Growing Up Behind Bars: Confinement, Youth Development, and Crime

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Abstract

Child development and juvenile justice experts agree that, in theory, youth should not be treated in the criminal justice system in the same manner as adults. Juvenile corrections facilities should provide a setting for establishing positive relationships that influence the healthy development of young offenders. However, rehabilitation does not often enter into the current juvenile justice process in the manner that theory suggests. This paper presents an exploration of the net impact of confinement on youth age 16 and younger and proposes a research plan to examine this issue.

INTRODUCTION

It was hard. It was okay. I hated being in there cause I wanted my freedom. I figure, hey, I can do it. It ain't s---. But when 'dem m----- f----- doors closed, oh, it wasn't all 'dat 'cause I cried like a m----- f-----. I was real hurt. I wanted to be out there in the world. And I seen, you know, what time it was. I was like, D---, I can't believe this s---. How the f--- I get caught up . . .

These are the words of a 14-year-old girl about her feelings of getting caught selling drugs in Detroit, Michigan. Her anguish continues as she tells of how going to the Wayne County Youth Home affected her life.

And all the time I was there, I kept on saying, Oh, God, please help me, God. Please give me one more chance, God. I swear I ain't 'gonna do it no more. I ain't 'gonna try to sell drugs. I know it's wrong. Please, God, please, God. 'Dat's all I was saying. Cause 'dat's the first person anybody holler for, when 'dey get in trouble, is God.

The staff, 'dey was f----- up. 'Dey ain't give a f---. Only thing dey do was sit there and watch us. You ask them a question, 'dey look at you like 'dey crazy or like 'dey don't know s---. The teachers was f----- up, too, 'Dey didn't give a f---, anyway. 'Dey figure like, ya'll m----- f----- criminals. I don't give a f---, you know, if you learn or not. I'm just here to get paid. And 'dat was real sad. You know, we know we was in there for wrong things. I was in there for drugs; people was in there for killing people, people was in there for running away, people was in there for all type of little dumb s---. But no matter what we was in there for, we was human beings, and we deserved to be treated like it.

Genda, now 21 years old, vividly recalls her stay in the youth home (Taylor, 1993b). This glimpse into her life depicts the horrors that many youngsters experience daily in American prisons and detention centers.

And when I used to talk to the staff and stuff, I used to go by the desk in a little office, she used to be like, don't come pass 'dat line. I'm like, what you mean, don't come pass 'dat line? Like I said, don't come pass 'dat. I said, why; you think we some kind of disease or somethin'?

And she used to be there at night, so when nighttime, you know, when you go all in your room, 'dey lock the doors and s---. So, I used to be knockin on the door at night, 'cause I used to have to use the bathroom cause I had a bad bladder infection. And I used to be bam, bam, bam, Ms. Doe, Ms. Doe. Bam, bam, bam. The b---- ain't never answered the door. And so I was like, f--- it. She didn't give a f---, so I didn't give a f---. So I pulled my m----- f----- shorts down and I p----- on the m----- f----- floor. And I know I was a criminal, and I know what I had done was wrong by sellin' drugs, but I do got my m----- f----- rights, and I know 'dat b---- is supposed to open the door and let me p---. I know 'dat m----- f----- much.

The American criminal justice system historically has treated juveniles differently from adult offenders, believing that their judgment and sense of responsibility are less developed and that their potential for rehabilitation is greater. In theory, fostering positive mental, emotional, and physical development is an integral part of the juvenile corrections process. However, contemporary circumstances have shifted the focus from children in trouble to menacing youth whom the public should fear. Young people committing serious offenses have captured headlines and media attention, fueling feelings that detention centers and correctional institutions for juveniles have become soft and that America needs to crack down on juvenile offenders. Policymakers have reacted by legislating more severe punishments for violent or habitual offenders. Many states have made it easier to sentence serious juvenile offenders as adults--in effect, scrapping efforts to rehabilitate juvenile offenders in favor of purely punitive actions. However, there is no empirical evidence that long sentences reduce youth crime (Singer & McDowall, 1987).

The Literature, tells us that juvenile incarceration has not been particularly successful in producing better young citizens (Fagan, 1990; Krisberg, 1992). The contrast between youth development theory, which defines and supports the quest of all adolescents to become healthy adults, and the realities of juvenile incarceration is extreme and disturbing. Youth development theory emphasizes growth and expansion, and symbolizes society's positive expectations. In turn, juvenile justice is too often characterized by inconsistent laws, policies, and enforcement rates, and the systematic oppression of young people.

