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THREE MODELS OF SOCIAL PLANNING FOR HUMAN SERVICES IN ENERGY-IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

Human service workers encounter many challenges as they face energy boom town situations in the Western United States. Currently, they respond following one of two models, corresponding to the role reserved for human services in the conservative laissez-faire and liberal enlightened capitalism models of American corporate behavior.

In the first model of social planning for human services in impacted communities, human service workers react after the boom, sweeping up the human debris in the wake of laissez-faire corporate approaches to energy development. In the second model, they participate proactively with enlightened capitalists in planning energy projects, but do not call into question the appropriateness of such energy projects. Both of these models accept the definition of the situation which holds that an energy supply crisis exists, thus justifying no-holds-barred development of our natural resources

Based on the following four notions:

- . A redefinition of the energy crisis as not solely a supply crisis.
- . The potentials of solar energy and conservation or "soft path" means of meeting our energy needs.
- . The devastating cost-benefit return to boom town residents, and
- . The likelihood of boom towns becoming rural colonies of oppressed people.

a third model of social planning for human services in impacted communities is proposed. Under this model, the human service worker would strive to meet basic human service needs but also work as an enabler, organizing against hard path and for soft path energy projects, raising consciousness, and building groups and coalitions. Such a model has implications for human service workers' political postures, necessary content knowledge, and awareness of extra-local political economic phenomena operating upon communities.

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The reappearance of boom towns in the inter-mountain Western United States has triggered a massive wave of concern, research, conferences, and hectic scrambling to respond among human service workers, public officials, and social and behavioral scientists. The basic outlines of what constitutes an energy-impacted community have, by now, been delineated almost to the point of overkill (e.g. Cortese and Jones, 1977; Freudenberg, 1976; Davenport and Davenport, 1980). Moving beyond that first level of knowledge, researchers have now started to specialize by addressing the plight of various at-risk populations, such as women, racial/ethnic minorities, and the elderly (Moen, 1980; Robbins, 1980; Larson, 1980).

Boom towns or impacted communities are nothing new in American history: the West experienced them during the nineteenth century as part of gold, silver and coal mining. Early in the twentieth century, many boom towns were spawned in the wake of coal, gas, oil, and uranium mining. What is new about this current wave of boom towns is threefold. First, the number of boom towns simultaneously occurring, eventually to be in the hundreds, is without precedent. Second, the physical and monetary scales of energy projects have greatly expanded since the projects of the nineteenth century. For example, current oil shale industry plans would bring 200,000 new residents to a four county area of Colorado to produce up to two million barrels of oil per day, creating the world's largest underground mine. Third, public attention has been focused on these energy projects and the resultant boom towns as never before through the efforts of scholars, public officials and even TV's 60 Minutes.

The reason behind this rapid growth of Western boom towns is energy and the generally accepted lack of it. In America, there is a wide-spread belief that we are currently facing an "energy crisis" as a consequence of continued high energy consumption and diminished or likely-to-be depleted oil supplies from the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC). In other words, the energy crisis is defined as one of supply not meeting demand. Behavior flowing from this definition of the situation has taken the form of a mad flurry of energy extraction and development projects in the West. Here one finds the nation's largest supplies of oil, coal, oil shale, and uranium, from which to produce electricity and petroleum-based products (Rounds, 1980, 1980, 1980; Smith, 1980).

Enormous social problems result for small rural communities from the rapid influx of new populations of temporary construction workers and permanent operating forces for mines or power plants (Mountain West Research, 1975; McKeown and Lantz, n.d.). Unable to absorb so many newcomers and their demands in a short time, communities, local governments, human services, public schools, other specific community institutions, and individual persons show definite signs of strain. This process of rapid growth has been described by Cortese and Jones (1977) and later by Massey (1979) as one of urbanization or modernization experienced in a time-compressed way, as a community goes through in two to five years what ordinarily might take 20 to 50 years.

Current Models of Social Planning

With so many problems making up boom town life, it is no surprise that human service workers come to play a visible role in such communities in service de-

livery and social planning for service delivery. Although most of the human service response to "boom" conditions is merely an after-the-fact reaction in the best ways workers know, one can retrospectively discern two models of social planning for human services which corresponds to two different models of business conduct within a capitalist political economy.

