

September 1995

Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare Vol. 22, No. 3 (September 1995)

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(1995) "Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare Vol. 22, No. 3 (September 1995)," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 22: Iss. 3, Article 1.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15453/0191-5096.2280>

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol22/iss3/1>

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Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

VOLUME XXII
NUMBER 3
September, 1995

The JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WELFARE is edited and published by the SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

JSSW is sponsored jointly by Western Michigan University, the College of Health and Human Services, and School of Social Work.

The substantial support of Louisiana State University in the publication of the journal is gratefully acknowledged.

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An Opportunity Lost: The Failure of the Michigan Commission on Death and Dying

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The Michigan Commission on Death and Dying was created to advise the state legislature on the politically volatile question of assisted suicide. Proposals were considered to allow assisted suicide with safeguards, and to continue the state's temporary absolute ban. Because of the political composition of the Commission, however, no consensus was reached, and the opportunity to enact humane but careful legislation seems to have passed. This paper examines the proposals the Commission considered, the alliances reflected in the voting, and some problems the Commission failed to address.

With the election Nov '94 and the December ruling by the Michigan Supreme Court in various lawsuits involving Dr. Jack Kevorkian and others,¹ it appears that the absolute, but temporary², prohibition on assisted suicide enacted by the Michigan legislature well over two years ago in order to give itself time to study the question has now become permanent. The Court has ruled that assisting suicide is in Michigan a common law felony which may in certain circumstances be prosecuted as murder. Though public and medical opinion seem clearly to favor some form of humane relief,³ in the new state legislature those opposing assisted suicide are evidently stronger than in the old⁴, and the Court's ruling will evidently be allowed to stand as Michigan law. Thoughtful, balanced legislation which would provide relief of suffering while avoiding certain dangers seen by some, is evidently not likely to be enacted or even brought to the floor. Thus a brief window of opportunity to rationalize Michigan law, which opened with the creation early in 1993 of the Michigan Commission on Death and Dying, appears to have closed, if not irrevocably at least for the foreseeable future. The reasons for this are no doubt many, but perhaps some of the blame can be laid to

the working of the Commission itself. Created to guide the legislature on this controversial and emotionally-charged issue, the Commission's 22 members failed to arrive at a consensus position, and instead of offering clear guidance, produced three proposals, none of which received more than nine votes. Even more serious from the point of view of those favoring at least some right to assisted suicide, none of the three proposals could be taken seriously as the basis for possible legislation; only one actually recommended decriminalizing assisted suicide, and this was so covered with qualifications and restrictions as to raise questions whether it would be more likely to enable those in need to take advantage of the right, or to discourage them from doing so.

This paper is an analysis of the commission's proposals and of the shifting alliances of its members as reflected in the voting. If there is a moral to be drawn from this, it is that politically designed commissions are no more likely than legislatures themselves to arrive at reasonable and humane solutions to emotionally powerful problems. The Death and Dying Commission was composed not of experts but of political constituencies pushing what turned out to be incompatible agendas; created to buy time and propose a solution which might to some extent get the legislature off the hook, the Commission effectively nullified itself because its member groups were more interested in defending their constituencies or points of view than in reaching a workable solution.

The Problem Illustrated

Before turning to the Commission, it might be useful to call attention to two stories reported in the press while the Commission was doing its work.

In July 1994 the *NY Times* reported that an 85-year old woman in Vermont had committed suicide by starving herself to death. Though in good health, as the *Times* put it, her eyesight had begun to fail and she had undergone difficult bladder surgery followed by colon surgery, incontinence and pneumonia. She celebrated her 85th birthday, made a last meal of birthday cake, and then refused all further nutrition. Her physician attended with morphine as necessary for discomfort; she died peacefully in her sleep after 6 days of fasting. The *Times* gave her story nearly 10 column inches (*NY Times*, July 20 1994).⁵

Mrs. Eddy was luckier, or cleverer, than many of the AIDS victims studied by a researcher in Vancouver, B.C. He found that half of the 34 assisted suicides he was able to identify were botched. In five cases the victims were unsuccessfully suffocated; in another an attempt was made to slit the victim's wrists with a razor blade; in two cases heroin was injected unsuccessfully; in another case, massive doses of morphine, "a month's supply," were given over a period of four days before death occurred. Similar reports surface elsewhere. "One ethicist told of a man in Illinois who tried to smother his lover with a pillow but ended up asphyxiating him just enough to destroy most of his brain's functions. A New York doctor told of a friend who tried to kill himself by overdosing on his TB medication. He tried a second time on Darvon, and failed again." (NY Times, June 14, 1994)

Mrs. Eddy's son is a medical doctor who wrote up his mother's death in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Eddy, 1994). It seems that his mother was sicker than the *Times'* report acknowledged. "She developed oral thrush, apparently due to the antibiotic treatment for her diarrhea, and her antidepressants got out of balance . . . she became anemic, which was treated with iron, which made her nauseated. She could not eat, she got weak, her skin itched, and her body ached . . . they found a lump in her breast and atrial fibrillation." After a cholecystectomy, Mrs. Eddy needed second surgery for rectal prolapse. "She especially hated the thought of more surgery and the intense postoperative fatigue. On the other hand the prolapse was very painful . . . She knew that she could not possibly walk . . . again unless it was fixed . . . Her main concern was to avoid incontinence." Mrs. Eddy decided to have the rectal surgery, which left her "totally incontinent 'at both ends,' as she put it. She was bed-ridden, anemic, exhausted, nauseated, achy, itchy . . . her eyesight had begun to fail . . . she could no longer read."

Mrs. Eddy and her son discussed *Final Exit* and found it of little use: "Patients can rarely get the pills, especially . . . in a nursing home . . . Anyone who provides the pills . . . can be arrested . . . Even if . . . the pills are available, they can be difficult to take, especially by the frail. Most likely, my mother would fall asleep before she could swallow the full dose . . ."

Starvation turns out to be the only solution. In a passage quoted in the *Times*, Dr. Eddy celebrates his mother's death: "Without hoarding pills, without making me a criminal, without putting a bag over her head, and without huddling in a van with a carbon monoxide machine, she had found a way to bring her life gracefully to a close," he wrote. "This death was not a sad death, it was a happy death. It did not come after years of decline, lost vitality, and loneliness, it came at the right time."

Dr. Eddy's reference to a van with a carbon monoxide machine is of course an allusion to Dr. Kevorkian, who had recently been acquitted by a Michigan jury of the felony of "assistance to suicide" in the death of Thomas Hyde, a victim of advanced amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Dr. Kevorkian had admitted to placing, in his van, a mask connected to a carbon monoxide machine over Hyde's face and putting in Hyde's hand the string by which the machine is operated.⁶

Mrs. Eddy's death and the botched attempts of the AIDS victims provide real-life counterpoint to the opinion of the famous anti-establishment psychiatrist, Dr. Thomas Szasz. Writing in the libertarian magazine *Reason* (Szasz, 1994), Szasz castigates Dr. Kevorkian as "dangerous," "ominous," "a threat," impugns Kevorkian's "purported compassion," and remarkably implicates Kevorkian as a participant in what Szasz calls "medicine's war on freedom and self-determination." The threat is not that doctors wish to kill people, but that they wish to control the means by which this is to be done. But Szasz stops short of advocating that because their motive is self-aggrandizement, not compassion, doctors must be prevented from assisting in suicide. His solution is the free market. "[T]he fact is that neither killing another, nor killing oneself, nor helping a person kill himself requires medical expertise," Szasz writes. "Giving a person a drug to help him commit suicide is like giving him liquor to help him become drunk . . . Judging by published reports, the persons whom Kevorkian has 'assisted' could have ingested a fatal dose of a lethal drug, had they access to such a drug and the courage to use it. The fact that drugs used for committing suicide are now available by prescription only is a cultural-legal artifact. Prior to 1914, lethal drugs, like other consumer products, were available on the free market." (Szasz, 1994) Whether doctors could safely

be allowed to administer these drugs or at least advise on their use without jeopardizing everyone's freedom, Dr. Szasz does not say. Surprisingly, he fails to mention self-starvation as a method of free market self-help even simpler than drugs.

The Commission

The Michigan Commission on Death and Dying was established by the state legislature to guide it in its deliberations on the problem presented to it by Dr. Kevorkian. The legislation⁷ which established the Commission also created the felony of "assistance to suicide." The membership of the commission was established by the statute, and consisted of 22 organizations (see Appendix) which have an interest in the question. Religious groups were conspicuously omitted, though a Roman Catholic priest served as representative of a secular organization.⁸ Each organization, among them the Michigan Association of Suicidology, an anti-suicide group claiming "approximately seventy-five members," ("Report," Appendix A, position statement of Michigan Association of Suicidology) had one vote. Though created with fairness and breadth in mind, the composition of the Commission did not in the end please everyone, notably certain disability advocates, some of whom tend to regard assisted suicide as a method of disposing of the unvalued disabled, and who proposed via picketing and disruption⁹ that the entire Commission membership be replaced by people with disabilities (*NY Times*, Mar. 6, 1994; *American Medical News*, Ap. 11 1994, pg. 11). Not all the member groups took a position, notably two of the most influential, the Michigan State Medical Society and the Prosecuting Attorneys Association, both of whom cited disagreement among their members as the reason not to commit themselves.¹⁰ (The representative of the state Medical Society, who was also the Commission's chair, abstained on all votes; however the Prosecuting attorneys allowed their representative to vote his conscience, which he did against the proposal decriminalizing "aid-in-dying" and for the proposal to make the prohibition permanent). The work of the Commission proceeded in the usual manner: open meeting, public forums and presentations, scrutiny of documents, subcommittee reports etc.¹¹ But the principle on which the Commission's

membership was determined and the inability of influential member organizations to take a position virtually guaranteed that the Commission would be deadlocked, as it was.

The Commission did reach consensus on several points, none more important than that some public policy was required. The relevant statement is worth quoting in full. **"A significant conclusion reached by the Commission is that some permanent policy regarding assisted suicide should be enacted by the Legislature. The Commission views the current situation, whereby the ban on assisting suicide is scheduled to sunset six months after this report is issued, as untenable. There have been proponents speaking before the Commission who have favored this "No law" option. The Commission felt very strongly that this option would be irresponsible as a matter of public policy and would create tremendous confusion for the people of the state. A motion was made and approved . . . to eliminate the "No law" option as an advisable recommendation to the Legislature." ("Report," Part II. Bold type in original.)**

In addition, the Commission unanimously endorsed 13 "points of consensus" ranging from public education on advance health care directives, to easing access to pain medication.¹²

The Votes

The Commission considered three proposals on the question of assisted suicide. The first, recommending decriminalization with safeguards, and including a model "death with dignity" act, received only 9 votes of the 22 member Commission. Seven members voted against and 6 either were absent or abstained. The second proposal, "Procedural Safeguards," neither endorsed nor opposed decriminalization, but recommended a set of safeguards should the Legislature decide to decriminalize. This also received 9 votes, of whom only 4 had voted for proposal one; five members voted against and 8 were not present or abstained. Finally, there was a third report, "opposing legalized assisted suicide;" this received 5 votes for, 9 against, the others absent or abstaining.