In some communities, juvenile detention facilities are simply the anticipated first stop on a road leading directly to the"big league": adult prison (Scott, 1993). Confinement in juvenile facilities may fail to deter criminal behavior because the experience has become normalized within many youngsters' lives--forming an outlaw subculture (Taylor, 1989). Not only do these youth expect to spend time in detention, some think of it as a rite of passage (Scott, 1993). The localized belief that going away to prison is normal is a direct

consequence of certain groups being disproportionately incarcerated over the decades (Mann, 1993; Taylor, 1989, 1993a, 1993b).

This paper explores what crime rate data, juvenile corrections data, and youth development theory suggest about the cumulative impact of America's confinement of youth 16 years old and younger.

Magnitude of the Problem

Between 1984 and 1992, the arrest rates (per 100,000 inhabitants) of youth under 18 years of age increased from 1,176 to 1,306 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1994). More recently in 1993, 2,014,472 juveniles under age 18 were arrested, 77% of whom were 16 years and younger (Department of Justice, 1994; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1992). Most members of this younger group, 55%, were between the ages of 13 and 16, and were arrested for committing property crimes (84%).

In 1988, Congress directed the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to assess conditions of confinement for juveniles, to determine the extent to which detention facilities conform to recognized national and professional standards, and to recommend ways to improve conditions.[1] The study, known as *Conditions of Confinement* (1994), surveyed all 984 public and private juvenile detentions centers, reception centers, training schools, ranches, camps, and farms. (The study excluded police lockups, adult jails, and facilities that hold juveniles tried and convicted as adults; as well as halfway houses, shelters, group homes, and psychiatric and drug treatment programs.) The study was commissioned in part to help remedy the serious problem of overcrowding in juvenile facilities. In 1987, 36% of confined youth were jailed in facilities whose populations exceeded their design limits. In 1991, overcrowding had increased to 47%; one-third were living in sections with 26 or more people; one-third were sleeping in rooms too small to meet national standards (*Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1994; hereafter cited as Confinement*). Overcrowding has significant effects. For example, large dormitory facilities reported more youth-on-youth incidents when the population exceeds capacity (*Confinement*).

Admissions to juvenile facilities rose after 1984 and reached an all-time high of nearly 690,000 in 1990. The largest increase was in detention, where admissions rose from just over 400,000 in 1984 to about 570,000 in 1990 (*Confinement*). Children in Custody (CIC) census counts reveal that on any one day in 1991 about 65,000 youth were confined, 56% in medium or maximum security facilities.

In 1991, most confined youth (88%) were male. Between 1987 and 1991, the proportion of minorities among confined juveniles rose from 53 to 63%. Specifically, the proportion of African-Americans increased from 37 to 44% (*Confinement*).

Beyond these numbers, fundamental human needs are not being met in some youth centers. The OJJDP study revealed that the most alarming and prevalent problems in juvenile facilities involved living space, security, control of suicidal behavior, and health

care--four areas that directly impact positive youth development. Alarmingly, in 1991, more than 11,000 juveniles engaged in more than 17,000 incidents of suicidal behavior while confined in juvenile facilities (*Confinement*). Clearly, rehabilitation is stymied because it is difficult to address self-esteem, education, or training when individuals are lacking the basics: safe living conditions and high-quality mental and physical health services.

The Case of Wayne County

The Wayne County Youth Detention Facility, based in Detroit, Michigan, is symbolic of what plagues other urban centers. Wayne County was cited by the Justice Department for its poor treatment of juveniles in December of 1994.[2] This facility has been poorly run for the past three decades. The physical edifice was shameful. The outer grounds were dirty and unkempt. The building was in desperate need of painting, cleaning, and repair. Upon entering the front vestibule, this author was unnerved by the stench of urine. Youth were constantly being shuffled into overcrowded rooms. Staff morale was low, caused in particular by a rapid succession of executive directors and a lack of in-service training. Parents of children in the facility described mistreatment and abuse. The youth complained about poor hygiene and health services. A physician who received patients from the Wayne County Detention Facility confirmed their complaints. The doctor was especially concerned about the lax health care in the face of serious public health issues such as AIDS. What these youth encountered upon entering and endure throughout their stay at this facility was captured in Genda's profane, yet richly descriptive words.

Developmental Systems Theory

Over the past two decades, human development has increasingly come to be understood as a function of the relationship between the maturing individual and his or her changing environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Gottlieb, 1992; Lerner, 1991, 1995; Magnusson, 1988; Riegel, 1975; Sameroff, 1983; and Thelen & Smith, 1994;). This basic model is known as developmental systems theory (Ford & Lerner, 1992) because development is viewed as occurring on many levels simultaneously: biological, psychological, interpersonal, familial, societal, cultural, physical ecological, and historical.

