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YOUTH, CRIME AND JUSTICE

Research in juvenile delinquency

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

1. The Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in its resolution 4 recommended action with regard to research and the development of standards in the field of juvenile justice. As regards research, in particular, the Congress recognized that cross-cultural research would significantly advance world-wide understanding of the causes and prevention of juvenile delinquency and recommended that the Secretary-General should assign to one of the United Nations crime prevention institutes "the responsibility for conducting research on the causes of delinquency and programmes for its prevention". The Congress also recommended that the Secretary-General should report to the Seventh Congress on the progress achieved. 1/

2. In pursuance of this recommendation, the Secretary-General assigned to the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute the task of conducting research and preparing a progress report thereon, in collaboration with the United Nations regional institutes for the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders.

3. A preliminary report by the institutes was made available informally to the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control at its eighth session in March 1984 during its discussions of the draft standard minimum rules for the administration of juvenile justice (E/AC.57/1984/2), which had been prepared by the Secretariat. The Committee welcomed the research carried out in the field of juvenile delinquency by the institutes. The view was expressed that a technical report on research in juvenile delinquency by the United Nations institutes could consitute the basis for a research workshop on juvenile crime and justice, which would be organized during the Congress.

4. On the recommendation of the Committee, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1984/45 on the continuation of preparations for the Seventh Congress, in which it approved the documentation proposed for consideration at the Congress, including the present report. The Secretary-General was requested, in the organization of the Congress, to include among other activities, the organization of the research workshop on juvenile crime and justice, with the joint co-operation of the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute, the United Nations regional institutes and competent national and international research institutions. The United Nations Social Defence Research Institute was entrusted with the responsibility of organizing the workshop in close collaboration with the United Nations Secretariat.

5. A number of steps were taken by the institutes to obtain the necessary expert and regional contributions to the preliminary report that had been informally submitted to the Committee at its eighth session. The report was transmitted by the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute and the Helsinki Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations, for substantive comments and observations to members of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control and to selected government-appointed national correspondents with the Secretariat in the field of crime prevention and control, as well as to selected scientific organizations throughout the world. The substantive input received in response to this inquiry is reflected in the present report.

6. The institutes' report was finalized by an ad hoc working group - composed of a representative of the United Nations Secretariat and representatives of the network of the United Nations institutes - which was convened from 16 to 20 September 1984 at the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute to

assist in the substantive preparation of a meeting of a scientific panel for the preparation of the research workshop. The report was considered and endorsed by the scientific panel, which subsequently met at the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute from 21 to 22 September 1984 to provide guidance to the institutes in the organization and formulation of the programme for the research workshop.

7. The present report has been prepared by the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute and the Helsinki Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations, in co-operation with the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute and the United Nations Latin American Institute. It reviews the progress achieved and focuses on research difficulties with respect to specific issues relating to delinquency, which were identified for particular attention by the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control at its seventh session (E/CN.5/1983/2), and which were set out under topic IV of the discussion guide for the regional and interregional preparatory meetings for the Seventh Congress (A/CONF.121/PM.1): (a) the movement of the young without employment opportunities or prospects from rural to urban areas; (b) the interrelationship between urbanization, drug abuse and youth crime; (c) the use of free or leisure time and the impact of the mass media; and (d) special problems of children and youth belonging to minorities. These issues were discussed at the regional preparatory meetings and were examined in depth at the Interregional Meeting of Experts on Youth, Crime and Justice, held at Beijing from 14 to 18 May 1984 (see A/CONF.121/RPM.1-5 and A/CONF.121/IPM/1 respectively).

I. OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SOCIAL DEFENCE
RESEARCH INSTITUTE AND THE UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL INSTITUTES FOR THE
PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS

8. Within the framework of United Nations activities in the field of crime
prevention and criminal justice, the United Nations Social Defence Research
Institute, the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute, the United Nations
Latin American Institute and the Helsinki Institute for Crime Prevention and
Control, affiliated with the United Nations, have played an important role in
the conduct of research, the training of crime prevention and criminal justice
personnel, the provision of technical assistance and the promotion of infor-
mation exchange activities (E/AC.57/1984/17).

9. The work of the institutes, which is carried out in close collaboration
with the United Nations Secretariat, has led to improvements in the planning,
implementation and evaluation of humane criminal policies within the framework
of the policies of the United Nations.

10. The following is an overview of the role of the institutes in the field
of crime prevention and criminal justice in general and, in particular, in the
field of delinquency prevention, since the Sixth United Nations Congress, held
in 1980.

A. The United Nations Social Defence Research Institute

11. Since its establishment as an interregional institute in 1968, the United
Nations Social Defence Research Institute has focused on research from a
global·perspective, with special emphasis on developing countries, but also
extending to research on limited geographical areas, especially at the request
of Governments. About 30 research projects have been carried out by the
Institute, many of which have been published and widely disseminated in
international, political and scientific communities. Its publications No.12,
entitled Juvenile Justice: An International Survey, Country Reports, Related
Materials and Suggestions for Future Research (1976) and No.21, entitled
Combating Drug Abuse and Related Crime (1984), are of direct relevance to the
topic of this report and will be referred to later.

12. Specifically, in pursuance of resolution 4 of the Sixth Congress, the
institute has conducted research on juvenile social maladjustment and human
rights in the context of urban development. In addition to the substantive
value of the research, there are three points worth noting. The first is the
collaboration with the United Nations Latin American Institute, as an active
partner in supervising the Latin American part of the project, which helped to
strengthen the relationship between the two institutes. The second is the use
and involvement of local personnel throughout the project, which offered the
opportunity of training ·in research methodology. The third is the discussion
of the research findings with decision-makers in the participating countries,
which proved to be fruitful as it not only drew attention to the problems of
youth but also stimulated and generated definite positive action.

B. The United Nations Asia and Far East Institute
for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders

13. The first United Nations regional institute concerned with the prevention
of crime and the treatment of offenders was the United Nations Asia and Far
East Institute, founded at Tokyo, in 1961. By March 1984, 65 international

seminars and training courses had been held by the Institute, bringing together researchers and practitioners from the Asian countries and the Pacific region and simultaneously fostering international co-operation.

14. Several seminars, training courses and workshops were held on the subject of youth crime. Three courses, in particular, were planned for officials working in the field of juvenile justice. The International Seminar on the Formulation of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, held by the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute in November 1983, was of particular importance. The fruitful results of these seminars, training courses and workshops have been published in the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute Resource Material Series.

15. In addition, in 1982, guidelines for the formulation of standard minimum rules for the administration of juvenile justice were proposed by the Institute, taking into account the reports of the study groups at its fifty-eighth International Training Course. The proposed guidelines were considered by the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control at its seventh session in 1982 (E/CN.5/1983/2), by expert meetings and at the Asian and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Seventh United Nations Congress in 1983 (A/CONF.121/RPM/2).

16. A regional project was initiated by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute and the United Nations Secretariat, in pursuance of resolution 4 of the Sixth United Nations Congress and in observance of the International Youth Year. The objective was to make a regional contribution to the formulation of international guidelines for the prevention of juvenile crime. The first step of the project was the joint conduct of a regional survey on juvenile crime and delinquency and prevention and treatment modalities.