The same five votes cast in favor of the proposal opposing legalization, also were cast against the proposal to decriminalize. There were the "hard-core" votes opposed to legalization. They

were the suicidology group, the Council for Independent Living, the Head Injury Survivor's Council, The Prosecutors' Association representative, and Right to Life, the anti-abortion group.

The other two votes against decriminalization-with-safeguards came from the osteopathic physicians and surgeons association, and the Michigan Hospice Organization. Both of these groups abstained on the second and third proposals. Hospice explained this seemingly inconsistent position as follows: "Rather than supporting legislation dealing with assisted suicide, the MHO supports legislation which requires education to address pain and symptom control and wholistic, supportive care for those with terminal illness and their families." MHO pointed out that the 13-point consensus statement contains much of their position. ("Report," Appendix). It would seem, nonetheless, that to oppose decriminalization is, at least by implication, to favor continuing at least some form of prohibition.

There was a bloc of nine organizations that voted yes for the first proposal, decriminalization-with-safeguards, and against the third, to oppose legalization. No other organization voted either for the first nor against the third; these nine organizations thus constituted a consistent plurality on the commission in favor of liberalizing the law, a plurality which, however, was unable to attract the three additional votes needed to become a majority. They are: the Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Health Care Association, Hemlock, the associations representing nurses, psychiatrists,¹³ psychologists, and social workers, the Senior Advocates Council¹⁴ and the State Bar.¹⁵

The most interesting proposal in some ways was the second, the procedural safeguards proposal, which neither endorsed nor opposed assisted suicide but recommended safeguards should the Legislature decide to decriminalize. This report was largely the work of advocates for the disabled. The disability community struggled with the problem of assistance to suicide, but was unable to reconcile the promise of offering to the disabled greater control over their own lives with the fear of reinforced social stereotypes and negative valuations of disabled people. Thus both the head injuries group and the independent living council formed part of the hard core opposition to assisted suicide, both groups opposing decriminalization and supporting continuation

of the ban, while the long-term care group and the retarded citizens group (ARC-Michigan) took no position on either decriminalization or permanent prohibition. The Council for Independent Living explained its position in a statement describing its aim as "to facilitate the unity and empowerment of people with disabilities." This they explain as "self-determination and having both the right and the opportunity to make decisions about the issues that affect one's life." They pointed out that assisted suicide could be regarded as a form of self-determination, but feared that a public policy allowing it as an option will reinforce stereotypes which work against disabled people. "These advocates feel that by permitting some form of assisted suicide available only to people with disabilities and chronic illness, the Michigan legislature will both provide a subtle coercion for people with disabilities and chronic illness to end their lives and open the door to active euthanasia in which the decision to end an individual's life is made by the medical establishment or dictated by social norms." ("Report," Appendix A)

Proposal two recommended safeguards without either endorsing or rejecting assisted suicide. Three of the five hard-core pro-ban groups (suicidology, independent living, head injury) voted yes on proposal two. This position is at least consistent: no decriminalization, continuation of the ban, but safeguards should decriminalization be adopted. Of the other two hard-core groups, Right to Life Michigan (RLM) voted against proposal two and the prosecuting attorneys abstained, each perhaps fearing that a yes vote could implicitly be seen as endorsing assisted suicide.¹⁶ By isolating itself from its allies in the disability community, RLM demonstrated its more categorical opposition to assisted suicide. The other two groups who voted no on decriminalization, hospice and the osteopaths, abstained on continuing the present ban; the osteopaths also abstained on proposal two, but Hospice voted yes.

The plurality decriminalization alliance split on proposal two: the ACLU, Hemlock, the psychiatrists, and the state bar joined RLM and voted no, the health care association, nurses, social workers and Senior advocates voted yes, and the psychologists abstained. The other five yes votes on proposal two came from three of the hard-core opponents of assisted suicide, plus Hospice and Better Care (the long-term care advocacy group). Both these

groups abstained on continuing the ban; Hospice voted against, Better Care abstained, on decriminalization.

These shifting coalitions, and the reasons for the votes, indicate the difficulty of reaching consensus. First, fully five of the 22 members either abstained or were not present for all three votes; no explanation is given in the report why certain groups were absent from the voting. Two groups (Better Care and the osteopaths) abstained on two of the votes, and three other groups (Hospice, psychiatrists, prosecutors) abstained once. Thus ten groups were unable to reach a position on at least one of three proposals. Second, apart from the five total abstainers, no more than four organizations adopted common positions on all three votes: health care, nurses, seniors and social workers voted yes on 1 and 2, no on 3; ACLU, Hemlock, psychiatrists and the state bar voted yes on 1, no on 2 and 3. Another set of three organizations voted no on 1, yes on 1 and 2: suicidology, independent living, and head injuries. That is to say, of the 17 groups voting on at least one proposal, no more than 4 voted the same way on all three proposals. (This does not of course take into account unreported straw votes and other informal measures of viewpoint).

in table form:

1	2	3	
Y	Y	N	health care, nurses, seniors, social work
Y	N	N	ACLU, Hemlock, psychiatrists, state Bar
N	Y	Y	suicidology, independent living, head injuries
N	N	Y	Right to Life
A	Y	A	Better Care
N	A	A	osteopaths
N	Y	A	Hospice
Y	A	N	psychologists
N	A	Y	prosecutors

Of course the second proposal complicated matters, splitting both the 9 member pro group and the 5 member anti group. Ironically Right to Life joined the most liberal groups, ACLU and Hemlock, in voting against proposal two. However the second proposal was in a sense the common ground proposal, neither

endorsing nor rejecting assisted suicide but specifying what everyone had agreed on in principle already, the need for legislation with safeguards and conditions. That even this proposal fared no better than the others, gaining only 9 of a possible 22 votes, is significant. Though all favor some kind of legislation, some who are opposed to decriminalization will not consider safeguards even hypothetically; some who favor decriminalization oppose safeguards they regard as unduly burdensome; others so fear abuse that the safeguards they endorse would make the decriminalization almost worthless.

Procedural Safeguards

Since the clear middle-ground position is decriminalization with safeguards, I shall next examine the safeguards developed in the first two proposals. There are some differences between the two proposals but it is difficult to say which set of safeguards is stricter. I shall quote from the summary of the decriminalization proposal, the "death with dignity" act:

"Only persons who have a terminal condition (an incurable or irreversible condition which would likely result in death within six months) or a condition involving irreversible suffering (an irreversible, progressive, debilitating or degenerative disease with unbearable or unacceptable suffering emanating from a physical condition) would qualify for aid-in-dying. Someone suffering from a solely psychological condition (such as situational depression) would NOT be eligible.

"Before any aid-in-dying is given, a person must. . .

- Record an official request for assistance, witnessed by two unrelated, disinterested persons.
- Be examined and counseled by two physicians to determine if the person has an eligible condition and to explore all possible alternatives . . .
- Be examined by a psychiatrist or psychologist, to determine the person's mental competence.
- Be counseled by a social worker to explore social service and support services which might assist the person in living in comfort and dignity.

- Be counseled by a professional in pain management or a certified hospice professional, where appropriate, to explore options that might alleviate suffering.
- Have compliance with this process certified by the probate court.
- Make two further direct requests for aid-in-dying to the attending physician witnessed by two unrelated, disinterested persons, with a waiting period of 7 days between the requests."

I am not, as the humor columnist says, making this up; this is the proposal supported by the ACLU and Hemlock, the Commission's most ardent proponents of decriminalization. The alternative "procedural safeguards" proposal, developed by the Council for Independent Living and ARC-Michigan (retarded citizens), though explicitly written to protect disabled people whose lives are said to be put in jeopardy by decriminalization of assisted suicide, is in some ways more liberal, but in other ways stricter, than the decriminalization model statute. (The title of the alternative proposal is revealing: "Procedural Safeguards against the Exploitation of Personal Autonomy and Vulnerability in the Decision to Terminate One's Life".)¹⁷ Eligibility is based on "irreversible suffering from a physical condition at a level which the individual finds unbearable." This delightfully vague statement seems to allow more opportunity for the individual to decide how much suffering is enough, compared with the decriminalization proposal which says the suffering must "emanate" from a physical condition as described. Under procedures, in addition to the patient's assertion of his/her request witnessed by two impartial witnesses, there are four required consultations. Before each consultation the patient must "reaffirm his or her intent to continue with the process." This is to be done (each time!) by completing a form whose content is specified. Before each consultation the patient must also request a "treatment summary" be sent to the consulting professional.

The consultations are with a physician who not only verifies the condition but is given several other powers and responsibilities including "to document barriers, including financial barriers, which prevent the individual from accessing identified health care interventions"; a social worker, a mental health worker, and

"at least one other expert who could provide meaningful support and assistance to ameliorate the unbearable suffering of the individual [including hospice] . . ." The mental health worker is required to call in a second professional if necessary to assess competence; absolute power is given to the mental health workers to terminate the process if "impaired judgment" is discovered (the document does not say what to do if the mental health workers disagree about this, nor does it say whether the patient adjudged impaired may dismiss the mental health worker and choose another).

To assure that no stone is left unturned in exploring alternatives to suicide, the proposal also mandates what seem to be a whole series of further referrals: "In addition to performing the tasks specified, *each* [emphasis added] of the consulting professionals will be responsible to offer a referral to a 'Personal Advocate,' [not defined] whose role it will be to assist the individual in accessing those support services which the individual chooses to pursue."

When all of these consultation are completed, the Probate court then has an oversight role "to ensure compliance with the procedures."

Whether it is possible, not to say ethical and moral, to construct legislation whose restrictions are so onerous as to discourage people from using its provisions, is a question for philosophers and legal theorists. Questions of unconscionable conditions aside, it remains to be seen who would be eligible for the aid-in-dying privilege, and for what it would be that they are eligible. One can appreciate that under both proposals eligibility is not restricted to those with terminal conditions suffering unmanageable pain, but extends to those with degenerative diseases and "unacceptable" suffering, a term not defined other than by implication to exclude "a solely psychological condition." Would Mrs. Eddy be eligible? Would all of the AIDS victims? The promising vagueness of both the first and second proposals cannot be said to exclude that they might, though doctors fearing prosecution might prudently hesitate to certify them as eligible under the certification requirements. I would suggest however that any "eligibility" criteria failing to meet the Mrs. Eddy test—a test based simply on the premise that someone who is going to kill herself

anyway ought to have the right to be helped by her physician, without the physician being put at risk of criminal prosecution—is unsatisfactory.