In the field of adolescent development, developmental systems models constitute the predominant theoretical approach. However, almost no information about links between youth development and the experience of incarceration exists. This void is perplexing given that nationally the juvenile violent crime arrest rate has risen by 50% in just five years (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1994). Indeed, this author has uncovered only one paper, currently under preparation, that attempts to frame the incarceration experience within the context of developmental theory (Walters-Chapman & Walters-Chapman,[3] pending).

Accordingly, if developmental theory is to become relevant to the experiences of a broad range of adolescents, researchers must address how burgeoning rates of youth violence, arrests, and incarceration affect development. Key issues include:

- the aspects of the incarceration context that influence development, the features of development that are affected (e.g., emotional, cognitive, social, moral/ethical) and in what ways; and
- how the development of incarcerated youth compares to nonincarcerated youth.

Because most youth in detention come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, are African-American or Hispanic, and grew up in troubled homes, it is necessary to consider how these contextual variables influence their development, apart from the experience of incarceration. However, very little is known about the typical developmental pathways of these youth. Developmental theory is largely based on studies of white, middle-class, male, nonincarcerated youth. The lack of knowledge in this area is especially problematic for African-American adolescent males, who experience the greatest likelihood of being involved in the juvenile justice system. Without adequate norms, it is impossible to gauge the effects of incarceration on development. How can we know if incarceration slows down, arrests, maintains, or promotes particular developments if we do not have baseline and normative data against which to compare the effects of incarceration? It is equally impossible to understand how the incarceration experience may remediate behavioral or developmental problems, prevent the burgeoning of such problems, or promote the future positive development of youth. Absent information on disadvantaged youth, we must reflect on those developmental issues which are thought to apply to all adolescents in American society.

Developmental Tasks of Adolescents and the Unique Struggles of Poor and Minority Youth

There are at least seven developmental tasks American adolescents confront (See Table 1): establishing identity, cultivating symbiotic relationships, defining physical attractiveness, investing in a value system, obtaining an education, separating from family and achieving independence, and obtaining and maintaining gainful employment (Lerner, 1993). Because these are each culturally loaded issues, youth are confronted with many obstacles, or risks, in their attempts to achieve them.

For instance, Dryfoos (1990) notes that 50% of the 28 million American youth between the ages of 10 and 17 engage in two or more of the following four categories of high-risk behaviors: drug and alcohol use, unsafe sex, school failure and dropout, and delinquency and crime. Moreover, 10% of American youth in this age range engage in all four of these types of risk. Dryfoos notes, then, that engaging in one type of risky behavior increases the likelihood of becoming involved in another type of risky behavior. And, when multiple types of risk are involved, the magnitude of intervention needed to promote positive development is substantially increased (Lerner, 1984).

Accordingly, the accumulation of risk factors-- especially when they are combined with poverty (Huston, 1991; Schorr, 1988)--makes engagement in criminal activity and confinement more likely. In turn, the presence of multiple risks makes any positive effects of detention more difficult to produce.

For those of a low socioeconomic status and for minorities, establishing an identity within the mainstream culture can mean abandoning ties to their subculture. Unfortunately, within particular segments of the Black community, for example, some pursuits of identity have been labeled nonblack. These include acknowledging any respect for authority, pursuing an education, or holding a minimum wage job in hopes of climbing the ladder. In such communities, youth face rejection from kin and peers if they choose these pursuits. If they persevere in spite of this rejection, they may be haunted by the feeling of having betrayed their race.[4]

Table 1

Seven developmental tasks of adolescenceand possible measures of these pursuits

Task	**Measure and Source**
1. Identity	A. Grotevant and Adams (1984) Ego Identity Scale B. Marcia (1966) Ego Identity Status Interview
2. Relationships	A. Harter (1983) Social Network Scale B. J.V. Lerner (1988) Adolescent Life Satisfaction Survey
3. Physical Attractiveness and Health	A. Lerner and Lerner (1977) Physical Attractiveness Rating Scale B. Lerner, Padin, and Spriro (1981) Physical Attractiveness and Physical Effectiveness Self-Rating Scales C. Medical Exam and Tanner Stage Ratings D. Health Records
4. Value Systems	A. Allport, Vernon, and Lindzey (1960) Study of Values Scale B. Grotevant and Cooper (1981) Interview
5. Education	A. Grade point average (school records) B. Standardized scores (e.g., Stanford Achievement Test, California Achievement Test) C. Attendance

6. Familial Separation & Individuation	A. Grotevant and Cooper (1981) Interview
7. Employment	A. Grotevant and Cooper (1981) Interview

In this case, the conflict between positive development--as defined by mainstream developmental theory--and environmental demands becomes obvious. The situation is complicated because disadvantaged or minority communities lack quality resources. The schools are often inadequate and inaccessible; there are few legitimate employment opportunities, and those that are available offer limited incentives or potential for growth.