C. The United Nations Latin American Institute
for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

17. Since its creation in 1975, the Institute has made many attempts to obtain a more accurate view of juvenile delinquency in the Latin American countries. These efforts have been hampered by various problems, such as the paucity of statistics and relevant information and the scarcity of research. Consequently, the main efforts of the Institute have been directed towards the training of personnel working in juvenile treatment centres. At the courses held on this topic in 1978, 1979, 1981 and 1982 it was observed that juvenile delinquency has reached alarming proportions throughout the region.

18. In addition to collaboration with the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute in the juvenile social maladjustment project, the United Nations Latin American Institute has carried out two studies that are relevant to juvenile delinquency: "Stigmatization, deviant behaviour and victimization in a marginal zone" and "Systems of prevention and control of drug abuse and traffic in Costa Rica". A research project on juvenile justice systems in the context of the development of the Latin American countries is now being conducted, involving more than 10 countries in the region, using a comparative approach.

19. Finally, the Institute formulated a set of guidelines for the Reglas mínimas Uniformes para la Administración de Justicia de Menores en Conflicto con la Ley Penal, for consideration by the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, the Secretariat, expert meetings and the Latin American Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Seventh Congress (A/CONF.121/RPM.3).

D. The Helsinki Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations

20.   The Hensinki Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations, is the newest of the regional institutes, having begun operations at the end of 1982.   In view of the highly developed status of criminological research in Europe, the Institute has concentrated on the promotion of the exchange of information.   Questions of importance both to research and to the issue of youth crime have been reflected in the information service activities of the Institute as well as its European seminars, such as the Seminar on Victim Policy, which took place in 1983, and the European Seminar on a Rational, Effective and Humane Criminal Justice System, organized in 1984.   These themes have been emphasized in the published recommendations of the seminars.

II.   GENERAL COMMENTS ON YOUTH CRIME AND RESEARCH

21.   The issue of youth crime should be examined in the context of development. The economic, socio-political, cultural and legal systems in question form the basis of the phenomenology of youth crime and of the capacity of society to deal with it.   Different systems have different concerns, and the definition of the concept varies according to their nature and structure.   Even the conceptualization of "youth" is related to many factors, for example to the educational system and its role in the process of socialization as well as to the functions and status of age groups in the society under consideration. 2/

22.   No single, unique definition of youth crime and juvenile delinquency could have been adopted for the present report.*   The need to recognize the proper background of the phenomenon is particularly important in the presentation of the research findings.   The research methodology, hypotheses and samples are invariably country-specific, and, thus, the research results   . cannot be perceived as universally valid without serious reservations.**

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*Both the word "crime" and the word "delinquency" have no standard or commonly accepted precise meaning; although "crime" is generally understood to apply to acts prohibited by criminal law and "delinquency" generally covers a broader scope of misbehaviour, various researchers have adopted different definitions in accordance with the specific needs of their research.   For example, in some studies "crime" may only refer to rather serious acts, while in others it may include acts not even considered punishable under the criminal law of other jurisdicitions.   In addition, many other terms, such as social maladjustment or anti-social behaviour, are used almost interchangeably to deal with this and related phenomena.

**Horst Schüler-Springorum notes that "... an improved methodology and an even greater current of empirical research have taught us that criminological results are as time-bound and as place-bound as most other sources of knowledge" ("General report of the International Association of Penal Law", prepared for the Sixth Joint Colloquium on Youth, Crime and Justice, held at Bellagio, Italy, in April 1984 (hereinafter referred to as the Bellagio Colloquium)).

Where culture-specific concepts are reflected in the research approach,
research design and questions addressed by the research, the validity of the
findings, in terms of their "generalizability", will be limited.

23. In the field of criminal justice, certain long-term trends and short-term
fashions can be identified. Research carried out during the last decade of
the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century largely
concentrated on the discovery of the cause of crime by looking at the
difference between individual offenders and non-offenders. Later research
extended the scope of possible causes and improved the methodology and still
later focused on the identification of appropriate means of treating offenders
for rehabilitative purposes. These general trends encompassed, although on
different levels and in different proportions, an individual-oriented as well
as a society-oriented approach. It should be noted that although for a consider-
able period of time research was primarily concerned with the situation of the
offender, interest has shifted towards the situation of the victim. More
recently, there has been a growing interest in examining means of crime
prevention, thus widening the scope and orientation of research on the basis
of a more refined knowledge of the complexity of the phenomenon. The
importance of the study of youth crime has been reflected in a considerable
amount of research carried out particularly in the developed countries. Youth
crime has long been a popular subject of research, and a considerable amount
of local, national and international documentation bears evidence of the
interest of criminologists, sociologists, criminal lawyers, criminal justice
practitioners, psychiatrists, psychologists, educators, physicians and other
concerned professionals.*

24. The United Nations Social Defence Research Institute conducted a survey
of research published throughout the world on juvenile delinquency, covering
the period January 1978 to July 1983. (Sources were restricted to material
available in the Institute's library.) The most unsettling finding regarding
the volume of research was the low number of published reports: 436 altogether,
with an average of about 79 a year world-wide. Whatever the reasons for this
situation - for example the end of what is referred to as the rehabilitation
ideal; disillusionment on the part of policy-makers, who maintain that research
seems to focus on exposing weaknesses without providing solutions; a drop in
funding for research in many countries; a shift in academic interest - the
search for long-term and medium-term solutions requires, as a matter of high
priority, the dedication of resources to research and in particular to basic
research.

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*For a discussion on research on this subject, see, for example, James
Finckenauer, "The theory and practice of treating young offenders", expert
paper presented to the Expert Meeting on Youth, Crime and Justice at the
School of Criminal Justice of Rutgers University, Newark, New Jersey, November
1983; A.A.G. Peters, "Comparative survey of juvenile delinquency in Asia and
the Far East" (Tokyo, United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the
Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders 1968); European Committee
on Crime Problems, "Social change and juvenile delinquency" (Strasbourg 1979);
Dhavee Choosup, "Institutional treatment of juvenile offenders", Simone Rozes,
"Alternatives to custodial sanctions for youth offenders" and J.H. Rodriguez,
"Youth, crime and justice", papers submitted on topic IV, "youth, crime and
justice", to the Interregional Preparatory Meeting for the Seventh United
Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders,
held at Beijing, China, in May 1984 (hereinafter referred to as the Beijing
Meeting).

25. Although a survey of recent research may shed some light on the present state of affairs, it cannot however claim to be comprehensive in terms of the current state of knowledge at the international level. In fact, many of the contributors regretted the difficulties encountered in reflecting research efforts, even in their own countries.

26. Almost half of the research studies published were primarily designed to evaluate existing programmes, less than one third were intended to describe juvenile deliquency in general terms, and only about one quarter were involved with either theory-building or theory-testing. It would appear from the survey that the authorities are focusing less on generalized theory than on programme evaluation research of immediate and specific application. The law-and-order response to crime may have led to a research focus more concerned with the present efficiency of existing agencies of social control than with a general understanding of the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency or the building of knowledge that has no immediate benefits. The Institute's survey noted the existence of a large number of empirical studies, many of which were rather simple in design and not related to any particular theoretical propositions, while there were few experimental studies.

27. By far the largest number of studies dealt in a very general way with juvenile delinquency in particular geographical areas. Thus 44 per cent were classified as general studies and 12 per cent as dealing, in broad terms, with social response without focusing on any one aspect and without going into depth. Some 9 per cent examined one or more aspects of social response in greater detail, and the largest number within this category evaluated diversion programmes at the pre-trial level. Only 8 per cent dealt with aetiology and a further 9 per cent with prevention, while the remaining 18 per cent dealt with treatment and processing.

