs were mixed between whites and blacks; 10 percent between whites and Latins; and 5 percent predominantly Latin and black. Twenty percent of the programs had most ethnic groups represented.

The "typical" program provided intensive services for 350 cases per year; about 60 percent were male and 40 percent female. The average age was 15.5 years. Primary sources of referral were school, law enforcement, and self. Primary reasons for referral were unacceptable behavior, personal difficulties, or some professional services needs. Drugs and delinquency were the primary reasons for police referral. Approximately 25 percent of the programs were open Monday through Friday for a total of forty hours per week. The remaining 75 percent worked in excess of this, usually forty-one to seventy-two hours throughout the entire week.

While this might be a description of a typical program, certainly other kinds of, and other functions for, YSBs can be isolated. In his early set of guidelines for the organization of YSBs, Norman (1972) gave primary emphasis to such functions as service brokerage, resource development, and "systems modification." Klein (1979) has argued that in addition to direct service, counseling strategies, diversion programs might involve advocacy, opportunity enhancement, and skill development (and he notes that even these don't exhaust the possibilities). A few YSBs did organize around such alternative strategies, such as the YSB in South Bend, Indiana where a strong emphasis was placed on youth advocacy, or the Rural American Project of Helena, Montana which focused on service coordination and resource development. (YDDPA, 1973: 142-143). The available evaluative descriptions, however, tend to verify that the overwhelming majority of these agencies were organized around strategies which combined direct service and diversion goals, with counseling in one form or another being by far the major service mode. (YDDPA, 1972; Polk and Schuster, 1975; and Elliott, et al., 1975.)

What has been the impact of these organizations, both on the lives of young persons, and on the patterns of youth services in their communities? A few years ago it might not have been possible to answer such questions. A common lament in the early years of YSB development was that little information was available regarding what a YSB was, and what its effects might be. Today, however, the situation has altered. Literally hundreds of pages have been written on YSBs, and several competent and sound evaluations can be drawn upon to assess the impact of such agencies. Additional evaluative information is available from several studies of juvenile diversion programs, most of which approximate YSBs in terms of goals, emphasis, process, and programs. While YSBs in virtually all cases professed to be diversion programs, some diversion programs may very slightly from the idealized forms of YSB organization. In what follows, findings which come from diversion programs per se will be identified as such, and it should be kept in mind that these might not mesh exactly with YSB organization and functioning.

YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS AND SUBSEQUENT DELINQUENCY

Above all else, youth service bureaus were proposed as an approach to delinquency prevention and control. Any question of the impact of these, as a consequence, must have as its major component an assessment of the subsequent delinquent behavior of those reached by the YSB programs. Unfortunately, the evidence available regarding the impact of YSBs on delinquency is tangled, and simple conclusions elusive.

For YSB advocates, at least some evidence is supportive. Typical is a recent study of the youth services program in Portland which, while recognizing that such assessments were murky, concluded that the available evidence suggests "...that the Youth Service Center program is reducing delinquency among clients served: (ASR, Inc., 1978: 81). In a somewhat more technical assessment where it was found that juvenile arrests in four of seven areas served by YSTs in California were lower during the period in which these were in operation, Duxbury concluded that "...the weight of the evidence is balanced on the side of delinquency prevention and diversion" (Duxbury, 1973). Drawing upon data from several California diversion projects, Palmer and Lewis (1980) find a statistically reliable reduction in recidivism among a group of diverted young persons, concluding that the delinquent behavior of clients as reduced relative to a matched comparison group. Several other investigations have drawn similar conclusions (Palmer, et al., 1979; Thornton, et al., 1973; Forward, et al., 1975 among others).

Some caution, however, is advised regarding these few findings of positive impact. First, reviews that have been conducted have tended to find flaws in the designs and data of many (see, for examples, the work of Gibbons and Blake, 1976; or Haapanen and Rudisill, 1980). Just for one example, in the Palmer and Lewis (1980) report, inspection of their findings will show a bare five percent difference in recidivism between diversion and "matched" clients (and some caution should always be maintained about such quasi-experimental procedures in juvenile justice research), and further, as the authors themselves point out, in the great majority of projects for which they have data, no pattern of difference was observed (i.e., in 8 of 11 programs). In sum, even where positive effects of diversion seem to obtain, close scrutiny of the actual data suggests care in interpretation.

Second, the few investigations which show positive effects are more than balanced by research which shows either mixed or negative effects. In their evaluation of

nine YSBs in California (based on a quasi-experimental design) Haapanen and Rudisill (1980) came to the conclusion that whatever else these might accomplish, the YSBs "...do not appear to be a viable mechanism for reducing delinquency." Similarly, in their extensive review of time series data for YSBs in Michigan, Lewis and Davidson (1977) concluded that: "Overall, the expectation that YSB jurisdictions would experience decreased crime rates following the intervention was not supported by the results..." In their assessment of several programs in Wisconsin, looking over the pattern of evidence where differences were hypothesized between participants and nonparticipants in YSB programs, Venezia and Anthony (1978) concluded that "None of the comparisons resulted in a significant difference being demonstrated."