Detention Studies

There is limited evidence that corrections programs employing developmental approaches produce positive results. For example, Vogel and Brown (1982) conclude that correctional programs oriented toward increasing the self-esteem of youth may be more successful than programs that do not address this issue. However, Fischer and Bersani (1979) found that for some adolescents, particularly youth lacking conventional social ties, self-esteem remains high despite acts of delinquency. Martin and Osgood's research (1987) supports increasing the autonomy of incarcerated youth. Their study found that autonomy led to increased prosocial values and indirectly enhanced acceptance of treatment goals. Leschied, Jaff, and Stone (1985) found that more mature youth tend to perform optimally in less structured environments, while less mature individuals perform extremely well in both low and high structured environments.

Having briefly summarized developmental systems theory and reviewed some current research findings, I will now look at the contextual variables within the detention environment that most directly affect the developmental tasks of American adolescents.

Contextual Variables of the Detention Center

Staff attitudes. Juvenile corrections staff often respond to the conditions of their work with hopelessness and resentment, and these negative attitudes are too frequently expressed through the inhumane and inconsistent treatment of the youth under their care. Consequently, many confined youth lose all respect for authority figures. This particular effect of the detention center environment may negatively impact the adolescent's education, employability, identity, physical attractiveness, relationships, and value systems.

For example, educational and employment settings require that the individual respect those in positions of authority. If past abuse has left an individual resentful of authority, it will be difficult for him or her to excel in these arenas. Problems with authority figures may result in suspension or expulsion from school. Later in life, the individual may face

the same difficulty at work, resulting in transient employment and/or long periods of unemployment.

In *The New Jack Roller* (Taylor, 1992), Tukkie Jones (33 years old), a warlord in a territorial gang, Ray (p. 31), and Pepper (p. 36), talk about their experiences as former inmates in the state prisons and their initial encounters with the juvenile justice system.

Tukkie, speaking slowly while drinking a Pepsi in an auto repair shop on the east side of Detroit:

I got put out of school so much that I knew they just wanted me out, me and Ray met outside the school, Mr. Moreland expelled us for being with 'ole Pepper. We was just some fellas smoking in the bathroom. Old man Moreland said we was bums, didn't belong in school. He rode my a-- all the time. The teachers used to put me out of class for not knowing the answer, man the teachers all hated us, or they was scared of us. Then they send us to the Youth Home for hanging out after they had expelled us. Yeah, the first place you learn about jails is the old Youth Home, next stop is the big house . . . You learn real fast that the man is watching you and got Black tom-a-- n------ to ride your a-- (Taylor, 1992).

Rettig, in his 1980 article, "Considering the Use and Usefulness of Juvenile Detention: Operationalizing Social Theory," found that many practitioners resort to detention as a matter of convenience rather than as an attempt to meet the needs of the youth involved. Rettig states that confinement is not the most viable means of correction for many who are currently detained in juvenile centers, but there is a lack of selectivity in determining which youth would benefit from detention and which would respond better to alternative treatment. He further explains that detaining a youth in an attempt to punish transgression ignores Lemert's warning that punished youth will often respond with continued deviance. Furthermore, Carbone and Lynch (1983) found that the inconsistent behavior of staff when enforcing detention center rules increased undesirable behavior in the youth and actually reduced their compliance rate. Monster (Kody Scott, a Los Angeles gang leader), tells in *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member* how he went deeper into gang culture after being punished in the juvenile system in California. A mentality of retaliation against corrupt or abusive authority is evident in *Monster* and *The Diary of a Gangster Girl* (Scott, 1993; Taylor, 1993b).

In "Life in a Children's Detention Center: Strategies of Survival," Fisher (1972) poignantly demonstrates how easy it is for staff to abuse their authority. Youth can be isolated in lockdown for up to eight hours without anyone knowing, except other staff on the shift. Employees frequently fail to file the legally mandated reports detailing the reasons for putting a youth in isolation. Fisher determined that staff "often use children to discharge complex, unacknowledged impulses." For instance, she found counselors who stood and observed but failed to intervene while fighting or sexual exploitation was occurring. Fisher also points to several transgressions of privacy which include counselors encouraging explicitly sexual conversations and occasionally participating in

sexual activity with the youth in detention. This corruption encourages youth to resent and manipulate authority figures.