28. The great majority of studies examined (and available in the Institute's library) for purposes of this review were conducted in developed countries, particularly in the United States of America. It would appear that policy-makers in most countries have not fully recognized the relevance and utility of research to the policy and planning process. The paucity of research undertaken in many other countries clearly illustrates the lack of acknowledgement of the important challanges to and input into the decision-making process which research can offer. This poses specific problems for the development of an indigenous research base for policy and practice, particularly in developing countries.

29. Research on youth crime is hindered in part by the complicated interplay of changing individual and social factors and basic values. The results of research cannot be used as irrefutable evidence of the general validity of any single approach. Research should develop the ability of critical analysis in order to dispel myths and provide new insights into the factors underlying youth criminality and the operation of the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Such a critical approach is especially important in showing the fallacy of seemingly simple answers to the problems of crime. 2/

30. Despite the difficulties encountered in the course of research, including differing levels, types and definitions of youth crime between regions and counties, certain general observations can be made. However, it is recognized that all such generalizations run the risk of detracting attention from important exceptions in certain areas, offender groups, offence categories, differential impact of contributing factors etc. (See the working paper prepared by the Secretariat on youth crime and justice, A/CONF.121/7). These general observations are set out below:

(a)   Although crime is ubiquitous, youth crime is regarded generally as worthy of special attention and treatment. Many young people have violated social and legal regulations at some time and in some way, although few have become involved in serious violation of the law.* The peak age-range in the frequency of the commission of criminal violations would appear to depend on the type of offence in question as well as on the cultural background. Studies in various countries tend to establish this peak age-range at 12 to 18** years;

(b)   Crimes of violence and other serious offences committed by the young constitute a smaller proportion of all offences.*** In some categories, for example white-collar and environmental offences, the young have limited involvement, this largely owing to the differences in opportunity;

(c)   There appears to be no distinct "career" in youth crime, although results of research are certainly not unanimous on this point. While those who have committed serious offences, for example, have generally committed petty violations previously, it cannot be assumed that minor behavioural problems (or "status offences") will lead to petty offences, which in turn will inevitably and gradually develop into serious offences; 3/

(d)   A considerable number of the offences committed by young people are part of the "dark figure" of unrecorded crime, and even if these offences are detected, they are often dealt with unofficially through traditional and informal social control;****

(e)   There has been a general increase in recorded youth crime in many countries. However, considerable differences between countries as to types of

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*For example, studies of hidden delinquency have demonstrated the wide extent to which young people have engaged in petty criminal acts. On the other hand, many countries report very low offence rates, in relation to both the general population and to their age group. Examples are the countries with centrally planned economies as well as Japan and Nigeria.

**In north America, for example, the majority of persons who commit petty property offences are 16 and under, and even violent crimes peak at 18.

***The increase in violent offences has been noted by many commentators. Studies and statistics however support the view expressed here that most youth crime is relatively minor. See André Bossard (INTERPOL), "Juvenile delinquency: The role of the police in prevention and law enforcement" and Richard Harding, "The impact of mass media upon youth crime", papers prepared for the Beijing Meeting.

****As noted by Yves De Thevenard in the "General report of the International Society of Social Defence", prepared for the Bellagio Colloquium, both self-report and victimization studies in many countries have shown that only a small number of offences and offenders are dealt with by the criminal justice system. See also Jean Pradel, "General report of the International Penal and Penitentiary Foundation on youth, crime and justice", presented at the Bellagio Colloquium; Hira Singh, "The role of corrections and the training of criminal justice personnel in the prevention, treatment and handling of youth offenders", prepared for the Beijing Meeting and the report of the Beijing Meeting (A/CONF.121/IPM.1).

offences and types of offenders exist: for example, some countries report a continuing decrease in both general criminality and in youth crime, while others note a disproportionate increase in certain categories of offence. Some countries note that this increase would appear to affect more offenders past the age of puberty than those below the age of 14 or 15;*

(f) The number of young females is lower than the number of young males in registered crime data; however, their numbers are becoming increasingly more substantial. A growing number of female juveniles are using drugs and are involved in serious criminality. This situation creates problems with respect to the treatment and handling of female offenders; 4/

(g) Statistics and studies in many countries show that there is a trend for young offenders to generally engage in crime when in the company of others. In other countries young offenders are generally found to commit crimes on their own;**

(h) A correlation between crime and such factors as the level of education, social status of parents, housing conditions, family relationships, the nature of contacts among peers etc. have been noted in studies. In some countries, a correlation has been noted between the abandonment, maltreatment and abuse of the young, on the one hand, and crime, on the other. The strength of the correlations vary from study to study, from area to area and from factor to factor; 5/

(i) Studies have also pointed to the correlation between industrialization and urbanization, on the one hand, and youth crime, on the other. The findings differ in terms of the strength and the direction of the correlation, to say nothing of its causative nature. Nevertheless, it has been frequently observed that an uncontrolled and rapid rate of social change, especially when not followed by an encompassing network of social support mechanisms, are associated with a higher rate of youth crime. While such processes seem to be highly predictive, when singled out in the form of one factor, for example unemployment, they appear to have a weak predictive value;

(j) The prevention and control of youth crime are inseparably linked to measures designed to promote and safeguard the well-being of young persons. Individual research projects have generally and unavoidably concentrated on specific circumstances, such as the effect of incarceration and other severe measures imposed on young offenders. Yet research should take into account the integral role of prevention and its position within the general context of responses to social problems;

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*Examples of countries reporting a decrease are the countries with centrally planned economies. Decreases in certain offence groups have been noted in the Scandinavian countries.

**For example, Wu Han notes that in China young offenders are generally found to commit offences on their own. Commission of offences in groups has only recently become a marked trend. Wu Han, "The situation of juvenile delinquency and the strategy of comprehensive approach in China", paper submitted to the Beijing Meeting.

(k)   The many theories on youth crime differ greatly in their degree of sophistication and their level of acceptance. None has received clear and universal support. This is partly because they have generally been developed against the background of only one culture, lacking transferability to others. It is also due to the tendency of many theories to over-emphasize particular factors and to overlook others, though the phenomenon is multi-dimensional and requires an integral but yet quite differentiated theoretical formulation and elaboration.

III.   CAUSES AND CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS

A.   The concept of the "causes of crime"

31.   One difficulty in presenting an overview of research on the causes of youth crime lies in the ambiguity of the concept of "cause". There are many theoretical explanations, but no precise causative explanatory model has been universally accepted. There seems to be general disapproval of the mechanical concept of the cause-and-effect relationship, however, especially in its unidirectional form. Furthermore, there is no consensus on the nature, type and degree of the relationship that can be considered as "the causative relationship", even within the framework of non-mechanical pluralistic concepts. On the contrary, in moving away from the direct mechanical conception, less reliable reference points in terms of identifying the elements of causation are found. Nevertheless, and despite numerous problems, the causative model still dominates the field. Many researchers maintain that the concept of crime can only be understood against the background of specific institutions in society, and, consequently, assertions about the "causes of crime" can only be examined in the light of the needs and aims of the society in question. Some experts would suggest that a critical evaluation of the process of criminalization and the forces that direct attention to certain types of crime is integral to an understanding of the "causes" of crime. Others deal with the effects of extroversion and chromosone abnormalities etc. Consequently, even a brief survey of the "causative explanatory models" or the "cause" of crime would not do justice to all expert views. The present report therefore does not attempt to reflect approaches.