But, the case does not stop here. Some investigations have reported actual increases in delinquency as a result of participation in youth service bureau programs. In her examination of police diversion program, Lincoln (1976) concluded that referral to such programs appears "...to aggravate rather than to deter recidivism." In one of the most methodologically sound designs for such evaluations (involving a four wave panel design of matched comparisons groups in three sites), not only did Elliott, et al. (1978) report that, in general, referral to a YSB was not related to lower reports of perceived labeling and self-report delinquency, but that experiencing service seemed to have problematic effects, regardless of where that service received. That is, service received in a YSB had a much negative impact on later perceived labeling or delinquency as did experiencing similar service in a juvenile court. Similarly, Lincoln (1977), in a study employing tight control procedures, found that while young persons who were diverted had lower rates of recidivism than was true for persons who received court petitions, at the same time their rates were higher than those who were released outright without any form of service.

What can be concluded from this confusion of findings? The general weight of the evidence should, at a very minimum, temper any enthusiasm about the effectiveness of YSBs in reducing delinquency. Further, it should be disturbing for those who advocate such programs that it is the most rigorous studies which line up on the negative side of the ledger. The general pattern should indicate that the more rigorous the study, the more negative the findings. At the very least, it can be concluded that the case for YSBs as delinquency reduction agencies is, at this time, not proven. While not yet conclusive, there certainly is at least some evidence that suggests that for some young persons, involvement in the programs may increase delinquency. Even the hint of this as a possibility should encourage program personnel to seek out evaluation of the impact of their work.

YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS AND NET-WIDENING

A further goal of diversion agencies is to reduce the total volume of cases being inserted into the juvenile justice system. It does need to be pointed out that diversion as a process is, itself, not new. Reviewing general justice systems statistics, Empey (1975) suggests that on average that roughly only one-half of the juvenile cases coming to the attention of the police nationally are referred on to the juvenile court, with the remainder being lectured, warned, advised, or in some way "diverted" out of the system. (Although this is an average and the specific percentages can vary widely between police agencies, even in contiguous communities, and over time within any single police department; see Bardon, 1967 and McEachern and Bauzer, 1967). Further, on average roughly one-half of the cases that come to the attention of the court are selected for formal processing, with the remaining half

informally counseled, admonished, placed on "informal probation" or in some other way removed, i.e., "diverted," from the justice process. In some respects, then, diversion has always played a major role in juvenile processing, even if it has not been formally recognized by that label. The diversion goal of YSBs, however, would dictate that such processes should be accelerated, resulting in a reduction of the number of young persons processed through the formal justice system, especially the juvenile court.

Unfortunately, quite the opposite may be happening. Blomberg (1978), for one, argues flatly that: "Diversion has increased rather than limited the numbers of youth receiving some form of justice related service." This goes beyond the argument the YSBs have not been effective in diverting young persons from the system (a finding reported by Lewis and Davidson, 1977, pp. 11 and 45). Instead the concern is that as a direct result of the implementation of diversion programs, more, rather than fewer, young people are processed. Data exist which support such a view. For one example, Blomberg (1977) finds that when families were unable or unwilling to cooperate with the family treatment process of the juvenile diversion agency, as a result the children were frequently referred to the juvenile court for some new disposition. He concluded that: "This resulted in accelerated court penetration of the siblings of diversions's targeted clients who would not have come to the attention of the justice system if not for diversion's family focus and accompanying net-widening" (Blomberg, 1979). This parallels this writer's experience in one youth service bureau over ten years ago, where as a direct result of an investigation into the family background of a client referred to the supposed diversion agency, YSB staff arranged not only for the direct referral of several other siblings to the Division of Youth Service for direct institutional placement for delinquent tendencies (as well as the client originally referred), but arrest of the mother and father as well for the innovatively invented charge of "moral neglect."

Approaching this net-widening issue from a somewhat different angle, Klein and Teilmann (1976) report that young persons referred to diversion programs from two large police departments in Southern California were the younger, nonserious, and nonrepeat offenders who at an earlier time would have been counseled and released. At the same time, the numbers and kinds of juveniles referred on to the juvenile court remained at about the same level. It is the suggestion of Klein and Teilmann that is such were to continue, the intent of reducing the flow of young persons into the court would be "...displaced by the provision of referral and treatment for offenders who otherwise would have simply been released" (Klein and Teilmann, 1976, p. 11). In their evaluation of a diversion program in California, Austin, Lawrence, and Krisberg (1978) found that as youth were diverted from the court, they actually became a part of the probation system, i.e. the diversion effort led to a net that was both widened and made tougher. They note that the effort to minimize penetration in the justice system "may be having its opposite effect..." (Austin, Lawrence, and Krisberg, 1978: 85). Drawing upon data from his own study of one adult diversion program and his review of many other, Austin (1980: 237) found that "...current diversion programs bear little correspondence with a theory premised on reducing criminal behavior. Instead of diversion, there has been organizational extension and expansion within the pre-trial court process."

Empey (1978: 542) comments that diversion has apparently contributed to the development of a new system of social control for children and new bureaucracy to run it, offering as support his observation that "with unbroken consistency" research findings suggest that this is the case. Cohen (1980) similarly observes that as diversion

gains momentum, existing justice system discretionary and screening powers become formalized and extended. In the resulting formalization, the reach of the system widens to include individuals who earlier would have either been ignored or diverted through previously existing means. Cohen (1980: 348) makes the further point that "...the more benign, attractive, and successful the program is defined...the more it will be used and the wider it will cast its net."