Interviews with a young female gang member who had been incarcerated revealed her pessimistic attitude toward authority figures:

They fake, all those lying a-- m---- f----- in there, they talk s--- about rules and they always breaking rules. They talk 'bout do this and half of them is sleeping on the job at night, creeping off getting with each other, getting high, the whole place is out cold. And if you say something, they will beat you down, it's messed up, real bad. When a fella want to grind you, you know . . . if they nice it's 'cuz they up to some s---. Sometimes they'll set you up for the s---, let some older n------ beat you down. They be cursing us out, then say we can't curse or they'll write us up. They treat us like we some dogs, it's messed up in this place, sometimes they wan't even give us toilet paper when you asked. (Mitchell & Taylor, 1994)

Staff morale does not have to be negative and abusive. Bazemore, Dicker, and Nyhan (1994) found that training to enhance staff-client relations had positive effects on employee attitudes and resulted in an overall reduction in problem situations, such as staff-client conflict, fighting among clients, use of isolation, and abuse reports against staff. Unfortunately, some youth center staff complain that they receive little or no training at all (Jones & Krisberg, 1994).

Detained youth have a market value. They provide case workers, probation officers, detention staff, and others with employment. When youth realize that they are being used as a commodity, they begin to question both their value as human beings and the legitimacy of a mainstream culture that allows and encourages employees to treat individuals in this way. Decreased self-value, distrust of society's structure, and feelings of helplessness prevail. Tuckkie explained why many youth feel that the system takes advantage of them in their incarceration:

Crime is good for America, without it whole lots of folks wouldn't have jobs . . . I realized when I was 14 in the Youth Home that I was just an excuse for the White man to get paid. That's what one of those long-hair White boy lawyers told me. He said America depended on me to keep prison guards, social workers, and all the po-lice working. (Taylor, 1992)

Impact on the family unit. It is most commonly a male youth from a troubled home who lands in a juvenile detention facility, and often this person is the primary breadwinner for his family. Therefore, the economic strain and psychological duress family members experience are comparable to those felt when an adult father or husband is incarcerated. In *The Impact of Incarceration on African American Families: Implications for Practice,* King (1993) describes the role of single African-American men in their communities and families as multifaceted, and says the results of incarceration are far-reaching. Eugene, a skilled car thief, spoke of his family responsibility:

It's tight out here, if you're in the joint you can't help your people. If I get those airbags it's change in the bank, my family is happy, and everything is straight. Me and Tukkie work out some straight paper for those JLB radios, now my momma is happy until I got busted for some stupid s---, she so mad she don't even come and see me. (Taylor, 1992)

Jorgensen, Hernandez, and Warren (1986) stress the need to address issues within families of incarcerated individuals. Their research can be extended to families who have lost a youth due to juvenile detention.

Effects of labeling. Once a youth has been categorized as a delinquent, often a self-fulfilling prophecy is set in motion. Unable to break free of the stigma, he may begin to structure his identity around this label. The effect is frequently future criminal behavior, diminished employment and educational opportunities, and the receipt of a new label--one of society's "undesirables." Tukkie talks of his early days in the Flynn's and how he became closer to his gang:

No doubt about it, the school said I was bad, the po-lice knew I was bad, so I was bad, I had to be, everybody told me so . . . at the Youth Home you were reminded that you was bad and they made sure they treated you real bad everyday in there. (Taylor, 1992)

Tuckkie considered his experience early in the Youth Home as part of the die in the cast of his life:

I was always good with cars, loved fixing and messing with 'em. I was alright in math. But, in school and at the Youth Home they always told me I couldn't learn anything, said I was stupid, you know they called it some Special Ed thing. Anyway I just didn't say s---, why talk? Nobody was paying me attention or saying s--- to me, they was telling me I was in Special Ed, that meant I was stupid . . . (Taylor, 1992)

Once labeled a juvenile delinquent, an individual is more likely to view his or her life chances negatively. Thomas (1977) found that those who view their future negatively and feel powerless tend to have a high level of criminal identification. Several ethnographic studies support these findings. For instance, Taylor found in female and male juveniles a strong connection between youth feelings of powerlessness and increased activity in outlaw culture (Taylor, 1989, 1993a, 1993b).