32.   Analytically, a distinction can be made between causal mechanisms that explain the amount and structure of youth crime in a given society on the one hand and causal mechanisms that explain why young individuals with certain characteristics come into contact with the justice system on the other. But some causal mechanisms and factors operate on both levels, even though they may appear in different constellations and their significance may vary in each case. Consequently, it may be difficult to adopt even such a simple dichotomy in structuring this report.

33.   The focus here will be on causal mechanisms related to the amount and structure of youth crime. This approach has been adopted in light of the fact that when United Nations bodies convene to discuss the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders, the primary focus of interest tends to be on explanations that would further the ability to control the amount of crime and the danger it presents to society.

34.   The concepts "causes" and "contributory factors" will be used throughout the present report in a neutral manner. One important assumption in its preparation was that the analysis would not be limited to studying the extent to which only intrinsically "negative" factors increase the amount of youth crime. When analysts of crime trends attempt to account for changes in the

trend of recorded crime, they often find that major changes must be explained by such factors as variations in the opportunity structure for crime or in the "dark figure" of crime. A number of studies suggest that demographic processes and socio-economic factors such as urbanization, fluctuations in the tolerance level of authorities and the general public and of the authorities etc. are the major determinants of the level of crime. Such processes in themselves exert a considerable influence on both recorded crime and the perception of the youth crime problem. (See A/CONF.121/11).

35. "Causal" explanations may be divided into "strong" and "weak" factors. There is a considerable weight of evidence to show, for example, that visible fluctuations in crime rates over a period of time can primarly be explained by a constellation of "strong" factors, such as changes in the demographic and economic structure of society, changes in the opportunity structure or factors relating to the system of formal and informal crime control. An attempt to investigate the importance of "weak" factors, such as the impact of small fluctuations on the severity of sentencing or the influence of changes in child-raising must also take into consideration the influence of the "strong" factors. Special consideration should be given to the factors indicated by some studies as being major determinants of youth crime, regardless of whether or not these are acknowledged as "causes of crime". It should be noted that the differentiations between the strong and weak factors is also analytical and that, in specific configurations, weak factors may become strong, and vice versa.

B. The movement of the young without employment opportunities or prospects from rural areas to cities

36. Statistical studies in many countries point to a general correlation between the amount of crime and the degree of urbanization.* This has led to a suggestion by some observers that there is something inherently negative about urbanization, i.e. that urbanization per se is a criminogenic factor. The thesis that increasing urbanization automatically leads to a higher level of crime has been criticized as being overly simplistic in terms of cause and effect, however, especially in the countries with centrally planned economies.

37. Two specific factors have been mentioned in connection with the general correlation between urbanization and the crime rate, and both are open to the influence of social planning: one is the difference in the degree of formal and informal social control, the other is the difference in opportunity structures.

38. It has been stated that, in general, informal social control adequately restrains crime in traditional rural societies. Industrialization and urbanization, frequently occurring concomitantly, impede the effectiveness of

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*This inter-relationship was the focus of discussion of the Think-tank Project on Urban Crime Problems, the Soviet Academy of Sciences, the Commission of the Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Criminal Justice, Rutgers University, Newark, New Jersey, May 1983.

formal and informal social controls. Owing to new divisions of labour that city life imposes, families and entire communities no longer spend as much time in immediate interaction with each other. Migration to urban areas loosens environmental ties and introduces new reference groups, value patterns, changed life-styles, family roles and interrelationships etc,* and introduces additional sources of potential conflict situations. At the same time, in many respects, new opportunities are opening up, including opportunities for almost all types and new forms of crime.

39. Industrialization has brought about a change in the role and status of youth and an extension of the age-range of "youth", which is perhaps the most important development. Advanced industrialization no longer depends heavily on all available labour. It relies extensively on trained and experienced workers. Young people are increasingly excluded from the labour force, whereas in the early days of industrialization they were used extensively. The role of education as preparation for employment has increased in importance both in developed and developing countries.** Yet improved education has frequently not curtailed the growing social alienation of youth in respect to existing social relations, institutions and arrangements. 2/

40. In the face of structural unemployment and underemployment, becoming a productive member of society - as a worker - has remained a desirable goal. Youth's inability to reach that goal leads to frustrations, heightened by the conflict arising from the inability to realize aspirations created by the asumption that educational achievement is the most promising avenue for social promotion, on the one hand, and the limitations of the social, cultural and economic capacities of the system to provide productive employment on the other hand. These disparities are especially exemplified in the situations of socio-economic disturbances or crises where the exclusion of youth from the labour force is not only a matter of economic cost to society but a potential source of the conflict and a variety of forms and types of social "misbehaviour". Such structurally created conflicts (manifest or latent) contribute to the development of a social milieu prone to crime. Thus, while urbanization in itself cannot be considered a cause of crime, the network of social processes and relations that accompany urbanization can provide crime-prone opportunity structures. Young people, although quite a heterogenous category, are directly involved in, threatened by and highly vulnerable to the influence of such developments.

41. A major project carried out by the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute from 1981 to 1984 dealt with the links between urbanization and social maladjustment. 6/ The research design was based on a five-country case

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*The effect of these phenomena, combined with the conflict between foreign and indigenous values, is underscored by H.C. Joko Smart in "Causation and prevention of juvenile delinquency and treatment modalities for juvenile offenders in the African region", prepared for the Secretariat. Similar observations are contained in many of the reports from Asian countries submitted to the sixty-fourth International Group Training Course of the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute (1983) on the quest for a better system and administration of juvenile justice.

**In developed countries, as well as in some developing countries, prolonged training also serves as a mechanism for removing pressures from the labour market.

study comparing areas of rapid urbanization with areas of non-rapid urban-
ization (in Colombia, Costa Rica, India, Nigeria and Senegal), and an
assessment of the contribution of formal mechanisms of social control (for
example, the police and the courts) and informal mechanisms (for example, the
family, school and religious and youth organizations). The aim was to
identify the trend of juvenile social maladjustment in each country studied.*
The project involved a socio-pyschological study of the Community attitudes
towards youth in general and towards "socially maladjusted" juvenile behaviour
in particular.**

42. The independent variable in the study was rapid urbanization. Originally
it was assumed that there might be higher levels of juvenile social mal-
adjustment in urban areas undergoing rapid urbanization; in fact, the data
show that this was not necessarily the case. The intervening factors that
seem to have made a considerable difference were: (a) the type of growth -
planned versus unplanned; (b) the cultural prescriptions against crime that
exist among new arrivals; and (c) the strength of family and community ties
that survive the transition from rural to urban society. This suggests that,
in the five countries selected, high levels of crime and juvenile social
maladjustment were not the inevitable consequence of rapid growth. While the
study sought to distinguish between an area of rapid urbanization that was
presumed to indicate unplanned urban development, on the one hand, and an area
of non-rapid urbanization that would present a contrast, on the other hand,
either the criteria used for the distinction or the interpretation of the
criteria did not attain the desired objective or the situation in all the
cities did not permit a clear-cut division. In fact, it was only in Costa
Rica that such a division appeared to be relevant. It was noted that, with
the exception of Senegal, the number of juveniles living with their parents
was higher in the non-rapid than in the rapid urbanization areas, and there
was an indication of the severance of family ties in the latter. There were
clear differences from country to country in the number of juveniles in the
two areas studied who attended school on a full-time basis, who worked
part-time or who worked full-time.