More interesting is the question of what are the benefits for which beneficiaries of the legislation would be eligible. After publication of the Commission's report its chair, Howard Brody, a medical doctor who is also a thoughtful and respected professor of philosophy, published an article (Brody, 1994) expressing his disappointment. It was not the Commission's inability to offer guidance to the legislature that troubled him, but the lack of philosophical analysis in the Commission's three proposals. Citing recently published work, Brody pointed out two alternative methods of terminating life, both based on hospice techniques: Mrs. Eddy's route, refusal of nutrition with medical support; and "barbiturate coma," used to assist patients who fail to respond to more routine pain management, in which patients are rendered comatose until death occurs, often in a matter of hours. The question is whether either of these methods ought to be regarded as the "aid-in-dying" to which the proposals' procedural safeguards would apply. If so, then these two techniques, which are presumptively legal even under the absolute ban, would be subject to restrictive conditions which might make them unavailable in many cases. If not, then the procedural safeguards would protect people very largely from lethal injections and effective crudities such as back-of-the-van carbon monoxide, which in any case Dr. Kevorkian has resorted to only since the cancellation of his medical license removed his access to lethal drugs. (Kevorkian's original "suicide machine" provided a self-injected lethal dose of potassium chloride. Access to this or similar apparatus would be regulated under the procedural safeguards.)

A month after the release of the Commission's report, Dr. Brody and five co-authors published, in the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*, a proposal for regulating physician-assisted death (Miller, F. G, et al, 1994). The centerpiece of the proposal is mandatory counselling with a trained "palliative care specialist." No other counselling is required. The function of this consultant is partly medical but also partly judicial, as he or she is given appealable veto power over the decision (the consultant's veto can be appealed to a "palliative care committee," whose decision

is final). There are at least two difficulties with the scheme: it is not clear on what grounds other than non-voluntariness the consultant could exercise the veto,¹⁸ nor does the proposal discuss the problem of "forum shopping," ie, how patients could be prevented from selecting consultants known to be favorable to patient's expressed wishes. These difficulties aside however the scheme seems humane and workable with minimum intrusions and burdens, though its quasi-judicial apparatus would clearly not satisfy those proponents of assisted suicide who wish to see no outside interference on the exercise of the right to die. There is no evidence in the Michigan Commission report that such a proposal was even considered by the Commission.

Conclusion

Because of the activism and propagandizing of Dr. Kevorkian, and its mixture of labor union liberalism, human rights activism, and Right to Life religious conservatism, Michigan is doubtless among the most advanced¹⁹ of the states in discussion of assisted suicide, so it might have been hoped that the appointment of a commission to recommend approaches to the problem would have led to some humane resolution which, if not satisfactory to everyone, would be accepted by all but the most unyielding. Establishment of a commission could be seen as a legitimate and even statesmanlike maneuver by a legislature anxious to obtain some distance from the emotional issue and searching for a relatively objective point of view. The failure of the Commission not only to agree on a reasonable proposal but even to lay out fairly the dimensions of the issue and present the plausible alternative solutions, has disappointed those who may have entertained such hopes, and the recent election, coupled with the Supreme Court decision, has apparently assured that these who oppose any decriminalization will carry the day. Opponents see assisted suicide as a piece with euthanasia and abortion, which they regard as the great moral evils of our culture. Proponents of decriminalization seem to lack the moral vigor focused on other human rights issues. Disability advocates, adept at media manipulation, regard decriminalization as suspicious and possibly dangerous (Miller, P. S., 1993). Minorities, who were not present on the Commission

(no members and only two alternates were black) also distrust decriminalization and appeared before it to express their opposition.²⁰ The medical profession is not only split but worried, and unlikely to go much beyond its current neutral position.

Since Dr. Kevorkian was acquitted under the former statute, those who are opposed in principle to any decriminalization will have to solve the problem of jury nullification, so it is unclear that the Legislature would gain anything were it to reenact the former ban. But any legislation purporting to clarify the status of assisted suicide short of an outright ban is likely to be subjected not only to restrictive procedural conditions but to tight definitions limiting who is eligible for the assistance and the kind of medical procedures that are allowed; this could end up criminalizing, or encumbering with procedural safeguards, procedures such as barbiturate coma and even assistance in refusal of nutrition which are presumptively legal and in principle available even under the current prohibition. If that is the outcome, the failure of the Commission will mean more than an opportunity missed to provide relief to those in need; it will also mean that relief has been taken away from sufferers who might have been entitled to it.

APPENDIX I: MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION**Michigan Commission on Death and Dying
Members and Alternate Members and Officers**

Howard Brody, Chairperson
Elsa Shartsis, Vice Chairperson
Deborah Cummings, Secretary

American Association of Retired Persons

Mable Meites, Member

Mary Alice Shulman, Alternate Member

American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan

Elsa Shartsis, Member

Ronald Bishop, Alternate Member

Citizens For Better Care

Marie P. Iverson, Member

Susan Titus, Alternate Member

Health Care Association of Michigan

Wanda Baad, Member

Helen Wentz, Alternate Member

Hemlock of Michigan

Daniel C. Devine, Member

Shaw Livermore, Alternate Member

Michigan Association for Retarded Citizens

Robert D. Aranosian, Member

Marjorie J. Mitchell, Alternate Member

**Michigan Association of Osteopathic Physicians &
Surgeons**

Joseph A. Balog, Member

Melvin Linden, Alternate Member

Michigan Association of Suicidology

Kenneth T. Morris, Member

Alton Kirk, Alternate Member

Michigan Council on Independent Living

Penny Crawley, Member

John Sanford, Alternate Member

Michigan Head Injury Survivor's Council

Diane Kempen, Member

Benjamin Bolger, Alternate Member

Michigan Hospice Organization

Sue Wierengo, Member

Barbara Kowalski, Alternate Member

Michigan Hospital Association

Lisa Vandecaveye, Member

John Lore, Alternate Member

Michigan Nonprofit Homes Association

Thomas F. Schindler, Member

Ethel Stears, Alternate Member

Michigan Nurses Association

Margaret L. Campbell, Member

Denise Jacob, Alternate Member

Michigan Psychiatric Society

Arles Stern, Member

Michigan Psychological Association

Charles Clark, Member

Judith Kovach, Alternate Member

Michigan Senior Advocates Council

Larmer King, Member

Mary Payne, Alternate Member

Michigan State Medical Society

Howard A. Brody, Member

Thomas Payne, Alternate Member

National Association of Social Workers, Michigan Division

Deborah Cummings, Member

Peter D. Weidenarr, Alternate Member

Right to Life of Michigan, Inc.

Edward Rivet II, Member

Bernard Dobranski, Alternate Member

State Bar of Michigan

John D. O'Hair, Member

Martin L. Kotch, Alternate Member

Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan

Patrick M. Shannon, Member

Richard Thompson, Alternate Member

APPENDIX II: PUBLIC ACT NO. 3, PUBLIC ACTS
OF 1993
STATE OF MICHIGAN

Sec 7. (1) A person who has knowledge that another person intends to commit or attempt to commit suicide and who intentionally does either of the following is guilty of criminal assistance to suicide, a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than 4 years or by a fine of not more than \$2,000.00, or both:

- (a) Provides the physical means by which the other person attempts or commits suicide.
- (b) Participates in a physical act by which the other person attempts or commits suicide.
- (2) Subsection (1) shall not apply to withholding or withdrawing medical treatment.
- (3) Subsection (1) does not apply to prescribing, dispensing, or administering medications or procedures if the intent is to relieve pain or discomfort and not to cause death, even if the medication or procedure may hasten or increase the risk of death.
- (4) This section shall take effect February 25, 1993.
- (5) This section is repealed effective 6 months after the date the commission makes its recommendations to the legislature pursuant to section 4.

Section 2. This amendatory act shall take effect February 25, 1993.

This act is ordered to take immediate effect.

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Notes

1. Mich vs. Kevorkian, (___Mich___), Mich. Supreme Court, five cases decided Dec. 13, 1994. Three of the cases involved lower court decisions rejecting various prosecutions of Dr. Kevorkian; these prosecutions were effectively reinstated by the Michigan Supreme Court. The other two cases were suits for declaratory relief brought by petitioners alleging terminal illness and asking for the right to obtain suicide assistance. These petitions were rejected.
2. The felony of "assistance to suicide" was created with an expiration foreseen to thwart Dr. Kevorkian while the Commission deliberated. Before its presumed expiration, the statute had been declared unconstitutional for technical reasons by four Michigan courts, but the Michigan Supreme Court, stayed the Appeals Court orders and then reversed. It was widely reported in November that the prohibition had indeed expired as scheduled, but the legal situation was at that point far from clear. The legislation creating the Commission and enacting the temporary ban required the Commission to report "within 15 months after the effective date of this act," ie, by May 23 1994. The section (#7) prohibiting "assistance to suicide" "is repealed effective 6 months after the commission makes its recommendations to the legislature." Because of the legal challenges and court rulings, the report issued by the commission dated 6 June may or may not be the report required by the statute to set the six-month clock running. The report itself was not issued as a document of the state of Michigan, but was published by the Michigan State Medical Society. In overturning lower court decisions and holding that the statute was not unconstitutional, the Michigan Supreme court failed to address the question (presumably made irrelevant by its ruling) whether the temporary ban had even expired.
3. A recent *Detroit News* poll revealed that 57% of Michigan residents favor allowing assisted suicide under some restrictions, while 9% favor allowing it without restrictions. Only 30% favored an absolute ban. According to a letter in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (331:812–813, Sept 22 '94) a survey of Michigan physicians showed that 41% of physicians favored allowing assisted suicide under some circumstances, 17% favored keeping it illegal, and 37% preferred to have no legislation on the subject.
4. In the lame duck legislative session which ended in Dec. 1994, majorities in each house voted for a permanent absolute ban, but the two houses failed to

agree on whether the question should be put to a vote of the people, and the legislation died with the session. The legislature elected in 1994 is slightly more conservative (ie, Republican) than its predecessor.

5. The headline reads "A Woman Charts an Unusual Route to Death."
6. *People v. Kevorkian*, Detroit Recorder's Court, #93-10158. The jury verdict of acquittal was returned May 2 after a five-day trial. Thomas Hyde was the 17th of the patients helped to die by Kevorkian since 1990 (as of June 27, 1995).
7. State of Michigan 87th Legislature, Public Act #3 of 1993, approved Feb. 25 1993.
8. The Nonprofit Homes Association, which abstained on all three proposals. However their representative was said to be active in discussion.
9. From the *Times*: "The commission's vote was delayed for several hours when more than a dozen members of Adapt, a group advocating rights for the disabled, burst into the conference room in motorized wheelchairs, carrying signs saying 'Extermination without representation' and 'Hey-hey, ho-ho, this commissions has got to go!'"
10. In May 1994 the Michigan State Medical Society rejected attempts to put it on record either for or against a ban on physician assisted suicide, voting 85-32 to take no position. The MSMS had only the year before become the first state medical society in the nation to change its position from anti-assisted suicide to neutral (*American Medical News* Ap. 11, 1994). The neutral policy calls for physicians to exhaust every alternative before resorting to assisting suicide (*Kalamazoo Gazette*, May 8 1994). This position is interpreted by some as affirming the individual physician's right to follow his or her conscience; protecting the privacy of the doctor-patient relationship seems to be the major concern of state medical societies. Outgoing MSMS president Gilbert Bluhm was quoted as saying that doctors need to make up their minds on the issue. However American Medical Association Chair Lonnie Bristow of San Pablo Calif has already made up his mind: "It is not ethical for physicians to take part in that kind of activity. . . . abuses will occur." (*American Medical News*, May 16 1994). The national AMA has recently strengthened its position, calling assisted suicide "totally incompatible" with the ends of medicine.
 In May 1994 the Oregon Medical Association was also unable to take a position on the ballot initiative to be voted on in November. The Association split virtually equally three ways: for, against, and "let the public decide." However the Association "declined to reaffirm" the national AMA position opposing the participation of physicians in ending a patient's life. (*American Medical News*, May 16, 1994). And a recent study of doctors in Washington state showed equally deep divisions (*NY Times*, July 17, 1994). (The Oregon initiative allowing assisted suicide in certain narrowly defined cases was enacted by a small margin).
11. The full commission met 11 times at the state capital, and held 6 public forums at cities across the state. One procedural and five policy subcommit-

tees were organized; these latter reported by Dec. 20, 1993. Three drafting committees reported at the meeting of Feb. 3, 1994. As a point of interest here, information was provided on the situation in the Netherlands by Dr. Herbert Cohen and Mrs. Jean Tromp Meesters of that country, and by Dr. Charles Gomez of Virginia, who has published a book on euthanasia in Holland. Additionally, I. John Keown of Queen's College and Ms. Demetra Pappas provided information on the Feb. 1994 report (firmly opposing assisted suicide) of the Select Committee of the British House of Lords.