Poor education programs. Simply put, the educational programming in detention facilities often fails, causing youth to experience lasting setbacks. They may lose interest in finishing school and are sometimes incorrectly labeled learning disabled. These realities have profound consequences for social interaction, employment opportunities, and life chances in general. Tukkie, again:

Teachers in there didn't even try to teach me anything. We just sat in the classroom and played around or the teacher would be p------ off and make us sit there without talking. (Taylor, 1992)

Juvenile detention facilities should be a place where troubled youth gain education; however, Genda protested about her schooling inside the Wayne County Detention Facility:

School, they didn't teach us nothing, the teachers didn't give a d---. You didn't learn s---, my girl went to the place ran by Vista Marie, now their teachers were real, they cared. The Youth Home teachers are like everything else in there, totally f----- . . . (Taylor, 1992)

There is a strong inverse relationship between education and criminality. Sixty-eight percent of those arrested in 1989 were functionally illiterate (McGeady, 1991). In fact, there is a complex web of interaction where education is concerned. Also functionally illiterate are 85% of unmarried mothers, 79% of those on welfare, and 72% of those without a job (McGeady, 1991). Since a reciprocal relationship exists between education and poverty, uneducated youth are more likely to be poor. Therefore, their children will be less likely to receive adequate schooling--perpetuating the cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and crime. The intergenerational attitude toward education is a key to breaking this vicious cycle. In *The New Jack Roller*, Tukkie advocates positive changes for his children's education:

I know how no schooling means instant death in this world. I don't want my kids in the junior prison (Youth Home) because that's the first big step in becoming a lifetime loser, people in the courts and everywhere think you're a convict right then and it's all over . . . and you're a teenager, it's all over. (Taylor, 1992)

Karen Johnson Pittman (1991) provided a framework for an assessment of youth development in her testimony to the House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families in September 1991. She underscored the need to educate all youth, especially those in marginalized high-risk areas, and showed that investment in youth as human capital instead of the punitive Draconian thinking, with a negative return on the investment, is more sensible (Pittman & Fleming, 1991).

In *An Effective Bridge Between the Correctional Institution and the Community* (1980), Wolford asserts that receiving solid educational experiences while institutionalized enhances an individual's opportunities on the outside. However, for those youth who have been incarcerated in inadequate facilities, the future is bleak and hopeless (McCall, 1994).

Some practitioners in the juvenile corrections field have advocated for building educational programs informed by developmental concepts. In "Content and Process of Detention Education," Roush (1983) provides a potentially successful framework for education programs in detention centers. In order to be effective, programming must be implemented by educators trained to handle special populations. Furthermore, it is essential that the teachers and detention staff utilize a team approach. Roush contends that cooperative relationships between the two types of staff lead to more effective programming for the youth and increased job satisfaction for the staff.

Physical and emotional detachment. When a youth becomes incarcerated, she becomes physically detached from her family and others in her social environment. This physical separation can lead to emotional detachment and decreased societal, familial, and peer ties. This disinvestment in others may lead to decreased social skills and, eventually, isolation, loneliness, and depression (Rettig, 1980).

In her biography quoted earlier, Genda speaks of her depression while incarcerated in the youth home early in her adolescence. She passed on her fears to her sisters, who had become delinquents with their own gang activities. Saddein, Genda's younger sister, talked about her stay in the state's training school for females in *SBC: A Territorial Female Youth Gang* (Mitchell & Taylor, 1994):

I was mad all the time, and sad as h---. I hated everybody, first I was taken away from my younger sister. Me and her was the leaders of our crew, then my momma couldn't see me up at this place. Then this fat White B---- was talking smack about I was sexually abused that's why I was so violent. Right! This fat b---- don't know s---, she's guessing what's wrong. I am violent 'cuz I am living in a place where everybody is trying to kick my a--.

These feelings, as well as those expressed by other young girls in *SBC*, support Thomas (1977), who found that the deprivation model of punishment often leads to high levels of alienation, powerlessness, and hopelessness. Genda commented on a visit to see her sisters in their respective detention facilities:

It's the same old s---, they treat 'em like prison. It's just little prison. When they get out they gonna go right back to f------ up . . . They won't tell you it's scary in there, or that you get so depressed. They'll just say it's okay or try and act out how hard they is . . . but trust me, it's depressing as hell, I hated it. Nobody should have to go to that place. (Mitchell & Taylor, 1994)

Rettig (1980) contends that, "The dynamics of separation can be traumatic to anyone in the client system . . . For the youngster himself, separation creates untold anxiety and uncertainty. It can cause residual feelings of rejection that will, in turn, contribute to his future behavioral pattern."