This is a most serious matter. It is not simply that these youth serving agencies are failing to meet goals of delinquency reduction or of reduction of penetration into the justice system. It would seem, if these research findings and commentaries are accurate, that the YSBs inadvertently may be serving as conduits for increased social control, and ultimately increased flow in to the justice system. Such would be far from the original intention.

YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS AND ISSUES OF DUE PROCESS

Criticism of YSBs specifically, and diversion more generally, also comes from another quarter, that concerned with the question of due process rights. This issue surfaced early in the development of the trend toward diversion. The question here, of course, hinges on the degree to which legal coercion follows the client into the YSB, and what this would mean. As Klappmuts (1972) observed: "If referral by the agency of Bureau for services or treatment in the community is backed by the threat of referral to court, then the allegedly nonpenal agency is really an adjunct of the justice system and diversion a verbal fiction." Similar concern for this question of coercion was voiced by Nejelski (1976), who cautioned that: "As a result of the increasing formalization of the juvenile court, there is a danger that diversion will become a means of expanding coercive intervention in the lives of children and families without proper concern for their rights." Consistent views have been expressed by Howlett (1973) and Mahoney (1974), among others.

Some support for the reality behind these expressions of concern is found in a mid-seventies investigation into youth service bureaus which made telephone contact with over 300 such agencies, and conducted site interviews with 27. The authors of this report (Polk and Schuchter, 1975: 92) essentially endorse such concerns, noting:

Data from our field visits suggest that diversionary referrals from court intake and courts to YSBs essentially facilitate deferred prosecution; generally are contingent upon admission of guilt without the advice of counsel; that "voluntary agreements" or consent decrees are obtained under coercive circumstances which vitiate the meaning of voluntariness; that throughout the diversionary and referral process the youth inhabits a legal limbo which increases his vulnerability to subsequent punishment for offenses previously committed, and which is a much more subtle and pernicious problem than double jeopardy.

In a similar criticism, Austin and Krisberg (1981) observe that diversion programs can be questioned for their failure to protect due process rights, especially where divertee participation is conditioned upon a formal admission of guilt. Noting that these developments indicate an increasing elaboration of rules, procedures and policies without reference to concern for determination of guilt, they conclude that, "...as such, diversion programs represent an erosion of due process and increased formalization by the state" (Austin and Krisberg, 1981: 171). Commenting that the low visibility and low accountability of these programs creates a blurring between such terms as diversion or prevention, Cohen (1979) states that often there is less room, or concern, "for such niceties" as due process or legal rights.

Austin (1980: 236), in his detailed assessment of one adult program, finds that diversion as presently conceived, seriously compromises the basic values of the due process model of justice, concluding that, "Instead of justice, there is diversion."

Drawing upon such observations, Empey (1978), expresses surprise that as yet no legal challenges have been raised against diversion, given the potential in such processes for expansion of coercion and stigma. There are some, of course, who would minimize such worries. Binder and Palmer (1979: 13) for one example, view as relatively trivial such processes as temporary detention, voluntary informal probation, and voluntary diversion, arguing that certainly these "...are not serious enough to warrant a hearing in court." Such views, however, would seem hardly consistent for an agency that is designed to provide help and advocacy for young persons. It would be tragically ironic if, as Empet notes (1978: 542), young persons who are actually charged with crimes and referred to court "...will be better protected than those who are charged with less serious crimes and diverted."

YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS: THE IRRELEVANCE OF THEORY AND EVIDENCE

To those familiar with the structure and functioning of YSBs, it may seem odd to even enter into a discussion of theory. Certainly, most such programs would hardly be viewed as "driven" or even guided by a particular coherent set of ideas. For most, instead, guidance appears to come from a loosely woven combination of common sense and varieties of remediation approaches. Yet, within the general YSB movement there was a particular concern expressed for a period of time for a specific theoretical orientation, and a review of the consequent events is instructive about the notion of diversion more generally conceived.

With the onset of the 1970s, there was launched what was intended to be a new form of national policy to cope with the then rising levels of juvenile delinquency (and the failure of other approaches to stem this rise). This "national strategy," as it was termed, was a product of the agency then known as the Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Administration (YDDPA) of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. This strategy asserted a view of delinquency that was grounded in an analysis of delinquency as a product of social structural conditions, rather than condition of personal pathology or weakness. It emphasized the role of institutions (rather than individuals) both in the generation of, and in policies to prevent and control, juvenile delinquency. In the litany of that time, what was called for was a national strategy which would focus on institutional change in order to provide "socially acceptable, responsible, and personally gratifying roles." In its more fully articulated form (Gemignani, 1972), the program called for systems changes in order to achieve four goals: (1) provide more socially acceptable and meaningful roles for youth; (2) divert youth away from the juvenile justice system into alternate programs; (3) reduce negative labeling; and (4) reduce youth-adult alienation.

What made this statement of a strategy unique was that several millions of dollars were made available to encourage its implementation. As a result, several programs evolved which purported to be models of the national strategy. All were in agencies whose general appearance was like a YSB. Some even bore that title. All, and so much for the theory, were virtually indistinguishable from any other YSB in the country.