12. Michigan has now enacted into law certain measures designed to remove some of the obstacles to access to pain relief.
13. The position of the Michigan Psychiatric Association appears to be stronger than the vote suggests. According to a letter published as part of the commission report, the Council of the MPS voted "Yes on removing the ban; *abstain* on allowing physician-approved physician-assisted suicide; *no* on allowing assisted suicide with counselling and 'safeguards.'" This appears to mean that the MPA either favors an absence of legislation (contrary to the implication in the report that there was consensus on the need for legislation), or legislation enabling assisted suicide but not imposing safeguards. The letter from the MPA Council was provoked by its delegate voting contrary to her instructions. The Council removed its delegate and asked the Commission to change its vote.
14. A sub-group of seniors was also represented by Citizens for Better Care, which describes itself as "a state wide consumer advocacy organization concerned with the quality of life and the quality of care for the residents of long term care facilities . . ." Its position was that "decriminalizing assisted suicide WITHOUT assuring that those who choose to end their lives are aware of services which may be available would be wrong." ("Report," Appendix A). This led it to abstain on proposals both to decriminalize and to continue the ban, and to support only the second proposal, safeguards without recommendation. In contrast, the Senior Advocates Council voted yes on both the first and second proposals and no on the third.
15. Whose representative, John O'Hair, was himself a prosecutor who had prosecuted Dr. Kevorkian, though expressing personal opposition to the prohibition on assisted suicide. He was said to be a leader among the decriminalization group.
16. Right to Life Michigan's statement fails to address the second proposal.
17. This proposal first attempts to address the fear of active euthanasia; it does so by what its summary calls "a definition of assistance with self-termination" to prevent active euthanasia: "Definition. The actual act which ends an individual's life must be carried out by the individual." However no definition of "actual act" nor of "carried out" is provided, and the distinction may seem hazy at best. Dr. Kevorkian placed the string to the CO machine in Thomas Hyde's hand. If Hyde then tried to pull the string but failed due to his ALS, then under the proposal one would have to say either that the correct procedure by Kevorkian would be to stop the intervention, detach

Hyde from the machine and send him home; or, if this seems unpalatable, that once Hyde had begun the act, or even attempted to begin the act, then the "actual act" requirement is satisfied, and Kevorkian is free to complete the string pulling. One can imagine similar hair-splitting with regard to injections; one can also imagine prosecutions turning on whether Hyde had tried sufficiently to begin the act, or whether his failure to complete the pull amounted to a change of mind. (If the latter, a willing but unable patient could never obtain relief).

It may be noted that as a philosophical question, whether passive acts such as refusal to eat are "acts" or merely "not doings" is probably an undecidable question. Thus if "an actual act carried out by the individual" is required to trigger the safeguards, it could be argued that a person who proposes to starve himself to death is not covered by the safeguards even if he requires the assistance of a physician to provide comfort and pain relief.

18. Dr. Brody has informed me by letter that the intent is that the palliative care physician determine whether the patient has a medical condition justifying assisted suicide.
19. Several states have held referenda, and a commission in New York state has issued a report which opposes legalization. One main objection was that suicide would be granted inappropriately by doctors who are untrained to recognize or treat depression (*NY Times*, May 26, 1994, pg. 1). Assisting someone to commit suicide is manslaughter in New York. The NY statute is being challenged in Federal court, *Quill v. Koppell*, 94 Civ. 5321. The plaintiff is the physician whose essay describing how he administered a fatal injection to a patient provoked both controversy and a criminal investigation (*National Law Jnl*, Aug. 1 '94, pg A8).
20. One black witness was quoted as saying "I took an unscientific survey at my local working class bar . . . They said, 'Wilbur, we don't even trust doctors to keep us alive!'" *NY Times*, Mar. 6, 1994.

This paper is a revised and updated version of a report made to the 10th International Conference of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies, held in Bath, England, 7-10 Sept. 1994; I am grateful to the organizers for the invitation to speak. The earlier version was read to the Center for the Study of Ethics in Society, Western Michigan University, Sept. 21, 1994, and has been published by the Center (Papers Published by the Center, vol. 8 no. 1). In preparing the paper I have had the benefit of conversation with three members of the Michigan Commission on Death and Dying: Howard Brody, MD, PhD; Fr. Thomas Schindler, PhD; Elsa Shartsis, JD. They are not of course responsible for the opinions expressed nor for any errors I may have made.

The Return to Family Intervention in Youth Services: A Juvenile Justice Case Study

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After more than a decade of relative neglect, youth services policymakers in the late 1980s began targeting the family as a primary focus of intervention in the response to a range of deviant behavior. One recent example of this return to family intervention has been a renewed emphasis on family services in juvenile courts and juvenile justice agencies. This case study describes one attempt to implement a new "family-focused" intervention approach as part of a larger return to treatment-oriented probation services in an urban juvenile justice system. Based on interviews and participant observation data gathered during a nine month field study in a Florida county, this paper describes ideological resistance, role conflict, and the informal adaptations of delinquency case managers in response to the new demands of this agenda. Implications for implementation of such policies in juvenile justice and other social service organizations, as well as conceptual questions about the logic and efficacy of the family focus policy itself, are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the scientific study of social problems, researchers interested in adolescent deviant behavior have focused on the family as an important causal variable (Wilkinson, 1974; Rothman, 1980). Similarly, social service administrators and policymakers charged with responding to youth problems such as drug abuse, mental illness, and delinquency have also identified the family as a primary target of intervention.

The relative intensity of both researcher and administrator emphasis on the family in different historical eras appears to have been influenced as much by cultural and political trends as by new empirical findings or new evidence of the policy efficacy of family-focused intervention (e.g., Wilkinson, 1974; Wilson, 1987). During the 1970s, for example, interest in families among poverty researchers declined based in part on a critical reaction to culture of poverty theories (Lewis, 1966; Banfield, 1970) and a questioning of culturally biased intervention models (see Baratz and Baratz, 1970; Ryan, 1971). By the late 1980s, researchers and policymakers had again become interested in the family. Today, an expanding emphasis on family policy and intervention strategies appears grounded in an increasing national concern about the vulnerability of the traditional family unit in urban, underclass neighborhoods (Wilson, 1987; Sullivan, 1989), as well as a renewed academic interest in troubled or "dysfunctional" families (e.g., Van Voorhis et al, 1988; Forsythe, 1992).

Generally, compared with the 1960s and 70s, research and theory focused on families appears to be less grounded in deficit assumptions (e.g., Lewis, 1966; Banfield, 1970), more culturally sensitive, and more attuned to resiliency and collective coping strategies within a community and economic context (e.g., Sullivan, 1989; Jarrett, 1994). Current policy discussions also place more emphasis on strengthening, revitalizing and restoring families that are now depicted as distressed and temporarily disorganized, rather than burdened with cultural deficiencies (e.g., Forsythe, 1992; Wright & Wright, 1994). But while there is little disagreement about the general importance of the family in the response to youth deviance, questions remain about the larger policy assumptions underlying various intervention approaches (Howard, 1994; AuClaire & Schwartz, 1986; Wells, 1994). In addition, family services are implemented in the context of bureaucratic and ideological structures which impose limits on administrator and staff creativity and flexibility. Rigid agency and service system mandates, restrictive staff role definitions, and inflexible funding categories (e.g., Meyers, 1993), as well as professional disagreements about the proper role and scope of family intervention, may present formidable obstacles to service delivery. Together, these ideological and bureaucratic limitations provide

cause for concern about the capacity of existing social service agencies and systems to effectively implement new family intervention initiatives and programs.

Recent efforts to initiate family services in juvenile justice systems appear to be a case in point. This paper presents exploratory findings from field research which examined one juvenile justice system's effort to implement a "family-focus" approach to juvenile probation. Based on informal interviews, participant observation, and document analysis in an urban county in the State of Florida, this paper has two overall purposes. First, we wish to describe the early stages of implementation of the family-focus initiative as perceived and experienced by juvenile justice case managers, their immediate supervisors, and local administrators. Qualitative data are used to examine such issues as divergence in professional orientation and role conflict associated with the new family intervention policy. Second, we hope to raise general concerns about the formulation and implementation of similar policy in juvenile justice and youth services.

The Florida experience and the experience of this urban county is similar to that of juvenile justice systems which adopted an enforcement and control emphasis for probation in the 1980s and are now attempting to revitalize a treatment approach geared specifically to increased intervention with families. As a case study in the general implementation of family intervention policy in youth services, the juvenile justice system is somewhat unique in that its mandate also includes public safety and sanctioning goals, as well as treatment and service objectives. However, juvenile justice agencies are also typical of social service bureaucracies primarily grounded in an individual treatment intervention logic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding the complexities of initiating family services policy in juvenile probation and the case manager's role in its implementation requires an examination of juvenile justice ideologies and professional orientations which define the role of the family in delinquent behavior. It also requires an understanding of the unique organizational context of juvenile probation and the dynamics and contingencies that may facilitate or impede implementation of new intervention approaches in these settings.

Juvenile Probation and the Juvenile Court

As a core component of the juvenile court treatment ideology, probation was historically viewed as an extension of the judge's mandate to prescribe individualized services and assistance in the "best interests" of juvenile offenders (Whitehead and Lab, 1990).¹ Although the reality of probation's control and enforcement function has always been apparent, an individual treatment ethic emphasizing counselling, service brokerage, advocacy and intervention in home or school conflicts has dominated probation work (e.g., Glaser, 1964; Conrad, 1982).