43. The research carried out by the United Nations Social Defence Research
Institute, as well as other available research, has not demonstrated that
industrialization and urbanization would, by direct causal necessity, lead to
a higher level of juvenile crime, although the results do suggest that there is

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*The project used a questionnaire addressed to a sample of the general
population living in two areas of each city in question, of professionals and
volunteers working in the juvenile field as well as of the young people (the
average age was 15 years) living in the area. In all, 1,642 juveniles, 2,144
members of the public and 481 professionals, a total of 4,267 persons, were
interviewed.

**In the study, the temporal parameter for "rapid and recent urbanization"
was set as the last 5 years for which data were available. In view of the
cultural and normative diversity of the participating countries, the accepted
definition of "juvenile" was that used in the legal statutes of each country.
"Social maladjustment" included all behaviour penalized or otherwise
sanctioned and, in some cases, behaviour that was at present unsanctioned but
was not tolerated by the community and therefore caused a negative social
reaction.

a correlation between urbanization and crime in general. When urbanization is unplanned and exceeds the capacity of the socio-economic and governmental structures to provide the necessary services and means in order to achieve certain objectives, its impact on (youth) crime is more pronounced. To some extent, this can be taken into account in explaining the development of the amount and structure of crime. Changes in society may lead to a loosening of the ties that individual young people have with their environment. The increasing opportunities generally accompanying industrialization and urbanization could also lead to an increase in youth criminality. Yet, in general terms, it is cultural factors that influence most directly the degree to which a community undergoing rapid urbanization will experience youth crime. Opportunities exist for local communities to utilize their extant socio-cultural resources to counter crime. Towards that end, research on juvenile crime prevention measures is called for.

44. It is not clear whether there is a direct link between unemployment and crime. 7/ Inasmuch as an inordinately large percentage of apprehended offenders were unemployed at the time of the offence, the conclusion has been drawn that unemployment may lead to crime - for example, to property offences in order to meet a given standard of living or to offences committed "on the spur of the moment", largely owing to enforced idleness. But it has been pointed out that, in affluent societies in particular, unemployment can be expected to reduce mobility and change leisure habits, resulting in a decrease in crime. Furthermore, factors such as the system of unemployment benefits may affect this link. The available research would seem to indicate that unemployment, and as a matter of fact economic development, affects crime in different ways. More research is needed on the association between types and fluctuations in unemployment, on the one hand, and the general social position of juvenile offenders, on the other.

C. The interrelationship between urbanization, drug abuse and youth crime

45. The increase in the use of "soft" and "hard" drugs by the young has been a matter of great concern in many countries.* Authorities are concerned not only with the health hazards inherent in drug abuse but especially with a rise in the crime rate that goes along with or follows increased drug consumption. Illegal drugs are becoming more readily available especially in the urban areas of many countries. The correlation between the level of urbanization and drug abuse is notable, and in fact in many countries drug offences are largely committed in the larger cities. As a consequence and also owing to the severe reaction of authorities in their attempt to reduce the drug problem (these reactions, of course, vary with the type of narcotic and country), there is a distinct subculture of young drug abusers and traffickers in many areas.

46. A merely repressive reaction to the drug problem does not contribute substantially to the perception of the issues or to the solution of related problems. Drug abusers often commit crimes related to their drug habit, particularly in order to obtain drugs or money with which to purchase them.

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*Also in many countries a problem of great immediate concern is the link between alcohol and criminality. Although contributing factors and inter-linkages are very similar to those found between drugs and criminality, there are important differences, for example, in the laws and in the control exercized.

Only a minority of all drug abusers come directly into conflict with the criminal law. The majority come into contact with it indirectly, as they form part of the actual detected or undetected population of crime victims.

47. The United Nations Social Defence Research Institute carried out a study for the period 1980-1983 on the interaction between criminal behaviour and drug abuse. In the study it was noted that while many studies had refuted a causal relation between drugs and criminality, others had reached different, although not definite, conclusions. 8/

48. The Institute's study did not attempt to unravel the difficulties encountered by previous studies. Instead, it attempted to assess the impact of the various drug control systems on the interrelationship between drug use and criminality. The methodology called for the quantification of the qualities of "seriousness of the phenomenon of drug abuse" and "harshness of the system in response to drug abuse" and an analysis of how a group of drug abusers (both those who were in contact with the system and those who were not) perceived the effects of the system.* By early 1983, preliminary reports had been received from Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Japan, Jordan, Italy, Singapore and the United States of America (from the State of New York). Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had carried out autonomous studies, and the Institute had received the corresponding data from Argentina, Costa Rica and Italy. Partial data were available from most of the other participating countries.

49. According to the researchers' findings, there did not appear to be a significant correlation between the levels of seriousness of the drug problem and the actual levels of harshness of the system (i.e., total, effective and theoretical). A significant correlation was found to exist between the seriousness of the problem and the perception of the harshness of the system. This meant that the problem tended to be less serious when the system was perceived to be harsher. Thus, the association between drug abuse and criminality appeared to be a close one.

50. In all countries under consideration, the subjects of the control group (drug abusers who had come into contact with the system) tended to show a lower rate of criminal activity than those in the experimental group (i.e., drug abusers who had come into contact with the system at least once). In the majority of the countries, the experimental group subjects also tended to exhibit more frequent and more serious criminal behaviour following contact with the system than they had before such contact took place. The researchers concluded that the interaction between drug abuse and criminal behaviour appeared to be somehow associated with the development of the drug addict's life-style and to the general development of criminality in the country in question.

51. The project on the links between urbanization and juvenile social maladjustment established the existence of some differences in the attitude towards and tolerance of drug abuse in the communities studied. Additionally, the police were found to react more sharply than the public to drug abuse.

52. In the study conducted by the United Nations Latin American Institute on the degree of tolerance of drug abuse and drug traffic, it was found that

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* This was done on the basis of eight standard and simulated situations centred on the use of hard and soft drugs and on the criminality associated with drug abuse, the subjects were asked to indicate what the probable reaction of the system would be.

tolerance levels in subgroups (communities) where drug traffic and consumption are fairly widespread, tolerance was higher than in society as a whole. 9/ In contrast, generally, the broader social and official reactions and sanctions were disproportionately severe in dealing with drug-related problems..

53. As was the case in the relationship between urbanization, unemployment and criminality, the research surveyed in the study has not demonstrated a clear and unequivocal link between urbanization, drug abuse and criminality, although a correlation was noted. This correlation was due especially to the difference in opportunity structures. In many countries, drugs are mainly available in the cities. As young people drift to the cities, some cannot integrate successfully into urban society, and many may become involved in drugs, with all the undesirable consequences. Although drug abuse does not in itself lead to the commission of crime, the interaction between many factors partially brought about by drug abuse, for example the new patterns of behaviour, as well as the punitive reaction of the authorities and society in general, may well be criminogenic.

54. Finally, three fundamental factors regarding the interaction between drug abuse and crime were identified in study by the Institute: (a) the effect of the abuse of drugs on criminal behaviour; (b) the effect of criminal behaviour on the abuse of drugs; and (c) the possibility that there are common factors that contribute to causing both criminal behaviour and drug abuse. These distinctions could serve as a basis for future research.