There were a number of dimensions that were assumed to be a part of an ideal national strategy program. Above all else, however, these were to be focused on institutional change strategies to widen opportunities of young persons to experience success and meaning, and to engage institutional change practices which would reduce negative labeling. It is clear that the programs did neither.

The evaluation carried out on these programs reveals the depth of the problem. First, it was very clear that the programs, despite the commitment to institutional change, were actually devoted fundamentally to individual or person centered change. For example, in the work of Elliott, et al. (1974), detailed program descriptions are provided for several of these YDDPA programs. Reading through the tables of organization, one finds that over 90 percent of the staff of these programs are in such person-changing roles as crisis intervention counselors, social workers, drop-in center counselors, detached workers, and psychologists, among others. These are individual-centered person-changing professionals. Clearly, organizational change was not a focus of these agencies.

Second, in reviewing both the tables of organization and descriptions of service programs, it was found that virtually all programs were based on stigma. The "client" had to have a "problem" to enter into most programs and that "problem" was clearly identified in both the referral and program diagnosis components. The ultimate program collected together individuals who shared common "problems." In short, the programs were neither instruments of institutional change, nor did they avoid stigma.

Elliott (1979) had concluded, regarding these programs, that:

Project Directors were, with few exceptions, knowledgeable about the strategy, being able to specify its elements and put them together to form logical explanations for either positive or negative youth development. As a rule, however, projects' staff were not familiar with the strategy and did not have a mental picture of its place in the effort to provide youth with opportunities for positive social growth.

What accounts for this violation of the clear intent of the strategy? A number of factors might be suggested. For one, the authors of the strategy document can be faulted for their failure to provide clear and unambiguous directives regarding what did and did not fit within the perspective. As one group of evaluators observed (Krisberg, et al., 1978: 41):

Perhaps the most serious problem with the...framework is its lack of full articulation....The authors provide a grossly inadequate description of their key terminology. Merging so much theory with so little argumentation seems to defeat the original intentions....Rather than assisting participants to clarify specific action strategies, the "framework" offers little more than jargon-laden slogans. The framework actually obscures several key theoretical issues and thus contributes to further ambiguity.

A further factor which compounded this problem lies within what we might call the organizational consequences of the "grant game." In the "grant game" a given agency

has its mission to accomplish to which line staff devote themselves. Administrators on the other hand, have the task of finding funds to support this mission, and the agency. As each new governmental initiative "comes down the pike," administrators, like magical tailors, dress their programs up in garments to fit the new criteria. In the "grant game," the rule is that the programs don't change. It is the program description written on paper, designed to meet the funding criteria, which is altered. A result in relation to the "national strategy" was that there then was created a two-tiered level of conceptual and ideological orientations in these youth serving agencies. At the top were the program administrators who could speak, articulately and persuasively, the language of the strategy (and it is suspected, whatever other language required by subsequent federal initiatives). For line staff, however, it was "business as usual at the treatment stand." Empirical support for this assertion can be found in the evaluation of these programs funded by the sponsoring agency (Elliott, et al., 1974: 626-627):

In retrospect, it is clear that many of the programs funded...during this period were developed without reference to the theoretical orientation proposed by YDDPA or OYD. Older traditional treatment approaches were often "dressed-up" in grant applications to look like they conformed to the new funding guidelines. In most cases, what was actually implemented under this "new" strategy was some form of individual casework or counseling. The vast majority of referrals to these projects received some type of personal or group counseling service.

To be sure, a compounding factor was the deep, pervasive commitment of the line staff of these agencies to person-centered strategies in dealing with troublesome youth. In the words of Elliott (1979: 4):

While the orientation of the OYD National Strategy was toward changing the structure of social institutions to facilitate positive youth development (reducing negative labeling practices and increasing access to conventional social roles), the orientation of project staffs was overwhelmingly a psychological, individual treatment orientation.

Concern for the consequences of such orientations has been voiced within the person-changing professions themselves (Caplan and Nelson, 1973). In one study germane to the present focus on diversion, Ruby (1974, 1977) has contrasted the "working orientations," i.e. the underlying theoretical assumptions, of diversion staff (drawn from several youth service bureaus) with staff of conventional juvenile justice agencies (consisting of three groups; workers in: juvenile courts, juvenile correctional institutions, and juvenile parole). On one dimension there was clear disagreement between diversion staff and the justice system groups. The staff of YSBs were much more likely to see stigma and negative labeling as factors in the generation of delinquency, i.e. to support those elements of sociological theory that underpin diversion. This is not especially surprising since the themes of diversion and stigma avoidance that provide the mandate for YSBs.

At the same time, when the basic causal perspectives were examined, the YSB staff members were indistinguishable from the staff of juvenile justice agencies in terms of their fundamental commitment to person-centered factors as causes of delinquency, especially personal or family problems. Ruby (1977: 11-12) then observes:

Virtually every empirical examination or evaluation of youth service bureaus shows that, consistent with such theories, the major single program modality in nearly every bureau is some form of individual or group counseling. These diversion agencies have not become vehicles for social, economic, educational, or political change. Instead, these participate in placing the weight of any change squarely upon the group with the least power in the scene to bring about institutional change: the deviant young persons themselves. Diversion, then, is in danger of becoming one of the many devices used by this society whereby persons made vulnerable by the operation of institutional processes of race, class, sex, and age bias, are then held accountable by social control agencies for their vulnerability.