By the mid 1980s, broader transformations in social services policy and practice, a more punitive national political climate, a distrust of community based interventions in criminal justice (e.g., Rossum, Koller, and Manfredi, 1987), and the "just deserts" philosophy (Von Hirsch, 1976) had begun to influence juvenile probation. In addition, juvenile probation departments seemed to be increasingly affected by the more punitive control and enforcement focus of adult probation and by new surveillance technologies such as electronic monitoring and new supervision modalities such as intensive probation (Clear, 1991; Byrne, Lurgio and Petersilia, 1992).² The impact of these influences was to challenge the previously unquestioned dominance of the treatment model in juvenile probation and encourage policymaker and administrator support for a surveillance-focused, or "sanction enforcement" agenda (Conrad, 1982).

Although this agenda remains dominant, the 1990s has witnessed a resurgence of practitioner and policymaker support for treatment as the guiding focus of juvenile community supervision. Arguments in favor of "revitalizing" or "reaffirming" the treatment model have become more intense in recent years (e.g., Palmer, 1992; McAllair, 1993), and according to some observers, are now filtering into policy and reinforcing the latent beliefs of many juvenile justice professionals in the efficacy of rehabilitative services (Palmer, 1992).³ One important feature of this apparent rebirth of a treatment focus for juvenile probation appears to be a renewed emphasis on expanding the role of probation to include more direct and intensive work with families.

Family vs. Individual Intervention with Offenders

Since the founding of the juvenile court, the family has been viewed as the institution most responsible for delinquent behavior (Platt, 1977; Rothman, 1980). The justification for court intervention, based on the concept of *parens patriae*, was both an indictment of certain families as inadequate (especially poor and immigrant families) and an affirmation of the family's vital role in exercising "wholesome restraint" over children and youth (Commonwealth v. Fisher, 1905; Whitehead and Lab, 1990). In assessment investigations, early juvenile court judges required probation officers to compile an array of facts pertaining to the family including, as one judge noted, "the character of the parents and their capability for governing and supporting the child" (Rothman, 1980: 218).

There are a number of examples of a revitalization of interest in a family intervention focus for juvenile justice policy and practice (Sweet, 1991; Wood, 1990; Wright & Wright, 1994). New family intervention programs include a variety of parent training and family behavior modification approaches (Patterson and Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984), family preservation (Henggeler, Melton & Smith, 1992), "home builders" (Forsythe, 1992), and a variety of crisis intervention and family treatment or "family systems" programs (McGaha and Fournier, 1987). In addition, more specialized family intervention units are now appearing in some juvenile courts, and there has been a renewed interest in the family court model as an administrative structure for integrating casework with delinquents, child welfare, child support and other functions (Rubin and Flango, 1992). National juvenile justice policy statements are beginning to cite family intervention as a renewed priority (e.g., Sweet, 1991; Wilson and Howell, 1993), and more training workshops for probation and parole professionals are being devoted to family services topics. Finally, delinquency researchers and theorists have become more interested in the family—albeit from new perspectives such as the role of abuse, family systems analysis, and differential oppression (Widom, 1992; Henggeler, Melton and Smith, 1992; Regoli and Hewitt, 1994; Van Voorhis et al., 1988).

But while some of these studies—especially program evaluations of parental training and systems approaches—seem to have gained the attention of policymakers (e.g., Wilson and Howell, 1993; Wright & Wright, 1994), thus far, implementation of family intervention in the juvenile justice context does not appear to be research-based or theoretically grounded (c.f., AuClaire & Schwartz, 1986). In addition, mechanisms for integrating a family focus into traditional probation and parole agendas are not well developed and family intervention themes are not well articulated in the broader community supervision mission of most juvenile justice systems. As Whitehead and Lab (1990: 374) observe in reference to probation, “what was once a rather clear institution for supplementing parental concern by means of adult advice and psychological/social work skill has become a matter of controversy.”⁴ Thus, although a number of commentators have suggested that probation and community supervision in juvenile justice should give highest priority to intensive work with families (Wood, 1990; McGaha and Fournier, 1987), such a focus may be expected to provide significant challenges for those who must implement family intervention policies.

Policy Implementation and Organizational Constraint

Although the current study was not designed to test specific hypotheses, two general bodies of literature—sociological case studies of probation and parole decisionmaking and policy implementation theory and research—provided guidelines and sensitizing concepts for analyzing the transition from a sanction enforcement to a family-focus model for probation. First, previous sociological case studies of probation and parole agencies offer an important frame of reference for analyzing the social organization of case work with offenders (e.g., McCleary, 1978; Needleman, 1981; Jacobs, 1990). Generally, this literature suggests that social control bureaucracies demand accommodation to what staff may view as “impossible” demands and may encourage informal and sometimes dysfunctional adaptations in work routines which mitigate against meaningful and effective intervention with offenders.

Second, the policy implementation literature (e.g., Goggin et al., 1990; Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1981) provides insight into

factors that may facilitate or impede system and agency movement toward the family focus. More specifically, theory and research on bureaucratic bargaining (Pfeffer and Selznik, 1978), "top down" reform efforts relying on hierarchical directives rather than "backward mapping" or "bottom-up" approaches (Elmore, 1978; Knott and Miller, 1987), and role expectations in organizations (e.g., Lipsky, 1980; Zurcher, 1983) are pertinent to the concerns of this study and may help to interpret both cultural and structural organizational resistance in the transition to a family-focus agenda. Also useful in understanding the implementation context is the conceptualization of social service professionals as "street level bureaucrats" (SLBs) who work in task environments often characterized by limited resources, ambitious and often poorly specified goals, and the sometimes conflicting demands of administrators and clients (Lipsky, 1980). In Lipsky's view, "although they are normally regarded as low level employees," the actions of SLBs ultimately define policy and constrain or facilitate implementation as they continuously adapt organizational mandates and modify policy goals to limit demands, control clients, ration services and generally manage work (Meyers, 1993).

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection and Sampling

The current study was conducted as part of a local process evaluation of juvenile justice case management services. The qualitative portion of this evaluation was based on a nine month field study which employed participant observation, informal interviews, document analysis, and an ethnographic perspective (Johnson, 1990; Patton, 1990). The overall goal of the field study was to develop a holistic understanding of the family focus initiative and gain better insight into case managers' and their supervisors' "street level" perceptions of the initiative and their adaptations to new mandates in the implementation process. While this experiential perspective is frequently missing from accounts of the implementation process, case studies of criminal justice organizations which do provide the "thick" description needed to gain this perspective (Bruyn, 1963) have not for the most part

focused on policy implementation (e.g., McCleary, 1978; Needleman; 1981).

Data collection was conducted in case manager and supervisor offices, juvenile court, and a variety of field settings. The researchers interviewed 10 of the 11 case management supervisors in the three regional offices and over 40 of the 76 total case managers. A sample of case managers were also accompanied on more than 20 field visits. In addition, the researchers attended numerous staff meetings in the individual case management units as well as district-wide meetings. All of the interview and observational data presented in this paper were collected by the co-authors of this paper, a white 41 year old male and a white 32 year old female. With few exceptions, the researchers worked independently in conducting the fieldwork.

The Policy Context: Implementing the Family Focus in a Juvenile Justice System

Following a ten year emphasis on surveillance and sanction enforcement-focused probation (known as "community control"), the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS), the agency responsible for services and supervision of delinquent youth, was assigned a treatment and rehabilitation mandate by the legislature as part of the Florida Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1990 (Florida Statute, Chapter 39). The new legislation was the culmination of several years effort by youth advocates to improve the image of juvenile justice and build consensus around the need for better assessment and services for youth entering the system. The emergence and passage of the legislation at this particular time was the result of a combination of factors including a political climate favorable to progressive reform, the decision of several senior legislators to make juvenile justice reform a personal crusade, and general policymaker sentiment to resolve costly lawsuits against the department and avoid further litigation (Schwartz, Barton & Orlando, 1991).

Consistent with national trends described earlier, the state's implementation protocol for family intervention with delinquents that eventually emerged was not clearly grounded in research or theoretical literature. Rather, after two years of a slow transition from a bifurcated intake and probation system for community supervision of delinquents to a case management approach

to probation, a newly appointed state juvenile justice director within HRS concluded that case managers should spend a much greater proportion of their time in direct field contact with youth and families.⁵ To communicate the importance of family contact, HRS headquarters issued a policy directive which required that each case manager devote a minimum of 24 hours per week to direct contact with youth and families in settings outside the office. While this contact standard was to be used in performance evaluations, local HRS districts were allowed substantial discretion in how these directives would be implemented, monitored, and enforced and in deciding what kinds of encounters could be counted as "contacts" (i.e. phone calls, collateral contacts with school counselors and teachers, travel time) for purposes of monitoring compliance. The Juvenile Justice Manager (JJM) in the local District studied in this research chose to place maximum emphasis on direct family intervention by adopting a strict, literal interpretation of the 24 hour rule. Administrative staff in the Central District Office were then instructed to develop and implement strict procedures for monitoring case manager and case management unit compliance with the quantitative standard.

A quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of the family focus initiative's implementation based on aggregation of contact data from mandatory timesheets revealed that field contact hours with offenders and families increased only slightly, to an average of three hours per week, from an average of less than one hour, over a period of approximately nine months (Nyhan, 1993). From monthly examination of this quantitative data, District administrators concluded that case managers and supervisors were resisting the transition to family focus simply because they had become comfortable with office work and were "lazy." One emerging hypothesis of the qualitative study, however, was that more complex factors—including case managers' street knowledge of situational contingencies (Lipsky, 1980) and their perceptions of restrictions on their professional discretion (c.f. Needleman, 1981)—might be important sources of resistance.

FINDINGS

Overall, District managers, supervisors, and staff agreed that the family played an important causal role in delinquent behavior

and merited the attention of case managers. Beyond this general agreement, there was little consensus about the relative importance of working directly with families and the most effective techniques for doing so. Three broad implementation issues confronted District office administrators in their efforts to make the transition from offender to family focused case management.

First, differences in ideology and professional orientation associated with a tension between the sanction enforcement focus and values tied to the reemergence of the treatment/services emphasis weakened commitment of some staff to family focus and seemed to exaggerate the intensity of normally anticipated resistance to change. In particular, case managers and supervisors comfortable with the sanction enforcement model resisted the family focus initiative based largely on objections to new, and what they viewed as inappropriate, job demands associated with this agenda and on feelings of role conflict. Second, more complex issues associated with managing the transition process emerged as a result of conflicting policy implementation goals, staff resistance to monitoring efforts, and bureaucratic bargaining and adaption by case managers and supervisors. Third, these adaptations, which appeared to be a result of management's continued efforts to enforce compliance with the quantitative standard, led to several unintended consequences. These consequences in turn point to larger policy and management issues regarding integration of family intervention with agency and system goals and with an overall mission for juvenile justice reform.

Professional Ideology, Control, and Role Conflict

While the first few months of family focus implementation witnessed a great deal of general opposition, it was possible to distinguish two ideological "camps" among supervisors and case managers. The first camp, a small group who seemed to share some background experience in child welfare protective services, foster care, or related fields and who generally held social work or family counseling degrees, supported family focus in principle. Generally, the professional careers and belief systems of these staff had been built around family work. Family focus *supporters* told interviewers that they had always conducted a significant amount of their work in the home and were comfortable with this emphasis. Most endorsed what one supporter called "womb

to tomb" case management in which one worker was assigned responsibility for one family. However, even these supporters expressed frustration with the approach to implementing family focus.