D. The use of free or leisure time and the impact of the mass media in relation to youth crime

55. Industrialization and urbanization generally lead to changes in the structure and use of leisure time. Especially in urban areas, more and more leisure time is spent with peers rather than with the family. Concern has been expressed that the company of peers may increase the risk of the commission of offences based on spur-of-the-moment impulses. As some researchers have suggested, it may also lead to the formation of gangs that deliberately engage in crimes as a leisure-time activity. The word "gang" in itself has come to have a negative connotation, despite the fact that the normal process of socialization involves lengthy periods spent in the company of other young people, generally engaged in constructive activities.

56. The study on social maladjustment and urbanization, referred to above, indicated that in areas of rapid urbanization young people had, in general, more leisure time than they did in other areas. Leisure time was generally spent apart from adults and in sexually homogenous groups, juvenile females generally being accorded less leisure time than males. About half of the juveniles interviewed reported that they participated in organized group activities, with a small proportion responding that they loitered. The study also noted some difference on how juveniles spent their time in the various countries. The responses of the juveniles were sometimes inconsistent with the perception of the public and of professionals. These differences reflected the various degrees to which juveniles were engaged in work and study activities.

57. The alleged detrimental influences of the mass media in general, and of violence portrayed in the mass media in particular, has long been the subject of research and speculation. There is a tendency to put the blame for delinquency on visible and morally tainted, or at least morally ambivalent, factors. Early mass media research has disclosed the complex nature and influence of the mass media, noting that a direct correspondence between the

content of the media message and the response of the audience did not appear
to exist. The recipient of a mass media message will perceive and interpret
any communication according to her or his needs, attitudes and views of the
world. Although the mass media may be fairly effective in transmitting
factual messages, it is less able to influence the attitudes or behaviour of
the public, especially if an attempt is made to persuade the audience to act
against firmly internalized norms.

58. Research into the question of violent criminality and the effect of mass
media exposure to violence differentiates between four possible scenarios.
Such scenarios may: (a) provide the audience with models of behaviour;
(b) raise the level of aggression in the audience; (c) desensitize the
audience to the damage associated with violence; or (d) provide an outlet for
the aggressive impulses of the audience, thus, by catharsis, reducing the
amount of violence.

59. Although each of these hypotheses has received some support in the
considerable amount of research carried out on the subject, no clear and
coherent picture has emerged.* Summaries of research findings generally
stress that there are more reports showing an aggressiveness-stimulating
effect than an aggressiveness-reducing (catharsis) effect. The main problem
with the majority of these studies (as is indeed the problem with many other
criminological studies) is the difficulty of generalizing results based on
small samples or specified atypical subjects, e.g., children exibiting minor
aggressive behaviour.

60. Findings concerning the impact of mass media violence are inconclusive.
At best there is a weak casual factor. There are far graver criminogenic
pressures existing in society than those exerted by the mass media. Although
exposure to violence in the mass media may inhibit or more probably stimulate
to some extent aggressive and criminal behaviour in certain individuals under
certain circumstances, it is extremely difficult to establish them as general
effects. The amount of crime in a given society accounted for by a "mass
media factor" may be too insignificant in relation to other forces to become
clearly visible, however sophisticated the research design.

61. Studies on the effect of violence in the mass media have generally
focused on the effect on potential offenders. One aspect that should receive
more attention is the effect of portrayals of violence on the general public
with respect to "the fear of crime". An unreasonable fear of crime may in
itself easily lead to a lowering of the quality of life, through the severance
of social contacts, isolation and forfeiture of opportunities. Fear of crime
has a critical reality of its own. Youth crime is part of the societal
"fear-violence" spiral and should not be seen as the main catalyst. 10/

62. Much of the research on the criminogenic impact of the mass media has
centred on programmes portraying violence particularly in the cinema and on

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*As with all research results, the absence of any clear indications one
way or another may be the fault of an insufficiently precise research
methodology. See the report of the Beijing Meeting (A/CONF.121/IPM.1). See
also Krzystof Poklewski-Koziell, "The impact of the mass media on youth
violence", submitted to the United Nations Secretariat, 1984, and Harding,
op.cit.

television. It has been suggested that this reflects an unfortunate
predilection to seek causes of crime among factors which are considered
"negative" or the social value of which is usually questioned. There
certainly is a risk that the two quite separate dimensions of what is
considered to be offensive and actual criminogenic potential become confused
or intermingled. Efforts to control violence in the mass media are sometimes
mainly concentrated on the most extreme and bizarre forms of violence, which
attract only limited audiences. Both common-sense insight and certain
research findings seem to suggest that greater harm results from the prolonged
and repeated exposure of young persons to models of "criminal solutions" in an
everyday context. The implications of the policy alternatives to controlling
either extreme and rare or less extreme but common forms of violence would
seem to merit attention in future research. Another area also worthy of
research is the influence of the role and value models projected by the mass
media, especially when, for example, the aspirations of the young cannot be
realized in light of socio-economic-cultural realities.

63. No direct mechanical link has been found in the research under review
between the amount and structure of leisure time and youth crime. In
addition, the evidence regarding the criminogenic influence of the mass media
is not conclusive. The interplay between the way in which leisure time is
spent, including exposure to the mass media, and youth crime is inseparable
from the issue of social integration. Quite effective crime preventive
measure would be to provide more constructive leisure-time activities that are
in line with the contemporary needs and interests of the young, and that
provides them with the opportunity to establish productive and stable
relationships. Association with other young persons should have a normal and
positive connotation, rather than a negative one.

E. The special problems of children and young people belonging to minorities such as foreigners, migrants and ethnic or religious groups

64. Statistics on crime in several countries reveal that certain racial and
other minorities, for example migrant workers, are overrepresented among
reported offenders while others are underrepresented. Researchers have dealt
with this question and have concluded that some minorities are more "visible"
than others; for this reason their offences would have a higher probability of
being detected and cleared. It also has been argued that the differences in
the statistics reflect actual differences in the incidence of crime, resulting
from certain attributes of the minorities or, perhaps more importantly, from
their very status as minorities. This includes differences in norms,
ignorance of the norms of the majority in the host country, discrimination by
the majority and a lower quality of life. Finally, reference has been made to
differences in the attitudes of the authorities towards minorities.

65. Although many studies in different countries would appear to indicate
that foreigners and migrants as a group have a higher crime rate than native
residents, these studies often overlook the fact that the migrants are usually
young males, for whom the crime rate is high. Consequently, in order to
obtain comparable crime data, the migrants should be compared with native
residents of the same age group and in comparable circumstances. It has also
been noted in some countries that first-generation immigrants have a lower
crime rate than their peers in the country from which they migrated, as well
as in the country to which they migrated, while the crime rate of the migrants
children is higher. Thus, migrants should be compared between different
generations and with native residents. These are points on which further
research is needed.

66. Research indicates that minorities often have difficulties in being accepted by the host society and are faced with a combination of problems, ranging from the difference in the patterns of and values imposed by the process of socialization to the limited avenues and degrees of social and individual advancement. Discriminative attitudes in general are an important factor that can influence education, employment and criminal justice processes, which in turn may strengthen these attitudes. Differential policies and practices involving minorities should be carefully balanced: over-emphasized affirmative action may sometimes lead to results similar to those produced by a clearly discriminatory policy, i.e., to the perpetuation of discriminatory attitudes. Further research is needed on the specific problems of young minorities and on the complex links between conflict situations, crime and the selective behaviour and reactions of juvenile and criminal justice systems when dealing with them.