The results are unambiguous. How an agency organized to treat, control, or respond to a problem will be a function of its operating theory about that problem. Staff of YSBs maintain virtually identical theories of delinquency as do the staff of traditional agencies. If the theories are the same, then so is the practice. Old justice system theory and practices now becomes spruced up in new and different agencies, but it is essentially the same.

What is even more startling is that there now exists an enormous wealth of data about these person-centered approaches almost none of which is positive. Evaluation after evaluation piles up, each adding to the message that these individual treatment programs, at best, do not work (for a review, see Gibbons, 1981; and Romig, 1978). In fact, there is some evidence of potential harm. McCord (1978), in her detailed follow-up of the classic Cambridge-Somerville experiment, documents clear negative impacts of a program whose services were virtually identical to those provided within the typical YSB.

If the weight of this evidence is negative, it is equally true that it is irrelevant, at least to those who work in YSBs. There is little in the posture of the YSB as a human service agency that would indicate that research findings or evaluation evidence constitute a significant factor in planning and service implementation. It is by no means certain that these agencies will respond to the currently available findings which question the effectiveness of juvenile diversion programs. The best prediction, in fact, is that YSBs will continue to exist, and will continue to provide the same services and programs, oblivious to the accumulating data.

In sum, the network of individually oriented, person-changing services characteristic of youth service bureaus does indicate the global theoretical position taken by these agencies. It provides an important statement of where such agencies fit both in terms of an ideological frame, and in terms of the pattern of human services in the community. Knowing this, it is possible to predict that in the future, as in the past, the YSB is likely to remain impervious to either contrary theoretical arguments, or negative evidence.

YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS AND HIDDEN SEXISM

One set of unintended consequences of the creation of YSBs may be found in the fact that these agencies are relatively more likely than other justice system units to involve women, and this higher level of involvement may constitute unanticipated, but nonetheless real, expansion of a form of sex biased moral control. At the onset it must be admitted that this assertion cannot be proven with the data at hand.

Table 1: Comparison of Percent of Clients Who are Female, the Percent of Clients Referred for Non-Offense Behavior and the Percent of Clients Referred from Agencies Outside the Juvenile Justice System (JJS), for Selected U.S. Youth eService Bureaus

Date Source		% Female	% Non-Offense Behavior	% Non-JJS Referrals
A. Nine California YSBs (Haapanen and Rudisill, 1980)				
YSBs:	1	56	79	88
	2	49	69	90
	3	48	55	83
	4	45	74	78
	5	39	47	56
	6	36	24	23
	7	31	23	33
	8	30	13	7
	9	30	1	3
B. Six King County YSBs (Kurfiss, et al., 1974)				
YSBs:	1	52	56	65
	2	40	28	40
	3	38	40	43
	4	37	33	59
	5	30	31	49
	6	29	70	41
C. Five Portland YSBs (averaged): (City of Portland, 1980)				
		40	50	44
D. Six Wisconsin YSBs (averaged): (Venezia and Anthony, 1978)				
		48	59	79
E. Twenty-eight Illinois YSBs (averaged): (Marzolf, 1978)				
		45	61	66

The argument is in large part conjectural, the available evidence not well suited for definitive tests of key propositions. Nonetheless, when the web of logic and evidence is considered, it would appear that the case, if not proven, is at least worth serious consideration.

The starting point for the argument is the sex distribution of YSB referrals. As background, the available arrest and court referral statistics for the U.S. indicate that in terms of police arrests, the typical annual proportion accounted for by females is between 15 and 20 percent, while the comparable proportion of girls at the court referral stage is close to 25 percent (Empey, 1978). While no single statistic accurately reflects the proportion of referrals to YSBs that are accounted for by females, the evidence indicates that it can vary from slightly under 30 percent to as high as 60 percent. In their recent evaluation of nine YSBs in California, in four of the YSBs girls accounted for 45 percent or more of the referrals (up to 56 percent), while in the remaining five agencies, girls accounted for from 30 to 39 percent, with the total for all nine YSBs averaging to 40 percent (Haapanen and Rudisill, 1980) [See Table 1]. In a review of several YSBs in Wisconsin (Venezia and Anthony, 1978) the average across the agencies was somewhat higher, with 48 percent of the total referrals being made up of females. In an evaluation of Seattle YSBs, the overall average was somewhat lower (39% of total referrals being female), but again there was a range of from 29 to 52 percent of referrals being female (Kurfiss, et al., 1974). Similarly, the proportion of female referrals in such places as Portland, Oregon and Mecklenburg, N.C., runs at close to 40 percent (Human Resources Bureau, Portland, 1980, and Heasley, 1975). For 28 YSBs in Illinois, females on average made up 45 percent of all clients (Marzolf, 1978). Whatever questions that might be raised at other points of the argument, there can be little doubt that significantly more females are involved in YSBs than is the case for more traditional juvenile justice agencies.