The second camp, a much larger group more likely to have begun their careers in juvenile justice and to share a probation rather than social work focus, opposed the concept in principle, arguing that a family focus, even if it were possible to implement, would be ineffective and/or inappropriate. This group expressed significant doubts about the practicality of working with families and providing useful assistance in the home setting. The *opponents* of the family focus concept made several arguments which reflected an ideological adherence or professional orientation to the sanction enforcement focus for probation. Essentially, these arguments centered around four value differences between the sanction enforcement orientation and the emerging treatment emphasis based on field services to families. These differences include: locus of accountability and responsibility; case manager control in the office vs. home environment; appropriateness of family intervention for the delinquent population; and role conflict and competing demands.

Locus of Accountability. In the "old" days, according to veteran supervisors and case managers, the expectation was that youth were responsible for meeting probation staff in the office or courthouse rather than waiting for case managers to arrange meetings in the home.

The judges then were much more strict and let the kids know they had to be here [in the office]. There were kids packed into the halls at the courthouse with their families waiting to see their counsellors. Kids would show up here for their meetings. We got a lot of business done that way.

Before, the kids were responsible for coming in to see the counsellor and the judges let them know they had to show up, *or else*. Now we have to go out and find them . . . they're not accountable to anybody.

Moreover, under the sanction enforcement emphasis, accountability for crime typically lay completely with the offender. For those who maintain this orientation, the delinquent youth is the preferred target of intervention.

The *kids* are the ones who will get in trouble in court [if they reoffend or if sanctions aren't completed], not the family. And if a kid goes out and kills someone or commits a serious crime, you can bet nobody will care that the counsellor did all this great work with the family.

At first I had the expectation that the kids were like those in foster care. I assumed that they came from abusive and dysfunctional family backgrounds. I was really surprised..it's *not* the family. The problem here is the *kid*.

Case Manager Control. For opponents of the family focus emphasis, the office setting provided a measure of control not possible to obtain in the frequently "chaotic" home environment. Visiting the home regularly was viewed as an unwise and ineffective use of time. The office environment, on the other hand, was said to instill discipline and respect for authority.

It's easier to get youth and families to talk outside the home. Often we get more productive contact done in the office, because at home it's hard to separate them [the youth and the family].

It's loud and disorderly in these homes. It's difficult doing business and keeping the counselor in control long enough to get things done when confronted with so many distractions.

I think it is important to visit the family—we need to know *where the home is* and what the environment looks like—but usually, once is enough—we don't need to keep going back there.

In the old days [the early 1980s], kids on probation were required to attend court-ordered group therapy at HRS offices. Kids had to behave according to strict rules [e.g., they were not allowed to swear or fight] during the hour or two they were in the group sessions. Requiring this behavior in the office had to have some spillover effect on their behavior at home and at school. If you can behave by some rules here, you can at school too.

Appropriateness. A concern addressed by several more experienced case managers and supervisors was the appropriateness of the family focus for serious offenders—especially older adolescents with chronic, sometimes violent histories. These offenders were believed to require more restrictive, if not punitive, options.

The program office is out of touch with the nature of offenders we are dealing with. Offenders today are different from the offender of 10 years ago and are not appropriate for family focus.

Family focus won't work for these kids who are all carrying guns now or [who are] in families where there is no hope; maybe they all need to be in Boot Camps or in independent living [for older youths].

Some argued that family focus should be applied selectively, rather than generally, and that it might be appropriate for youth:

. . . about 12 to 14 and under. Once they're about 16, they're not family members anymore anyway and the school has given up on them. What's the point of trying to deal with the family? We're not like PSI [protective services] where the families are a threat to the kids. These kids are a threat to their families . . . they're as afraid of their kids as everybody else.

Role Conflict. Even some supporters of family focus agreed with opponents that District managers had yet to define the parameters of family focus or to clarify when these interventions were and *were not* appropriate. In the case of "dysfunctional" families, several case managers argued that family interventions yielded few benefits.

I would have to raise the parents first. There just isn't enough time and resources, so I focus on the client. The client is my primary responsibility.

Opponents of family focus also argued that there had been no "trade-offs" for the extra responsibilities this new emphasis entailed:

Nothing else [responsibilities] has been taken away, but now they [case managers] must also deal with the needs of the family. We still have the victims calling us everyday for restitution . . . they don't care if we've done all this good work with families.

Many requirements associated with the sanction enforcement role remained (see Maupin, 1993). In addition to paperwork demands, large caseloads in some units, and the significant demands on time of court hearings, case managers also reported that it was often necessary to complete reports and other "office work" associated with case management (including new family focus monitoring forms) in their homes after hours. Some case managers believed that family work was reducing their effectiveness in these other tasks. Others simply expressed displeasure at

"being forced" to visit the home. More than anything else, opponents of family focus expressed frustration with the demands of a new and unfamiliar role that was linked to ambiguous and conflicting supervision goals. As one supervisor noted:

Case managers *were* expected to be reporters of behavior, but now they're expected to be agents of change. Most don't want to be responsible for a kid's behavior or responsible for this change. For years they were told that they were to be like adult community control officers . . . expected to focus on sanction enforcement and (on) reporting clients as soon as they reoffended. Now they're being torn in different directions.

Not unlike other policy contexts, some of this role and ideological conflict seemed to be imbedded in the policy itself (e.g., Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1981). The remainder of this paper briefly describes how this conflict played out in the early stages of the implementation process.

Reaction, Bargaining, and Adaptation

As Lipsky (1980) has observed, the contingencies which policymakers and managers regard as inducements or constraints in the implementation context may be very different than those impacting street level bureaucrats (SLBs). For this reason, both incentive structures and the gap between top administrators, middle management, and line staff may result in unexpected responses from staff such that: "The policies that result from routine treatment are often biased in ways unintended by the agencies whose policies are being implemented or are antithetical to some of their objectives (Lipsky, 1980:84)". In this case, the discretion of front-line case managers and mid-level supervisors become a critical contingency in implementation.

From the District administrators' perspective, the 24 hour standard and strict monitoring procedures were necessary to force most workers to alter their office-bound routines. While this study provides no conclusive evidence to confirm or refute this belief, what *is* suggested from our interviews and observations is that the contact requirement failed to anticipate street level organizational contingencies surrounding juvenile justice case management (c.f.,

Meyers, 1993) or the power of line staff to make, break, or distort policy (Lipsky, 1980). The answers to questions regarding the key determinants of policy compliance (e.g., skill and commitment of implementers, Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1981; clarity and communication of policies and standards, Van Horn and Van Meter, 1982) can be found in the perceptions of implementing agents and the informal culture of the street level environment.

From their perspective, case managers faced several practical difficulties in their attempts to adapt work schedules to comply with the 24 hour contact standard. The difficulties most commonly reported to the researchers and observed on field visits included: scheduling and arranging home visits; coping with extensive travel time; locating youths and families (often families had moved or were not at home when case managers visited); resistant families; and "chaotic" home environments which provided unique challenges to conducting casework. As a result, case managers, like the parole officers studied by McCleary (1978), learned to cut corners as a coping tactic. Contrary to the unit supervisors in McCleary's research however, most supervisors in the present study sided with their workers. In opposing the performance standards as a serious affront to their integrity as professionals—as well as an "impossible" requirement—several supervisors even appeared to lead the opposition of their staff.

In this way, supervisors began to negotiate the limits of the new family focused role with District managers. Generally, supervisors responded to mandates which restricted their discretion to manage workloads by exercising discretion *not to* encourage, monitor, and/or sanction staff in efforts to implement or resist implementation of family focus. Specifically, most neither supported nor disciplined staff, and few "coached" case managers on how to maximize compliance with the standard without violating the spirit of family focus. Moreover, many supervisors adjusted to what they viewed as impossible demands by ignoring or even encouraging staff adaptations that clearly ran counter to the intent of the family-focused initiative. Few seemed clear about what case managers should try to accomplish in the home. When asked what she wanted case managers to accomplish on home visits, for example, one of the more experienced supervisors responded, "I

just tell them to fill out their forms (e.g., required assessment instruments, consent waivers)." More in line with the old sanction-focused school, one supervisor insisted that the "important thing" (in home visits) is to go over the court requirements and "stick to the court order . . . make sure they are doing their [community service] hours, going to school, abiding by other sanctions, and not committing new offenses." Such an emphasis clearly targets the youth rather than the family and seems otherwise contrary to the holistic intervention approach associated with family focus (e.g., Forsythe, 1992).

Defeating the Goals of Family Focus: Unintended Consequences

Since open opposition to the 24-hour contact standard itself as a tool for implementation was viewed as dangerous by supervisors and staff (in numerous meetings with the District Administrator, supervisors and case managers expressed no opposition to the standard), adaptations were primarily subversive in nature. "A lot of workers play games to get their hours in," said one case manager who reported that at least one worker had been "getting in time with her clients by driving them around on stops to see *other* clients." Some case managers reported that colleagues manipulated time sheets, and that others met the standard by spending most of their time with "easy" kids or predictable families. In addition, since driving time was not counted as contact time, some case managers focused on clients that they were able to locate with a minimum of difficulty.

Several counsellors told us that they felt forced to act contrary to their professional judgement and in some cases had to neglect or ignore principles of good case management (e.g., service brokerage, assessment, collateral contacts with school personnel). Few incentives remained for case work that did not involve direct contact, and for many workers, disincentives prohibited using discretion to employ other methods.

24 hours a week of client visitation is not worthwhile. If my kids are in programs and are doing what they are supposed to be doing, all they need is a phone call.

Some kids need close supervision and you need to spend time with them. With other kids you need to check on them every week, but they are doing what they are supposed to be doing. There is a

lot of pressure to spend 24 hours in the field, but it is a waste of time. More time is needed to coordinate services, to get kids in programs. There is not enough time for resource development—which takes a long time if you're trying to get community groups to work with your kid.

Some kids I need to see every week, but with others I could send a Fax to FOSI [the Florida Ocean and Sciences Institute day program]. Now I drive just to get my hours. I guess they want us to start having lunch with these kids.

You could spend lots of time with a client without doing a proper needs assessment. You will not move them one step forward. What good does family contact do if you don't have time to make a referral . . . we're supposed to be getting services for them (families and kids), but I spend so much time driving I don't have enough time anymore to arrange for referrals. You can spend lots of time without any quality.

The 24 hour standard also seemed to alter the logic used by some workers to schedule and execute home visits. One supervisor told us that "most case managers (now) prefer to call in advance to make sure that the kid will be home in order to *make sure they get the contact hours*" (unless the case manager) "believes a kid is trying to avoid us and then we might want to surprise him." Clearly, the disincentive for making surprise visits (or for tracking a youth who is avoiding supervision) could be viewed as counterproductive if one of the goals of home visits is client monitoring. Whether monitoring and surveillance (generally associated with the sanction enforcement focus) is, or should be, a goal of these family focus visits was never clarified by the District office. One could argue, however, that if one goal is to observe normal interaction in the family and to try to bring about change in this interaction, unannounced visits would be necessary.