Socialization within a criminal subculture. The environment within a juvenile facility may actually foster criminality. Juveniles exchange information, criminal skills, and the values and beliefs of a criminal subculture. This point is reinforced in the autobiography of Los Angeles gang member Monster Kody Scott (1993). Scott describes how he adapted to juvenile incarceration in its different forms and mastered the adult system later. Scott's story parallels Genda's and Tukkie's. Tukkie confirmed this fact in his view of youth detention:

The Youth Home is where you learn the basics, it's like basic training before you become a full-time gangster. They'll teach you in the Home, plenty of s--- to make you street smart, make you hard . . . yeah that's the first place to learn 'bout what the rest of your life is gonna be, it ain't so bad when you learning something, better than sitting in the

classroom and having some teacher just staring at you, thinking you ain't s---. Your boys teach you how to survive in there, and then you get out and try to survive out there. Either way you gonna catch h---. (Taylor, 1992)

Hypotheses About the Impact of Incarceration on Youth Development

Although the extent to which a detention facility's program design explicitly incorporates developmental concepts varies from place to place, there is little evidence that the functioning of most programs reflects these concepts. In other words, overall, there seems to be a gap between theory and practice. This gap raises questions about the aggregate impact of detention on youth development. That is, one may wonder if detention itself actually increases recidivism or other indices of negative youth development, such as poor school achievement or dropout rates, at levels beyond those associated with community-based or alternative sentencing programs. There are, in fact, data indicating that alternative forms of treatment are more likely to produce positive developmental outcomes (Barton & Butts, 1988; Greenwood & Turner, 1987; Jones & Krisberg, 1994; Krisberg, Schwartz, & Fishman, 1987, 1989; and Murray & Cox, 1979). However, data from delinquency treatment studies are mixed. Mark Lipsey (1991) pinpoints the complexity of juvenile correction research:

While it was demonstrated that the grand mean of those effects is positive, indicating at least modest overall treatment effects, the primary focus of this phase of the investigation has been upon the variability of effects . . . While not so close as to justify the 'nothing works' rhetoric of the 1970s, convincing positive effects would be difficult to discern in any sample from this literature . . . Moreover, the wide variability in effect found in this literature means that different reviews that sampled different portions of it could come, quite honestly, to rather different conclusions. (Lipsey, 1991)

It is my hypothesis that, despite their stated commitment, the structure and function of traditional detention programs may actually preclude positive growth experiences. I believe that one would find a considerable gap between theory and practice if one evaluated:

- the theoretical vision of youth development found in a range of detention programs;

- the specific outcomes for youth development expected to be derived from this vision;

- the indicators that program personnel *and* youth believed would mark the successful development of these outcomes;

- the descriptions, made by program personnel and youth, of the day-to-day activities in detention facilities; and

- the degree to which personnel-defined and youth-defined indicators are being developed among detained youth.

To be certain, the size of this gap would vary from site to site.

I also believe that, if asked, personnel and youth could generate reasons for the difference between theory and practice. Based on existing data about the nature of confinement, especially in large urban settings, I would expect staff and youth to focus on overcrowding; lack of effective education; health screening and health care; financial pressures; and the diversity of the racial, ethnic, cultural, and behavioral backgrounds of detained youth. Moreover, I would expect that if asked how they envision changing their program's activities to narrow the gap, staff would raise ideas consistent with concepts in the applied youth development literature (Fisher & Lerner, 1994).

For instance, personnel might talk about lowering staff-client ratios to increase individualized attention to the specific problems and developmental potential of each youth (e.g., see Dryfoos, 1990). And, they would probably focus on developing more diverse and culturally sensitive programming (Dryfoos, 1990; Schorr, 1988). Moreover, I would expect that better detention programs would be created if one explored:

- the human assets that personnel and youth believed could be brought to bear to align theory and practice;

- the programmatic actions they would introduce to use these assets;

- the indicators they would assess to ascertain if their actions are succeeding; and

- the steps they would take to monitor and correct their actions.

Research Plan

The first step in the research plan is to use existing evaluation research to answer the question: What programs have worked in promoting positive youth development? This researcher will use these reports (e.g., Dryfoos, 1990; Hamburg, 1992; Schorr, 1988) to understand the features of past or current programs that most closely parallel accepted best practice in youth development. The researcher will try to identify programs that promote one or more of the five qualities that the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989, pp. 15-17) suggests characterize a youth who has developed well through the middle school years. Specifically, such an individual would be: intellectually reflective, en route to a lifetime of meaningful work, a good citizen, caring and ethical, and healthy.