A second point in the argument is that YSBs are aimed at the more minor kinds of misbehavior, rather than serious law violations. Certainly the specific intent of the original formulation of YSBs was to provide an alternative for the handling of status offenders in particular. In a great many YSBs, in fact, the individuals referred are not law violators even in the restricted status offense sense. In the Wisconsin case, well over half the referrals were of non-offenders (59 percent; See Table 1). In California, the proportion of individuals referred for non-offense behavior ranged from a low of 1 percent up to 79 percent, with four of nine being evaluated showing over fifty percent referrals for non-offense behavior. In Portland, the figure is just over half, while in Seattle the range is from 28 to 70 percent referrals from non-offenders. Turning this around, across all these jurisdictions, a scant minority of referrals to YSBs consist of individuals referred for an offense that could be considered a felony. Youth service bureaus, in other words, are not conduits for alternative responses to individuals who otherwise would be processed through the justice system. Instead, these have become vehicles for a widening of the pattern of social services, so that new kinds of misbehavior become grounds for social agency responses.

Unfortunately, these various evaluations and annual reports do not display a key bit of evidence necessary for the argument, namely, whether there is a differential pattern of referral for females that is offense or behavior linked. The evidence,

and argumentation, then, must be somewhat indirect. Some direct evidence to the point is found in evaluation of juvenile diversion programs in California conducted by the Youth Authority (Bohnstedt, 1975). This review of over 50 different diversion programs reported an average proportion of female referrals of 39 percent, quite close to the averages observed in other studies. Further, in this analysis Bohnstedt reports that proportionately more females are referred for "delinquent tendencies" (Which includes such behaviors as refusal to obey parents, beyond control, truancy and runaway) than is the case for males (56% vs. 48%). Approaching these figures somewhat differently, of those referred to diversion agencies for "delinquent tendencies," 57 percent were female, while females made up but 20 percent of those referred for felony offenses. In addition, from the Seattle YSBs, information is available on the number of prior offenses, which might be considered as a rough indication of the "seriousness" of the commitment to delinquency. Of those referred to the Seattle YSBs with no prior histories, 54 percent were females, while of those referred with prior histories, only 29 percent were females. These data would seem to support an argument that females are being referred to diversion programs with less problematic histories of actual delinquency involvement.

Other indirect evidence is available which speaks more to the general function of the YSBs. Two additional bits of data are contained in Table 1 which indicate the proportion of the referrals of each of the YSBs that are: (a) for non-offense behaviors, and (b) referred from non-juvenile justice system agencies. In general, the patterns indicate that the higher the proportion of referrals made up of females, the higher the proportion of non-offense and non-justice system referrals (the pattern with respect to justice system referrals is not quite as clear in the Seattle YSBs). What this suggests is that those YSBs that cast their nets widest in terms of non-delinquent problem behaviors are the ones that are the most likely to have higher levels of female referrals. Support for this finding is contained in an evaluation report of one youth service bureau in Modesto, which shows that, over time, there was a direct correspondence between the proportion of female referrals and the source of those referrals. While the actual proportion tended to fluctuate up and down, the pattern was such that, at any point, the lower the proportion of official referral sources, the higher the proportion of female clients being served (Galvin and Coventry, 1977).

At this point the argument becomes indirect and conjectural. Two main factors need to be considered: (a) what is the implication of data supportive of the notion that YSB involvement may increase delinquency, and (b) to what extent is it necessary to consider the implications of the possible effect of "net-widening"? If it is possible to argue that girls are more likely than boys to be involved in YSB programs, and if YSBs in fact both increase delinquency and widen the net of legal control agencies, then it would seem that there is a clear potential for sexist bias that ought to be considered.

What evidence supports such assertions? While indirect, the data appear to be surprisingly strong. It is clear that YSBs are more likely to involve girls. Regarding the impact of YSBs on delinquency, admittedly the evidence is mixed. Yet, there is at least some support for the argument that there are potential negative effects of YSB involvement. Key evidence here, then, can be derived from studies such as that conducted by Lincoln (1977) which reported that young persons diverted had higher rates of recidivism than those who received no service whatsoever (although, to be sure, the diverted group had lower levels of recidivism than those who received

court petitions). Also, supportive is the evidence (Elliott, et al., 1978) that receiving service in a YSB had an equally negative effect as receiving service in a formal court process in terms of self reports of stigma or later delinquency, as well as the conclusion in an earlier study by Lincoln (1976) that diversion actually aggravates rather than deters recidivism. In addition, support can be obtained from a few of the studies which seem to indicate "no difference" between comparison groups. For example, in terms of subsequent arrest rates, Haapanen and Rudisill (1980) find that while the diversion group is no different from a juvenile justice comparison group,

the rate of rearrest is higher than a "school" comparison group. That is, the finding of no difference between a group that experienced the YSB program and a group that went through the ordinary juvenile justice process actually supports the present argument, since what is hypothesized is that the diversion experience is equally negative to more traditional system processing. Thus, the common finding of "no difference" in many of the existing evaluations (e.g., Haapanen and Rudisill, 1980 or Venezia and Anthony, 1978) actually buttresses the present argument that the referral to a YSB as opposed to doing nothing may actually produce negative effects. Further, it must be remembered that relatively few of the studies show positive effects of YSB involvement, and of those that do, virtually none is able to stand the test of careful methodological scrutiny. Approaching the matter from another angle, almost none of the wealth of available evidence would permit a clear rejection of the hypothesis that YSB involvement may have negative effects for young women.