Perhaps the most significant and unfortunate unintended consequence of the performance standard was its tendency to create (or increase) opposition to the family focus concept itself and to deflect attention from its substantive meaning. Overall, the researchers heard little discussion of the *quality* of contact desired in family focus; virtually all discussion was focused on *quantity*. When asked for a definition of family focus, some made vague references to "involving the family a lot more" or "meeting them

more often," but most workers first mentioned the 24-hour contact rule and clearly equated the standard and the family focus initiative.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As policymakers are again embracing a renewed emphasis on family intervention, there has been much discussion of new program alternatives and "best practices" (e.g., Wright & Wright, 1994), but little critical examination of the implications of the family agenda for larger systemic and policy issues (e.g., Wells, 1994). Little attention has been paid to the structural and procedural complexity involved in redirecting services to families in organizations in which staff are comfortable with work routines organized around responsibility for individual clients. Based on exploratory interview and observational data, this research documents an urban juvenile justice bureaucracy's initial attempt to make the transition from youth-centered to family-centered intervention. While tentative, the interpretation in this case study of organizational contradictions and unintended consequences that resulted from implementation focused on policy mandates may provide a benchmark for examining similar transition efforts.

Limitations and Implications for Implementation Research

As a case study in the implementation process, this research has several limitations. For example, this effort to describe and document one phase and selected aspects of implementation of the family focus initiative does not take account of other features of the implementation environment and other contingencies in what is often a complex process (e.g., Goggin et. al., 1990). While we examined ideological orientation and commitment of street level staff to the implementation process and the informal adaptations of supervisors and case managers to new policies and enforcement procedures, other critical features of implementation such as the clarity of the policy and adequacy of the enforcement process (Van Horn and Van Meter, 1981) received only superficial attention.

In addition, this study does not permit us to draw conclusions about the validity of claims by case managers and supervisors that

they were overworked and overwhelmed by the new requirements. Nor are we able to determine the extent to which resistance to implementation of monitoring procedures and performance standards was primarily a function of concern about loss of professional discretion or was primarily based on opposition to monitoring of *any kind* and to being held accountable for one's work. Future research on implementation of similar initiatives may benefit from a focus on these issues, as well as an emphasis on patterns of communication in similar youth social service organizations and the impact of these patterns on implementation and the response of staff to performance standards.⁶

There are, however, several key findings that add to previous research and tend to confirm key propositions from the implementation literature. First, ideological disagreement with the family focus initiative increased the level of opposition for case managers and supervisors who had been socialized into a sanction enforcement focus. In addition, case managers and their supervisors experienced role conflict related to the need to balance conflicting demands (e.g., paperwork vs. time with families) in attempting to make the transition between the divergent policy mandates of the sanction enforcement and family intervention agendas. Second, these initial effects of the transition process can be understood in the context of policy implementation perspectives which question the efficacy of top down management approaches to organizational reform and point to inherent weaknesses in what Elmore (1978) has referred to as the "bureaucratic process model" of implementation (Knott and Miller, 1990). The top down approach, which in this case utilized quantitative performance standards to ensure that case managers spent greater proportions of their time with families, failed to accomplish implementation objectives and led to significant opposition. Viewed by case managers and supervisors as an unwarranted infringement on their professional discretion, this approach led to defiance by SLBs in response to efforts to limit their autonomy to manage their work environment (Lipsky, 1980) and had several unintended consequences.⁷ Whether or not such results could be anticipated in every case, it is clear that staff and supervisor involvement in designing both policies and monitoring standards may improve prospects for

successful implementation of reforms involving systemic changes in service protocols (see Maupin, 1993).⁸

Systemic and Social Policy Implications

Because it is clear that the family focus initiative in this jurisdiction was not reflective of theoretically-grounded and research-based "best practice" in family intervention services, the primary importance of this case study is its implications for organizational resistance to change in social service bureaucracies. Beyond management and implementation issues, however, the current exploratory study has several policy implications for assessing the role of family intervention in juvenile justice and youth services systems.

Overall, while few would argue with the need for juvenile probation to return to an emphasis on rehabilitative and field-focused family intervention, a probation focus on families raises a number of questions. Some of these were articulated by the ideological dissenters among case managers and their supervisors in this study who expressed concerns about: the applicability of family focus to *all* families (including dysfunctional and/or abusive families of older youths); the importance of the family in delinquency causation in all cases; and trade-offs between family work vs. intervention with offenders, victims, and community groups. Such questions may arise in part because family oriented intervention practices in some agencies and systems have thus far been discussed and implemented in a policy vacuum. As a result, intervention techniques are not linked to goals that flow out of an overall mission, and performance standards are therefore likely to be viewed as meaningless or arbitrary. Questions not addressed by social service managers about the rationales for new techniques and priorities among competing responsibilities (e.g., family work vs. paperwork) are sure to be raised in opposition by street level bureaucrats who must alter work routines to carry out reforms, and role conflict should be an anticipated outcome.

From a juvenile justice systems perspective, such questions suggest the need for placement of a family focus in the context of an overall mission that links family intervention with sanctioning, public safety, and rehabilitative objectives of interventions

with delinquent youth. A more holistic and "balanced" approach that would include families, as well as other community "customers" (e.g., victims) of juvenile justice, as targets of intervention (Maloney, Romig and Armstrong, 1988; Bazemore, 1992) would provide one such context and a alternative mission.

From a larger youth social services perspective, the one policy vacuum surrounding the renewed focus on family intervention appears to be a social structural and economic one. In part, the difficulties in intervening with families experiencing economic and other forms of stress resulting from poverty and neighborhood disorganization and obstacles to implementing even well planned and widely supported youth service and development interventions are a result of broader social structural forces (e.g., Wilson, 1987). In this larger context, family interventions which attempt to expand the scope of influence beyond a focus on "problem youth" may be targeting individuals who are themselves *almost as vulnerable* to these forces (i.e., parents). Economic and social isolation in urban neighborhoods may place limits on the ability of families under such stress take advantage of assistance intended to strengthen capacity to supervise and nurture adolescent children. The family focus, while an apparent improvement over clinical approaches which isolate youth for treatment and services, fails in this regard to also target community institutions such as schools and local economic institutions in an effort to create new, more empowering roles for youth and impoverished adults. As two of the strongest advocates of a family focus approach in juvenile justice observe:

. . . the interaction between parents and children takes place in a broader social and cultural environment. Schools, workplace, community organizations, child care facilities, and health care systems play important roles in developmental processes. (Wright & Wright, 1994: pp. 191)

Failure to take account of these forces that impinge on families of delinquents and other youth-at-risk may exacerbate tendencies of administrators and policymakers to blame families (see Ryan, 1971)—or to blame direct service staff when such interventions fail to accomplish intended objectives.

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Notes

1. Although the proportion of youths now placed out of home in commitment and residential programs has increased in recent years (Butts and Poe, 1993), probation remains the most frequently used disposition in juvenile courts. Approximately 57% of all juveniles formally adjudicated in juvenile court are placed under some form of probation supervision (Butts and Poe, 1993; Whitehead and Lab, 1990).
2. Signs of these changes in juvenile probation (and in juvenile aftercare) were numerous and included changes in local and state juvenile probation policy, formation of specialized units and programs designated as "sanction enforcement units", "tracker programs", "surveillance units" and "intensive supervision programs" (Armstrong, 1992), and in some states, replacement of the term "probation" with terms borrowed from adult probation such as "community control."
3. Some of this movement toward renewed interest in treatment has been subtle and evidence of a shift in focus is anecdotal. Keynote speeches, conference workshops at professional meetings, and trade journals in the late 1980s, for example, which began to feature such topics as "revitalizing treatment" and "treatment is alive and well," explicitly questioned the limitations of the surveillance, enforcement and sanction focus and challenged research suggesting that treatment doesn't work (e.g., Martinson, 1974; Lab and Whitehead, 1988).
4. An irony of juvenile court ideology is that families are often blamed for delinquency, but interventions and resources are directed almost exclusively at young people. Moreover, the juvenile court has historically done little to strengthen the family's capacity to nurture and supervise, and parents have had few if any rights in the disposition of their children (Lab and Whitehead, 1990). As a result of the vague historical mandate of the juvenile court as both welfare and justice institution, juvenile justice professionals have historically experienced ambivalence about the treatment/services vs. surveillance/enforcement components of their role (Rothman, 1980; Lab & Whitehead, 1990).
5. We appreciate the admonition of an anonymous reviewer that it is important not to equate *family intervention* with *contact* or *home visits*. Although less than

ideal implementation in this study does not permit a fair assessment of the feasibility or effectiveness of a more complete model of family intervention (e.g., family systems), it does allow us to examine obstacles to implementing a perhaps not atypical, family intervention initiative in a large, bureaucratic social services agency. As part of the transition in probation services to a case management system, the job title of probation staff was changed from "community control officer" or "intake officer" to "case manager." The new case management position integrated probation and intake functions.

6. One important limit to effective two-way communication of standards not explored in this paper, for example, is the power of organizational climate and organizational culture (Shein, 1986) in stifling creative dissent over standards that are perceived by staff as impossible. On the other hand, an organizational development alternative to the bureaucratic process model of implementation (Elmore, 1978) might encourage open discussion of policy clarity and possible contradictions, as well as allow ideological disagreement and feelings of role conflict to surface on the front end (Maupin, 1993).
7. The contrast between such efforts to control discretion among juvenile justice workers, many of whom held advanced college degrees, and recent efforts to *maximize* discretion and encourage field level problem solving among police officers (e.g., Moore and Stephens, 1991), many of whom have only high school diplomas or their equivalent, is instructive.
8. Advocates of new, more inclusive and empowering management techniques for human services such as total quality management (TQM) (e.g., Deming, 1980; Martin, 1993), might view the general failure of implementation described here as a predictable and inevitable result of top-down management protocols (Knott & Miller, 1987).

Policy Implementation in Social Welfare: A Framework for Analysis

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A review of the research on implementation of federal-state partnership programs indicates a need for more analyses of the post-legislative phase of social welfare policy. This paper addresses the importance of research on policy implementation in social welfare. It examines some critical tools in the policy implementation analysis process, presents a framework for analysis, and offers recommendations to stimulate interest in the study of the implementation process.

Researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners have increasingly concerned themselves with the effectiveness of federally-mandated, state-administered programs.¹ During the last 20 years, various scholars, recognizing that the interdependent relationship between and among government officials at the federal and state levels is crucial to successful implementation, have begun to analyze the policy implementation process (Goggin, 1987; Goggin, Bowman, Lester, & O'Toole, 1990; Palumbo & Calista, 1990; Palumbo & Harder, 1981; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). Although many articles that provide analyses of policy implementation are found in the literatures of other disciplines, a review of articles published between 1978 and 1992 by six social work periodicals that focus on social policy and social welfare research produced only twelve citations. Thus, there is a pressing need for more analyses of policy implementation by social workers and social welfare researchers.