In the first model of corporate behavior, articulated in the traditional laissez-faire philosophy initiated by Adam Smith in the 1775 publication The Wealth of Nations and now the cornerstone of Reaganomics, private enterprise operates relatively free of public or government intervention. The conservative assumption supporting the laissez-faire model contends that the invisible hand of the marketplace will result in a match between supply and demand, and the corollary assumption is that human needs will be satisfied by private enterprises' market operations. Today the economic theories of Milton Friedman (1978) and David Stockman best epitomize the twentieth century version of conservative economics.

Applied to energy development, this conservative model holds that projects geared to produce more coal, oil, oil shale or uranium should be allowed to happen, and the problems generated by them will somehow be dealt with through the marketplace. The human service worker's role under this reactive approach is that of "capitalism's janitor", cleaning up the human debris which the private marketplace does not find to be a profitable venture. Thus, one sees in boom towns, human service workers dashing about madly trying to cope with increased incidences of mental illness, substance abuse, community tensions, child and spouse abuse, and the like. They find themselves facing not only a quantitative impact of providing more of the existing services to the swollen populations, but also a qualitative impact of having to provide services in situations they've never or rarely handled or witnessed before. For example, one Colorado county had a half-dozen child abuse cases in pre-boom years; that number mushroomed to 34 the following year as growth occurred and 50 during the next 9 months (Quality Development Associates, 1979). Davenport and Davenport describe the qualitative impact theme in discussing the lack of rape crisis services in Wyoming boom towns.¹

Depicted graphically, this model of social planning for human services under a laissez-faire political economy appears thus:



¹The notion of qualitative vs. quantitative impacts comes from Cortese and Jones (1977), and has been applied to the area of rape crisis services by Davenport and Davenport (1979).

Although laissez-faire philosophy in its pure eighteenth century form is not widely subscribed to today, many corporations still try to act out that set of beliefs and President Reagan's brand of economics harkens back to that earlier philosophy, with its stress on deregulation, decontrol, and the unleashing of private enterprise.

Increasingly during the last decade, this model of business operation became harder to follow due to governmental intervention in the form of Environmental Impact Statements, permitting processes, energy facility siting councils, and other regulations, plus the defensive actions of environmental and consumer groups.

Somewhat in contrast to model one is a second model of American corporate behavior, generally referred to as "enlightened capitalism" which has become the prevalent approach. Subscribing to this model, an energy company proposing a major project in a rural area will put considerable effort into "front end" planning so as to minimize the negative physical and social impacts of the project, thereby defusing opposition to the project and lowering costs in the long run. Specialized in-house staff or consultants, sometimes with a background in human services, are retained by the company to work with the targeted community to engage in planning activities on any number of issues, including human services. As a consequence of such efforts, human service councils may emerge to coordinate existing or proposed human service programs.

One noteworthy example of this model is the so-called "French Connection" in Mercer County, North Dakota where a French company, the Department of Energy, and the local communities have teamed up to work on energy development in such a way that negative impacts are minimized (Pierce and Hagstrom, 1981). Because of its more proactive posture, model two of social planning for human service delivery is likely to reduce the eventual negative impacts, compared with the results of model one, and that constitutes a difference. The similarity between the two models is, however, more significant: like model one, model two still accepts the legitimacy and the appropriateness of the profit motive and private decision making as the driving forces in setting energy policy, and thereby shaping Western communities. As such, this model reflects modern liberal philosophy. Diagrammatically, model two appears as follows:



A Critical Perspective

The social problems of impacted communities have come upon the human service professions very rapidly and with such force that little time has been available for critical reflection on which model one is following (if indeed one is even aware of following a model), what definitions of situations one is acting upon,

and what political ramifications flow from one's actions.

Nearly a decade of experience on the part of the senior author as researcher and consultant in impacted communities leads us to propose another perspective on social planning for human services in energy-impacted communities. This third model is derived from a very different definition of the energy situation as well as from a critical analysis of the experiences of boom towns.

First, the definition of the energy crisis as one of supply is open to debate (Bramhall, 1981). That current demand is outstripping current supply is not contested. However, current demand is largely a contrivance, brought about by energy company and general corporate policies which foster higher consumption to generate higher profits. In addition, that demand stands where it does because of wide-spread practices of using overly sophisticated forms of energy for very simple tasks, such as, in effect, boiling water in nuclear power plants to convert to electricity which is inefficiently transmitted to homes to boil water and heat homes! The energy crisis is also one of rising costs as we continue to exhaust the relatively cheaper forms of energy, leaving us with a depleted supply of relatively more costly energy forms. When energy costs for households go up, so do energy company profits, built as they are, on a percentage basis; this means the energy crisis is a cost-benefit one: as consumers' costs increase corporate suppliers benefit.