The second strand of the conjectural argument focuses on the question of net-widening. There are two different aspects of this phenomenon of relevance to the present argument. One, it has been argued that as a consequence of diversion programs, such as YSBs, the actual number of referrals into the juvenile justice system may be increased. Blomberg (1977), for example, in his analysis of one program estimated a 32 percent increase in justice system referrals as a direct result of diversion programs. Second, the findings of Klein and Teilmann (1976) indicate that it is quite possible that what is happening as a consequence of diversion is that younger, nonserious, and non-repeat offenders who earlier would not have come under program scrutiny and care, are now receiving services. Diversion programs, in other words, permit the agencies of social control to attend to problems which earlier would have been ignored. As Empey argues (1978: 542), the net effect is to create new bureaucracies and a new and wider system of social control.

If there is a new system of control emerging, the data reviewed here would suggest that it is distinctly sex biased in contrast with other legal control mechanisms. But that is only a part of the story. It would seem reasonable from the evidence that, as is true for much of the justice system processing of females, young women are more likely to be processed for misconduct than for law violations, misconduct which offends some sense of morality and concerns reinforcing appropriate sex role behavior of girls. Certainly, an argument can be made that the more an agency is concerned with non-offense and status offense behavior (which seem to represent concerns deriving more from moral than legal deviance), the more likely the agency is to be dealing with females. It may be, in fact, that what diversion represents is an attempt to expand the formal networks of social control to include a widened reach over issues of moral misconduct.

It must be granted that this argument is conjectural, and the data are lacking at key points of the argument. It has been observed, for example, that those agencies which proportion of females are also likely to serve higher proportions of younger

adolescents as well (Klein, 1979). The YSBs are actually aiming for the "cream puff" cases, in other words, and that the real bias is slanted toward the trivial cases rather than any bias for females. Further, recent writings have challenged the view of sexist bias around the status offender categories (Teilmann and Landry, 1981).

Granting these possibilities, the available data indicate that: (a) diversion programs appear to represent a widening of the net of social control, (b) this widened net draws in the non-offense and status offense behaviors that are likely to involve deviance tied to morality, and (c) as the net is widened it scoops up larger proportions of females than is true for other agencies of social control. As a consequence, at this point it would be difficult to ignore the possibility that diversion programs may represent an attempt on the part of the community to expand its control over the sex role behavior of young women.

YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS: PROSPECTS

What is the future of YSBs? There is no simple answer to such a question. In general, however, it would seem likely that the idea will survive for a good many years to come. This is not necessarily because these agencies are effective by any particular criteria. Rather, it is because these agencies respond to what seem to be gaping holes in the service patterns of most communities.

The question of funding. One of the major conditions which sets boundaries on growth or decline is funding. It is true that a great many of the YSBs that were created in the boom period of ten years ago no longer exist. It is also true, however, that in some areas the agencies are remarkably hardy. One key factor, clearly, has been the pattern of funding within which the agency functions. The original funds from the Federal government (either from LEAA or HEW) were virtually always on the basis of a short term, demonstration grant. After the original grant funds dried up, in many instances the agency disappeared as well. There are two general kinds of counter trends, however, that are worth noting.

First, in some cases planning was done well in advance to assure some solid base of funding from the hard monies of either state or local governments. In Portland, Oregon, for one example, almost from the beginning of the youth services center program a large proportion of the funding was directly from the regular human services budget as a direct, program "line item," i.e., not as demonstration, but as part of the ongoing city priorities for service. Given this commitment on the part of city government, the youth center program in Portland is actually growing at a time when other YSBs find themselves being financially strangled out of existence.

In California, a different route was taken to a similar destination. While throughout their history, YSBs in California have derived at least partial support from Federal sources, a direct advocate for these programs, and a source of supplementary funding, has been the California Youth Authority. Currently, several of these organizations are alive and healthy, deriving most of their current support from the Youth Authority. If the trend continues in its present form, these agencies would appear to have more than reasonable chances of survival through much of the next decade.

The message in these cases is, then, that YSBs will survive if they can become a fixed part of the routine pattern of human services available, either through state or local funding sources. What this means is that the agency sheds its role as an experimental or demonstration organization, and instead becomes defined as one of many essential services to be provided in the community.

Second, and closely related, the YSBs have tended to shift and alter their focus as the reality of economic survival came down upon them. Their situation is identical to that of other diversion agencies, where Austin (1980:232) observed:

The worsening economic picture for diversion programs will force them to develop new strategies for economic survival. Some diversion agencies already are assuming new criminal justice and social service functions in addition to the present business of diversion.