Youth programs, especially community-based ones, can make several potential contributions to positive youth development. As noted by the Carnegie Corporation report (1992), as well as Lerner (1995), and Villarruel and Lerner (1994), these contributions include:

- providing opportunities for youth to engage in positive social relationships with peers and adults;

- teaching youth important life skills;

- offering youth opportunities to make contributions to their communities;

- providing youth with a sense of being part of a positive group experience; and

- facilitating the sense of self-competence among youth.

Following this review, I will collect new data using a participatory approach (Lerner, Ostrom, & Freel, in press; Ostrom, Lerner, & Freel, 1995; Weiss & Greene, 1992).

A participatory-normative approach to evaluation. The arguments for a participatory-normative approach to evaluation have been championed by numerous evaluators (MacDonald, 1994; Miller, 1993; Weiss, 1987a, 1987b; Weiss & Greene, 1992; Weiss & Hite, 1986; Weiss & Jacobs, 1988). Such an approach:

- builds on the values and meaning system of the youth, families, and other stakeholder groups in the community;

- enlists members of the community as active research partners; and

- enhances the capacity of the community to identify, organize, and utilize their assets to attain goals they value (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1993).

The development-in-context evaluation (DICE) model. Promoting positive development at the individual and community levels through the use of participatory evaluation is commonly referred to as the development-in-context evaluation (DICE) model (Lerner, et. al., in press; Ostrom, et. al., 1995). Evaluators following the DICE model work with community members to identify problems or issues and plan the evaluation process; they also collaborate with the community in utilizing the information derived from the evaluation. Evaluations of this kind create a feedback loop with the community throughout the research process.

In the proposed research, I will focus on a set of existing detention programs--ones representing a range of commitments to connecting youth development theory to practice--and I will use the DICE approach to test the hypotheses discussed previously. Accordingly, I will ask program personnel and youth to identify desired outcomes and indicators of these outcomes.

I will work with the stakeholders in each program to review the seven domains of adolescent development and the qualities of positive youth development discussed above, and review the features of programs that are associated with positive youth outcomes. Finally, I will discuss the range of quantitative indicators (e.g., achievement test scores)

and qualitative indicators (e.g., identity status) that are available. However, both these indicators *and* the indicators of successful program revisions will be generated through collaboration involving the stakeholders and me.

The evaluation will involve collecting primary data through interviews, focus groups, and observations of youth and their caretakers, and examining secondary data collected by program and probation staff. The material will be used to assess the youths' achievement in the seven developmental issues pertinent to adolescence (measured prior to and after the program). Table 1 presents a list of these seven developmental issues and examples of measures that may be used to provide scores. Additionally, the secondary data will be broadly compared to corresponding information from NIJ/OJJDP and Uniform Crime Reports. These data will be used to test the hypothesis that a juvenile corrections program that incorporates best practice principles of youth development will enhance the positive development of confined youth, as compared to what occurs among youth confined in typical detention settings.

In sum, a participatory approach to evaluation and program enhancement will be used to identify:

- the role of youth development theory in the vision of existing programs;
- the role of youth development theory in program practice;
- gaps between theory and practice;
- the vision among program personnel and detained youth for narrowing the gap;
- plans of action for narrowing the gap and the efficacy of these plans; and
- the youth outcomes associated with these program changes.

Possible Research Limitations

Unfortunately, few juvenile justice agencies routinely collect any data on outcomes. And, generally, there is very little information on recidivism. Therefore, the research sites need to be carefully chosen. Additionally, this research design requires intensive collaboration with stakeholders at every stage and a multiyear commitment to study, implement, and evaluate changes in at least three sites.

FOOTNOTES

[1]The study measured twelve areas: (1) living space; (2) health care; (3) food, clothing, and hygiene; (4) living accommodations; (5) security; (6) controlling suicidal behavior;

(7) inspections and emergency preparedness; (8) education; (9) recreation; (10) treatment services; (11) access to community; and (12) limits on staff discretion.

[2]Los Angeles County; Essex County, New Jersey; and youth detention centers in Denver and San Francisco are other serious violators.

[3]In this paper, the authors examine attachment and identity among youth confined in boot camps.

[4]Much confusion has resulted from confounding Black with low socioeconomic status (SES). Being Black and of low SES does have profound implications for development, as Ogbu (1985) states. If we hold social and economic status constant, many of the observed differences across ethnic groups seem to vanish. However, Spencer and Dornbush (1990) contend that even if we hold SES constant, race does have a unique impact on youth development.

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