Another facet of the energy crisis, redefined, is the fact that energy forms currently pursued, such as oil shale and nuclear power, are potentially dangerous to our society, in and of themselves. Finally, in one respect the energy supply is also an artificial one to the extent that this nation was forced into an unhealthy reliance on foreign energy sources only after American corporations made their decisions to invest in those more profitable sources abroad rather than developing domestic sources.

Consequently, a combination of federal and corporate energy policies focused on supply increases, with the resultant "rape of the West" masks over larger questions of energy costs, forms, and controls. Underlying that supply-oriented thrust is an assumption, which can be refuted, that energy growth is necessary to have general economic growth; the California Energy Commission has successfully refuted that assumption by showing that billions saved by the use of conservation and alternative energy sources generate other consumer demands and hence, new jobs (Doctor, 1980).

A second source of an alternative model for human service planning in impacted communities comes from the mounting evidence that a very sizable portion of the nation's energy needs could be derived from renewable sources, including various forms of solar energy, and that demand could be significantly reduced through conservation measures - a position amply documented by Amory Lovins (1979). To use Lovins' terminology, we would do better following a "soft path" of reliance on conservation and renewable sources of energy, than a "hard path" of reliance on nonrenewable sources such as coal, gas, oil, oil shale, and uranium. Again, California has taken significant steps in state-encouraged use of soft path energy forms, such as solar-powered homes, wind machines, biomass, etc. Such a policy, applied nationwide, would reduce the degree to which nonrenewable energy projects

and their attendant boom towns need to be perpetuated (Doctor, 1980).

Third among our sources of this alternative model is a critical analysis of the benefits generally portrayed as accruing to impacted communities. This more critical analysis reveals a negative balance sheet. Evidence is mounting that there's very little benefit to having one's community impacted by a conventional energy project:

- . At-risk populations, such as women, minorities, and the elderly are getting little out of the economic largesse that is accumulated in boom towns (Moen, 1980; Feldman, 1980; National Urban Coalition 1980);
- . The costs of local areas from environmental devastation cannot be recouped (INFORM, 1980);
- . The new jobs created by large-scale energy projects are not going to local residents as promised (Lovejoy, 1980);
- . The wealth produced by such hard path energy projects does not remain in the local area to be used in meeting human needs generated by the project (Colorado Open Space Council, 1976);
- . The lion's share of the new business opportunities in impacted communities are captured by absentee chain operations, not by the local businesspeople who had enthusiastically supported the project believing it would bring in new business for them but often lacked the entrepreneurial skill or drive to capture the opportunities of expanded markets (Cortese and Jones, 1977).²

Finally, this alternative model builds on the kind of analysis being developed by Lovejoy and Krannich, who hold that rural areas being industrialized by large-scale energy projects amount to little more than colonies of urban areas (Lovejoy and Krannich, 1980). Lovejoy and Krannich quote Gray and Flinn (1976) who suggest colonial-type dominance exists in rural areas being industrialized when the following conditions exist:

- . The employment generated goes to non-local residents;
- . The finished product (in this case energy) goes to non-locals (i.e., high energy consumers in cities and suburbs) while the negative impacts stay in the rural area;
- . The economic and political exchange relations between urban and rural areas are out of balance; and
- . The rural area receives inadequate, if any, compensation for the resources extracted from it.

Thus, the rural community being impacted by energy projects is not just losing its autonomy and way of life, but it is becoming a colony housing America's newest but not yet officially recognized oppressed minority.