IV. STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION AND CONTROL

67. In criminal justice, "prevention" is generally understood to refer to measures designed to preclude unlawful behaviour, while "control" is understood as the reaction of society to such behaviour. Prevention includes both general measures designed to influence behaviour and attitudes, for example through the educational system, and specific actions designed to decrease the opportunity to commit offences. Research on prevention can be divided into research dealing with measures operating on a general level (general prevention) and measures focusing on certain individuals (individual or special prevention).* It should be noted that while the prevention of juvenile crime is inseparable from the prevention of crime in general, special conditions prevail with regard to preventive approaches and measures dealing with young people, especially in the pre-delinquency area.

68. Research on prevention is hampered by difficulties in measurement. The measure of the success of a programme of prevention is generally the extent to which it decreases crime, but the level of crime is also due to a number of factors that are not necessarily related to the prevention programme in question.

69. Many studies on the efficacy of prevention concentrate on the role of the criminal justice system, for example on the effect of increased police surveillance, swifter administration of justice or different sanctions as deterrents. However, the concept of prevention should not be viewed in a narrow perspective and should cover both punitive and non-punitive policies and interventions. Changes in the criminal justice system may have a weak effect on the level and structure of crime as compared to improvements in, for example, education, welfare, health services or especially the informal social control exercised by the community. In the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute study on juvenile social maladjustment and urbanization it was noted that the great majority of the public and many of the professionals

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*Regarding the role of police in prevention, see Bossard, op.cit. The problems of prevention in the special circumstances of Africa are noted in Smart, op. cit. The same question is dealt by Borodin, op.cit.; the importance and great potential of early prevention are stressed in this paper. Also see Evelina Melnikova, "The prevention of juvenile delinquency in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republic", paper submitted to the Beijing Meeting.

interviewed did not view repression as an adequate long-term solution. Rather, a social policy that strengthened family and traditional ties, provided employment and other opportunities for young people and improved the capacity of the local milieu to address the wide ranging particular needs and problems of the young is preferable.

70. Researchers have pointed out that long-term work on the establishment of an interlocking and stable relationship between the family, schools, employment and the community could be especially useful. Not only would placing the young in this interlocking network allow them to find their place in the society, but it would also subject them to an elevated degree of informal social controls. The role of formal and informal control systems in this process of establishing interlocking networks is critical: the institutions of society should take more account of the needs of youth and not vice versa. Obviously some caution should be exercised with regard to the impact not only of formal but also of informal control, since both can and do exercise positive and negative influences.

71. In deciding on the measures to be used, attention should be paid to the fact that some of them may lead to even more difficult problems for both the offender and society. Isolated cases of success should not be used as a justification for the wide application of the measures involved, especially those of a coercive nature, without further evidence of their effectiveness. Carefully designed, guided and exercised social and educational policy measures are more effective and significant than punitive reactions.

72. Research on coercive measures, regardless of whether these involve "rehabilitation", "treatment" and/or what constitutes punishment, indicates that, at least in certain circumstances, coercion may be counter-productive and lead to repeated acts of delinquency and crime. The example generally cited is the use of incarceration, especially in the case of very young offenders.

73. Some studies have found that correctional measures for dealing with juveniles may differ from adult criminal justice measures, especially in imprisonment, in name only. Furthermore, it has been noted that attention should be paid to maintaining the guarantees of substantive and procedural legal principles in dealing with juveniles. Special procedures and treatment should not displace basic human rights on the pretext of benefiting juveniles and society, as has been observed in juvenile justice systems. (See the report of the Secretary-General on the draft standard minimum rules for the administration of juvenile justice, A/CONF.121/-).

74. Research has not conclusively resolved the conflict between those advocating the treatment and support of offenders, on the one hand, and those advocating greater emphasis on punitive criminal justice measures, on the other.* It would instead appear that both approaches will continue to have a basic role in the response of society to crime. Not all violations should necessarily lead to punishment; it may well be sufficient to remind the offender of the existence of the norm. Other violations may indicate the necessity for social welfare or educational services, rather than punishment. Still other violations, which may be quantitatively limited but qualitatively important, may require the use of coercive measures.

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*For example, the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute study on juvenile social maladjustment noted that with respect to human rights, the majority of professionals in the five countries studied called for the provision of defence counsel for juveniles who were being considered for commitment to an institution.

75. In general, research has suggested many promising programmes of prevention and control that have been successfully applied in limited areas. In order to produce useful results in other circumstances, however, these programmes usually require considerable adaptation to the social and economic characteristics of the country or area in question. Furthermore, differentiated models of youth crime prevention and control, emerging from the nature and structure of a given society and the different situations of the juveniles, should not be set apart from other action-oriented systems but should be of an integrated character in order to be responsive to and reflective of both the needs and problems of the subjects and the objectives and realities of society.* Overreliance on formal methods of social control, characteristic of many countries, not only has not worked very well but is probably too expensive to be fully adopted by other countries. On the other hand, important gains might be made by developing a social response to youth crime and delinquency derived from values within the national culture and/or the cultures of the local milieu.

V. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

76. In many countries, the favourable trends generally associated with development, such as a rise in living standards, better possibilities for education, increased social mobility and generally improved health care and social welfare, have been accompanied by negative features including an increase in the opportunity for crime and a consequent increase in actual crime. Statistically, there is indeed a correlation between development and crime, although the experiences of many countries have shown that this link has intervening variables and is not a direct mechanical one. Research has shed some light on crime-prone factors and situations, thus suggesting possibilities of formulating policies that would lessen their influence.

77. Increased educational and other opportunities, increased mobility and improvements in the care of citizens have usually lead to an increase in tolerance towards deviant behaviour and life-styles. At the same time, improvements in social services may have made deviants more visible. Development may, thus, lead to various changes in how youth crime is conceptualized by society.

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*The role of criminal law is emphasized in, for example, the following expert papers submitted to the Expert Meeting on Youth, Crime and Justice held at the School of Criminal Justice of Rutgers University at Newark, New Jersey, United States of America, in November 1983, in preparation for the Seventh Congress: C. Springer, "Justice for juveniles"; I. Antilla, "The young offender and the tug-of-war between ideologies on crime prevention"; and M. Joutsen, "Criminal justice and social justice for young offenders: Finland". See also McHardy, op cit. The need for an integrated and comprehensive approach to delinquency prevention is emphasized in Wu Han, op.cit., and by Keiji Yonezawa, in "Manifestations of youth crime and drug abuse", paper submitted to the Beijing Meeting. A.A. Adeyemi emphasizes the need to maintain traditional social stability and a cultural identity to increase prevention in "Administration of juvenile justice and treatment of juvenile offenders in Nigeria", paper submitted to the Beijing Meeting. See also the "Report of the International Training Course on Integrated Approach to Effective Juvenile Justice Administration", held by the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders at Tokyo in 1981.

78. As this report has indicated, research results have not been able to explain criminality, either generally or for specific crimes, in particular in terms of unidimensional theories of crime causation, whether they concentrate on offender characteristics or on broader societal and treatment factors. This may have been due at least in part to inadequate research methodologies or unidimensional approaches. The behaviour of an individual and his or her interaction with society are the outcome of an extremely complicated set of circumstances and factors. Unidimensional research can only point to certain circumstances and factors in isolation that are correlated with criminality. Research should be multidimensional and multidisciplinary.