In general, the trend has been for the YSBs to become part of a mass of private, purchase of care agencies that state division of youth or children's services draw upon to serve all manner of dependent, neglected, and delinquent young persons. An inevitable part of this evolution will be that the YSBs will become even more tightly woven into the fabric of the care and control institutions. A positive feature of this development is that it may signal the beginning of a breakdown in reliance on vast monolithic correctional bureaucracies, with the building instead of smaller units more closely tied to neighborhood and community interests. The negative side concerns the functions that the YSBs will be able to serve. Purchase of service agreements may lead to a significant narrowing of the reach of the goal of the YSB. The need to maintain respectability with the sponsoring agency may preclude specifically such functions as youth advocacy or community development. "Whose bread you eat, his tune you sing" holds true to both persons and organizations. Requirements of accountability and case management may require that the new agency provide information over time on the "progress" of clients. The net result of such processes will be that the diversion agency might become indistinguishable from the very institutions from which it was supposed to provide an alternative.

The question of charter. Running through this question of survival for the YSBs is the issue of their charter or mandate. The juvenile court survives because of its clear mandate in the state juvenile code. The school continues to exist because of the economic and legal needs around the preparation of youth for adult roles. Other such programs maintain because these, too, find some unique charter or mandate within which they serve. In assessing the future of the YSB, a major unresolved question rests with where such a charter will come from for these agencies, and what form the mandate will take. Certainly there are gaping holes in the kinds of services that might be seen as desirable for young persons. Avoiding for the moment the important question of what should be done (or if the YSBs should do it), the young person who is unemployed, who has dropped out of school, who is under age 18, will find few doors open in most communities in the United States today. When such a young person comes to the attention of a policeman who wants to find some alternative to the juvenile court, there are, in most places, few real options.

But within this gaping hole, there are many possible services to provide, many roles to play, and many different ways to shape a youth serving agency. All the evidence points to YSBs moving in the direction of intensifying their direct services, especially to individuals and families. This is, in general, what these agencies have been doing all along. These are the services that are consistent with the theoretical orientation and skills of line staff of the YSBs. These are the services which the community leaders see as valuable. What this will mean, of course, is that any weak commitment previously held to youth advocacy or youth development is likely to evaporate.

The question of stigma. One of the original pushes toward alternative agencies such as YSBs resides in the concern for avoidance of stigma for the young person. That is,

it was felt that service provided in a diversion agency would avoid the problematic labeling that allegedly follows official court processing. Over time, however, another interesting phenomenon begins to occur. The agency itself begins to assume the stigma of its clients as it becomes visibly and publicly identified through processes of referral and services.

There are two parts of this accumulation of organizational stigma worthy of note. First, at some point we may begin to see the call for diversion from diversion. Lest this seem far-fetched or fanciful, it is worth remembering that the juvenile court itself was originally devised as a mechanism for diversion, in this case diverting young persons from the adult criminal process. Second, and more pertinent to the present discussion, how the YSB manages this stigma is crucial for its future survival and organization. The juvenile court can survive a heavy dose of stigma deriving from its clients because it is legally obliged to respond to problems of youthful violations of law. The USB has no such protection.

The YSB that serves "hard core" delinquent youth ultimately may end up becoming blamed for the very problems it was created to solve. At a more practical level, to avoid problems of stigma-blame, and given the pattern of declining funds from Federal justice sources, in all probability the YSBs will beel pressured toward serving a clientele that is much less troubled. Further, there will probably be a move toward defining the services in family/welfare terms, rather than in diversion/justice terms.

The question of evaluation and assessment. Some words must be included about evaluation. This is not because of the importance of evaluation and assessment to the YSBs. Quite the contrary: it has been argued that assessment and accountability are irrelevant to staff and administrators of YSBs. The basis of nearly every YSB program is direct service built around counseling in one form or other. The evidence regarding the effectiveness of these programs is overwhelmingly negative (for a review, see Gibbons, 1981, and Jensen and Rojek, 1980). Most YSBs continue to speak to the importance of diversion, despite the large amounts of data accumulating suggesting that these programs, in common with other forms of correctional programs, simply don't work. Little concern is shown for the growing evidence regarding the potential dangers of net-widening. Probably the best that can be said about this ignorance is that YSB personnel are no different than any other human service personnel. YSBs, after all, did not invent counseling, treatment, or therapy. The consequences are enormous. For one, dangerous and harmful programs may be proliferating in an ever expanding network of coercive control. For another, there is often no system of accountability by which more successful modes of response to youth problems might develop. Competing paradigms of policy have little chance of either hearing or trial.

THE QUESTION OF THE FUTURE

It would seem quite likely that the YSB is a relatively hardy invention, capable of surviving in modified form for many more years into the future. The overwhelming problems of youthful unemployment caused by fundamental rearrangement of the work force, the rapid deterioration of our educational institutions, the vast problems of youthful dependency, all can be expected to continue and to generate masses of what come to be defined as "troubled" youth. Yet, young people are acknowledged to be an important resource. There is widespread concern for doing something to help "troubled

children." Obviously, many of the perceived problems are not problems of delinquency, and many problems that have come to be defined as delinquency are now seen as requiring some other definition.

It is into this vacuum that the YSB has moved. Despite the famous plea to "leave the kids alone whenever possible" (Schur, 1973), communities probably will insist on doing something, and will use organizations like YSBs as the vehicles for such efforts. Conceivably, these might do some good if these operated within a theory which addressed issues of youth development and institutional change. This is not likely, however. Instead, in their sincere attempts to help young persons, YSBs will expend resources in programs which at the very least will probably do little good, but which more problematically may eventuate in programs and policies which serve to sidene networks of social control.

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