A different definition of the situation would generate for the human service worker different definitions of goals and roles as is spelled out in the following chart:

²Colorado State Treasurer, Roy Romer, has repeatedly noted the capital-shortage problem of small firms in energy-impacted areas (Ruhl, 1980).

| Differ-entiating Aspects \ Model | Conservative | Liberal | Radical |
|---|---|--|--|
| Definition of human service issues | Human needs will be met by reliance on market mechanisms, with some minimal public assistance for "truly needy" | Human needs are not being taken into account in project planning and should be | Decisions about human needs (as well as everything else with regard to project) are being made on basis of profit, not human needs |
| Human service worker goal | Preserve social harmony | Serve immediate human service needs | Foster social change to preserve local autonomy |
| How social planning should occur | In minimal way so as not to interfere with market operations | At local level, by human service authorities, with consumer involvement | Broader discussion beyond human services to larger social changes |
| What human services should be provided | "Safety nets" services to "truly needy" | Whole range of standard services for various at-risk populations | Basic human services + consciousness-raising and group-building activities as "private ills" are translated into "public troubles" |
| Roles for human service workers | Direct service, brokering of services | Direct service, brokering, social planning, lobbying, some advocacy | Those in liberal column + organizing and coalition-building (enabling) |
| Possible employers of human service workers | Local agencies - public and private | Local agencies - public and private | Local agencies - public and private + extra-local organizations (churches, consumer groups, public interest law firms, environmental groups, etc.) |

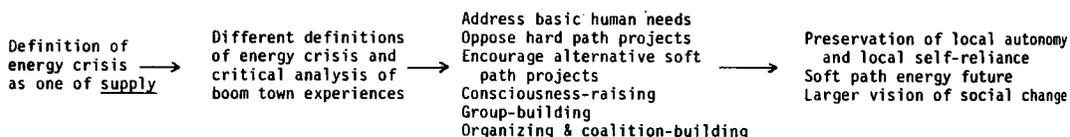
From this critical/radical perspective, the situation in energy-impacted communities is nothing different than the usual operations of capitalism but does show those operations in bold relief. This affords the opportunity for the human service worker to translate the expression of "private ills" into a broader analysis of "public troubles", and to translate the expression of local negative so-

cial into an analysis of societal political economic issues. The skewed distribution of the costs and benefits in a boom town is easy to convey to those paying the costs, while the human service worker is in the process of meeting basic needs.

This human service worker might move beyond basic service provision to group-building à la Middleman and Goldberg's (1974) paradigm and beyond that to regional coalition-building since no small rural town on its own will be able to contend very successfully with multi-national energy corporations. Looking at the issues in the community more holistically, the worker might respond to the unemployment situation (which often sells a community on a "hard path" energy project) by organizing around the creation of alternative energy projects which have been shown to be more labor-intensive (Grossman and Daneker, 1977; Commoner, 1977). Such economic development efforts might complement efforts to stop "hard path" energy projects, where that is still a feasible strategy.

In summary, the human service worker operating from this basis would address basic human needs but also work as an enabler to broaden the horizons of clients by educating about energy issues, to challenge projects based on old definitions, and to forge creative alternatives that foster local self-reliance.

The differences between this third model and the two currently followed models show up on the following diagram of model three:



This third approach, as far as the authors know, is not being employed systematically anywhere by human service workers. It will be labelled, correctly, as a "political" orientation to human service delivery, but so are the other two models. One's initial analysis or definition of the situation is indeed a political act in that it implies support of one national energy policy or another, accepts or challenges a given set of power relations, and has a defined (or ignored) set of implications for the political economic future of the impacted community.

Implications for the Human Service Professions

All three postures described here are political. Model one buys into a conservative philosophy, model two subscribes to a liberal ideology, and model three derives from a more progressive or radical set of beliefs. The first key implication of the foregoing analysis, as contended by Galper (1975), is that human service work has a political dimension.

A second implication is that the modern human service worker has a responsibility to acquire content knowledge as well as the usual process skills, in this case, knowledge about energy forms, uses, costs, etc. Failing to prepare oneself in this way raises questions about professional responsibility.

Third, there is a need to focus attention on a community's political economy, that basic set of human relations centering on the business of producing what a society or a community needs to keep going, as a basic shaping element of our society and our communities. That this element of analysis of human service planning and delivery is often ignored is a direct reflection of its omission in most human service curricula.

Human service professionals generally view a community in terms of social structure comprised of its set of institutions and their roles; a culture involving beliefs, values and norms; and a spatial or physical form. In all communities, but especially in energy boom towns, the larger society's political economy must be recognized as a significant example of what Roland Warren (1963) called "vertical relations". The modern boom town cannot be fully understood without reference to the operations of multi-national energy companies and their relations to the government, and the interaction of those two extra-local systems yields the energy policies that give rise to the phenomenon of boom towns. Ignoring those vertical relations of the societal political economy puts human service workers in an unfortunate posture as reinforcers of the powers that contribute to the destruction of community in energy boom towns.

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