79. The research that has been reviewed in this report relates predominantly to the more developed countries. It has been noted that all research should be examined against the background of the culture in which it was carried out. As the rapid and often unplanned growth in the developing countries frequently has led to a rising concern that crime in those countries threatens to offset the gains of development, there is a need for further research that has more direct application to the requirements of developing countries. Furthermore, a greater effort should be made to analyse the applicability of research results or theories of crime cross-culturally. A more refined attempt has to be made towards utilizing the enormous body of research in the developed countries in developing countries.* Research in developing countries can be used to re-evaluate the research models and findings in developed countries. Furthermore, there has to be a closer link between sound research findings and policy formulation.

80. The need for the establishment of a culture-specific autonomous scientific basis for further development of research, policy and practice in developing countries should be balanced against the demand for simply adapting existing research methodologies and conclusions to the needs of developing countries. Consequently, all research carried out in both developed and developing countries should make an effort: (a) to identify those properties of the phenomenon being investigated that may be unique for the particular culture; (b) to identify the properties of the phenomenon that are valid cross-culturally: and (c) to offer both a theoretical framework of explanation and guidelines for policy, taking into account the experience, structural and phenomenological similarities as well as particularities.

81. The research and policy experiences of developed countries are certainly important to other regions of the world. Even so, more effort is needed to develop research and policy that corresponds to the needs of the developing countries. Such a task calls for improved international scientific co-operation and more direct involvement of researchers, practitioners and policy-makers from the developing countries.

82. This report has pointed to the large volume of research devoted to youth crime and related issues and to the difficulties in applying research results nationally and cross-nationally and approaches designed in one situation to

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*The United Nations Latin American Institute together with the Research Committee on Sociology of Deviance and Social Control of the International Sociological Association organized an international seminar in December 1984 on crime and development. The primary focus of this Seminar was the extent to which criminological research in developed countries could be applied to the situations in developing countries.

that in another. Most studies have been carried out in one country or jurisidiction in isolation, with little attempt to use research findings available or approaches used elsewhere. Furthermore, research has often concentrated on unidimensional approaches as well as on factors that have been referred to in this report as "weak" contributing factors to youth crime, while the effect of stronger factors has been largely ignored. Both for the benefit of the developing countries and for the promotion of research in general, greater efforts should be made to pool the available research results. The focus of research should be on the more critical factors, i.e. those that can be influenced through policy decisions. The role of basic research in identifying causal mechanisms and constructing causal models remains important, but attention should also be paid to the application of such research.

83. While it is widely recognized that youth crime is one of the most intractable, costly and complex problems faced by many societies, it would appear, particularly in the light of the survey by the United Nations Social Defense Research Institute, that the amount of research is out of proportion to its impact on decision-making. It would also appear that much research has been devoted primarily to phenomenology, with reliance on less sophisticated methodology, and not based on carefully considered theoretical propositions and a failure to fully draw out relevant policy implications.

84. Research on such general themes such as the interlinkages of industrial-ization, urbanization and crime should avoid linear and unidimensional models designed, for example, solely to indicate that a correlation exists. Research should be geared towards identifying those strong factors that best assist in understanding such processes, thus providing a scientific basis for policy decisions.

85. Similarly, the general assumption that drug abuse leads to criminality should be tested by considering reciprocal relationships, for example whether participation in criminal activity may lead to experimentation with drugs or that both criminal behaviour and drug abuse are phenomena resulting from yet a third set of factors.

86. The analysis of research on the impact of the mass media on young people has shown that research is needed on the effects of portrayals of violence on the behaviour and attitude of the general public. Questions remain as to: (a) whether such portrayals may lead to a disproportionate fear of crime; (b) whether depiction of criminal techniques in the mass media may lead to their application; and (c) whether the gap between the aspirations evoked by portrayals of certain life-styles, on the one hand, and by socio-economic reality, on the other, leads to criminal activities.

87. The involvement of minorities in delinquency and the different responses by justice systems calls for further research and attention by policy-makers. The broader perspectives of human migration, cultural autonomy and processes of adaptation, selective policies and practices and changes in the status of minority groups deserve utmost attention.

88. Despite the priority given to prevention in many countries, an inordinately small number of research projects is devoted to this issue. Attention should be paid to the co-ordination of the preventive measures adopted by different sectors of society. Tolerance in society and the community play a significant role in conditioning and predicting the success of preventive programmes. Before launching a particular preventive or control measure in a community or society, there might be a study of tolerance levels. Furthermore, as differences appear to exist between the professional-governmental and the

public responses to delinquency problems, serious attention should be given to closing this gap via co-ordinated social programmes dealing with youth in a way that would not only bring the various social control agencies together but would also provide opportunities for greater non-professional participation.

89.   Taking into account the issues dealt with and emerging from this report, there is a need for increased collaboration between the United Nations institutes, the Secretariat and its network of national correspondents, and other United Nations programmes in the formulation of strategies for and in the undertaking of research on youth crime, on which to base juvenile justice policy. Greater co-ordination and exchange of information would provide a better understanding of the properties and of the changing context of youth crime, from both mono-cultural and cross-cultural perspectives. Also, it would help to provide a firm basis for research policies, with a view towards preventing juvenile crime and ensuring justice for juveniles.

Notes

1/   See Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Caracas, Venezuela, 25 April - 5 September 1980 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.81.IV.4), chap. I, sect. B.

2/   See L. McCardy, "An exploratory paper on the role of the American juvenile and family court judiciary on the prevention, adjucation and treatment of juvenile delinquents/offenders", paper submitted to the Beijing Meeting and D. McClintock, "General report of the International Society for Criminology", paper prepared for the Bellagio Colloquium.

3/   Jospeh G. Weiss, "Jurisdiction and the elusive status offender: A comparison of involvement in delinquency behaviour and status offences" (Washington, D.C., National Juvenile Justice Assessment Center, 1980).

4/   See report of the Beijing Meeting (A/CONF.121/IPM.1); the report of the Secretary-General on the fair treatment of women by the criminal justice system to the Seventh United Nations Congress and to the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control at its Eighth Session (E/AC.57/1984/15); and the United Nations Latin American Institute (ILANUD), "Characteristics and trends in female criminality in recent years" (San José, Costa Rica, 1980).

5/   See Jorge Montero-Castro, "Youth, crime and justice: The exploitation, maltreatment and abandonment of minors" and Adolfo Beria di Argentine, "Youth crime and justice: A difficult subject in evolution", papers submitted to the Beijing Meeting; see also S.V. Borodin, "Soviet criminology on the causes of juvenile delinquency and its control", paper prepared for the Secretariat in 1983; and Ken Pryce, "Juvenile crime in the Caribbean", consultant paper prepared for the Secretariat in 1985.

6/   Interregional project on juvenile social maladjustment and human rights in the context of urban development, carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, Colombia; the United Nations Latin American Institute, Costa Rica; Tata Institute for Social Sciences, India; the Federal Ministry of Social Development, Youth and Culture, Nigeria; and the Ministry of Justice, Senegal.

7/   See J. Rousselet, "The role of youth employment in the prevention of juvenile delinquency", Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, and "The role of institutions of socialization in a changing society", Collected Studies in Criminological Research, vol. XIX (Strasbourg, Council of Europe, European Committee on Crime Problems, 1982), pp. 87-102.

8/   United Nations Social Defence Research Institute, <u>Combatting Drug Abuse and Related Crime</u> No. 21 (Rome, 1984).

9/   United Nations Latin American Institute, "Sistemas de prevención del abuso y tráfico de drogas en Costa Rica" (San José, 1982).

10/   See Richard Harding, "The impact of mass media upon youth crime", report submitted to the Beijing meeting.

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