This paper addresses the importance of research on policy implementation in social welfare, examines some critical tools in the policy implementation analysis process, and offers recommendations to stimulate increased interest in such analysis. Public Law 100-485, the Family Support Act (FSA) of 1988, and specifically the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) section of the Act, is used to illustrate the types of issues addressed by an implementation analysis. The FSA provides an important challenge to national, state, and local evaluators to analyze state officials' interpretation, application, and implementation of this reform measure. There are many decisions that remain to be made that will shape how the provisions of the Act will be carried out at the state-level and that will determine how productive or punitive the FSA will be nationally (Chilman, 1992; National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 1988; Rom, 1989).

RATIONALE FOR STUDYING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation is evolutionary, and is influenced by the ideological, political, and economic climates in which it occurs. The goals and objectives stated in legislation are interpreted initially by administrators responsible for policy implementation. These interpretations become broader and more varied as the policy objectives filter down through the bureaucratic structure of the implementing organization. The implementation process can facilitate or hinder program development. When the program development phase is complete, what is actually implemented may vary substantially from the original policy directive (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983; Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980; Palumbo & Harder, 1981).

Research on welfare policy implementation has several purposes: to address the influence of state bureaucratic factors on welfare policy implementation; to explain variation in policy implementation within and across states; to demonstrate the interrelationship between the policy implementation process and program performance; and to assess the extent of intended change produced in the larger society by a program. Implementation researchers attempt to explain the implementation process, examine the extent to which programmatic goals were satisfied, and describe how well the policy performed, given the way in which the state complied with the federal mandate.

Implementation research is not necessarily prescriptive in the sense of determining the goodness or rightness of policy statements. Instead, it takes the policy articulated as a starting point, as the set of propositions which will be transformed into actions by a variety of actors. This does not, however, imply a mechanistic or technocratic analytic view; norms, values, and preferences are as much a part of implementation research as they are the policy formulation and policy implementation processes.

The importance of implementation analysis can be appreciated by considering the FSA, which was passed in 1988, but which had not been fully implemented by several states as of 1992. The FSA includes broadly defined educational and training opportunities; job search, health benefits, and child-care supports; limited work requirements for two-parent families; increased enforcement of child-support payments; and up to a year of continued child care and medical care for some families who leave AFDC due to employment.

The central feature of the FSA is the creation of the JOBS program which consolidates and expands prior authority for education, training, and work programs. Participation in the JOBS program is required for selected AFDC recipients in exchange for continued public assistance. The selected groups include: (1) custodial parents under 24 years of age who have not completed high school or who have little or no work experience; (2) recipients or applicants who have received AFDC for thirty-six of the preceding sixty months; and (3) recipients within two years of becoming ineligible for AFDC due to the age of their youngest child (Chilman, 1992; NASW, 1991). Since recipients are expected to work in exchange for public assistance, the FSA attempts to shift AFDC from a redistributive program (i.e., one that redirects wealth to benefit particular segments of society so as to satisfy equity concerns) to a developmental program (i.e., one that attempts to enhance directly the economic well-being of the state or community) (Gueron, 1990; Rom, 1989; Sanger, 1990).

It is important to acknowledge at the outset limitations of the FSA which may not support achievement of its goals of poverty reduction and self-sufficiency. For instance, the FSA does not specify how much education and training is acceptable in any state program. Nor does the Act create or provide for the creation of jobs. Instead, it largely emphasizes activities either to enhance

the education and skills of recipients or to compel recipients to locate and accept available employment. The effectiveness of either of these approaches depends on the availability of jobs in the local economy, and the Act does not assure that families attaining employment will have enough income to meet their basic needs. It also does not address the income needs of AFDC families who are not employed (Chilman, 1992; Greenburg, 1992; Gueron, 1990). In fact, Gueron (1990) asserts that the fundamental dilemma of the FSA is the impossibility of simultaneously reaching these two major policy goals—reducing poverty and encouraging self-support.

Although the policy details have been outlined by federal officials, the primary design, implementation, administration, and coordination of the FSA is left to state officials (Evans, 1992; Reggins, 1991; U.S. Congress, 1988). In the absence of a national welfare standard, and given the unique social, economic, and political conditions of each state, eligibility criteria and program benefits can vary within the boundaries established by the federal legislation (Evans, 1992; Rom, 1989).

If the uniqueness of implementation is dependent on the above conditions, on the commitment to and interpretation of the policy by implementing officials, and on the structural and organizational processes of the implementing organization (Chambers, 1986; Glass, 1990; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975), it is important for welfare policy analysts and evaluators to analyze these operating characteristics in relation to the implementation process. Although variation across state welfare programs is clearly permissible and expected, the implementation procedures that contribute to this variation need to be documented. Case studies of how states move from a redistributive to a developmental welfare system are needed to enhance our knowledge base and to provide models for implementation analysis. Such information will enable social workers to play an active role in shaping evolving federal and state welfare initiatives.

A FRAMEWORK FOR STUDYING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

There have been many attempts to understand, explain, and analyze the relationship between policy and implementation.

Although a multitude of case studies with varying conceptual frameworks exist, there is no generally accepted theory to provide guidance to research on policy implementation. Scholars have not yet developed a typology for studying policy implementation, a major step toward theory building (Goggin et al., 1990). As Goggin et al. (1990, p. 11) argue, "a topographical map that characterizes the terrain in precise terms, indicates quantitative measures, and specifies precise relationships among the various elements is needed."

Despite these limitations, implementation research has managed to shift the focus from "how a bill becomes a law" to "how a law becomes a program." Such studies have demonstrated the complex and dynamic nature of policy implementation and have emphasized the importance of a policy subsystem and the difficulties that a subsystem creates for coordination and control. Research on the implementation process has illuminated several dilemmas that implementing officials may face and has identified factors that seem to account for variation in programmatic results (Glass, 1990; Goggin et al., 1990; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975).

A review of the various conceptual frameworks employed in implementation analyses suggests a number of conditions as requisites for successful policy implementation: (1) clearly defined goals and objectives; (2) administrators with technical competence to implement and execute the policy; (3) clearly defined populations; (4) intelligible enabling legislation; (5) the publication of federal regulations prior to program implementation; (6) program procedures for implementors and administrators to follow; (7) training assistance from the federal level to state implementors during implementation of joint programs; and (8) adequate resources (Chambers, 1986; Glass, 1990; Goggin, 1987; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983; Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Palumbo & Calista, 1990; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). The implementation process also is facilitated or blocked through the implementing organization's structure and its functional processes (Gryski & Usher, 1980; Magill, 1984; Sosin, 1990; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975).

Building upon these prior studies, a framework is proposed for implementation analysis. The framework incorporates the

following domains: (1) enabling legislation; (2) federal regulations; (3) organizational structure; (4) organizational process; and (5) program performance (See Figure 1). The proposed framework enables the implementation process to be studied and analyzed so that inferences can be made about the relationship between policy design, policy implementation, and policy outcome. It can be applied to investigate how the administrative authority of those responsible for implementing, coordinating, and administering federally-mandated, state-administered programs affects variation in policy implementation.

The *enabling legislation* and the *federal regulations* address the legal contract between the federal and state governments. The legislation is the actual law which mandates the policy decision. The regulations contain the provisions which authorize the implementation of the policy, including rewards for compliance in carrying out the policy and legal sanctions for noncompliance (Chambers, 1986; Goggin, 1987; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983).

Organizational structure is defined as the degree to which the implementing organization represents complexity, formalization, and centralization (Goggin, 1987; Magill, 1984; Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980). *Organizational process* is defined as how functional activities, such as decision making, are affected by the administrative procedures necessary for complying with the new policy (Sosin, 1990). *Program performance* involves the actual outcome, the result, of the implementation process. Assessment of program performance is concerned with who and how many clients or target groups were reached and the types and amount of program's resources they received (Hasenfeld, 1984; Palumbo & Calista, 1990).

APPLYING THE ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK TO THE FSA

The following sections illustrate the application of the proposed analytic framework. The types of issues addressed in implementation research are identified using the FSA as a case example. These discussions are not intended to be definitive, but

Figure 1:**Implementation Analysis Framework**

Enabling Legislation	Policy Goals & Objectives Target Population Fiscal Arrangements Major Provisions Eligibility Guidelines Federal Administrator State Administrator Rules of Entitlement Benefits
Federal Regulations	Provisions which Implement Policy Sanctions for Compliance Target Populations Eligibility Requirements Financing & Administration
Organizational Structure	Implementing Agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Federal Bureaucracy b. State Bureaucracy c. Local Agency Mission of Agency (ies) Implementing Officials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Professional Orientation b. Educational Training c. Previous Experience
Organizational Process	Communication Patterns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Top Down b. Bottom Up Internal Decision Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Centralized b. Decentralized Resource Allocation
Program Performance	Who Governs How Funds are Used Who Benefits Extent of Goal & Objective Achievement Activities Contribute to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Success b. Failure Mechanisms to Revise Failures

are suggestive of the ways in which this framework can be used to generate information about the policy implementation process.

Enabling Legislation

How federal legislation is drafted can affect the extent to which public policy objectives are attained (Magill, 1984; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983; Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980; Palumbo & Harder, 1981; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). The statutes, which make the legislation binding, structure the implementation process through the delineation of legal objectives, selection of implementing institutions, provision of legal and financial resources to those institutions, and regulation of the opportunities for participation by nonagency actors in the implementation process (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983). To the extent that the statute provides precise and clear instructions to implementing officials and others, the more likely it is that the policy outputs of the implementing agencies will be consistent with the policy directive (Magill, 1984). However, it is rare when ambiguity is not present in federal legislation.

The FSA allows the state to set cash benefit levels. By doing so, the federal government permits wide variation in the welfare benefits that states can, and do, pay to welfare recipients (Rom, 1989). The policy allows state officials to exercise discretion regarding benefits and eligibility in order to satisfy the unique needs of their citizenry, as determined by their local political and economic climates (Peterson, 1980).

States are required to establish and operate a JOBS program to give welfare recipients education, training, and work experience. In seeking to meet federally-mandated participation rates with limited resources, state officials can impose extensive and unproductive requirements on many families. In addition, JOBS implementation cannot be viewed in itself as a comprehensive response to the needs of poor families. JOBS implementation does not address the low benefits, restrictive eligibility rules, and frequent procedural arbitrariness facing families in need of AFDC (Chilman, 1992; Greenberg, 1992).

The total cost of the FSA over 5 years is estimated by the Congressional Budget Office to be \$3.3 billion to the federal government and \$.7 billion to the states. Initially funding was appropriated by Congress through 1991, but further funding has

been appropriated for each of the federal fiscal years through 1995. Federal funding for JOBS in 1992 and 1993 was \$1 billion (Chilman, 1992). While these amounts seem like a lot, they are actually a minimal resource commitment.

Federal JOBS funding is not open-ended (Greenberg, 1992). Instead, each state is eligible to draw down a capped entitlement amount from the federal government each year. The state's capped entitlement amount is based on its pro rata share of the total federal allocation. Most of the federal funds available to the state for JOBS are at one of two matching rates: 60 percent or the state's Medicaid matching rate for the JOBS program, whichever is greater. Federal funds are also available to cover up to 50 percent of administrative, transportation, and supportive service costs. The state is eligible for open-ended federal funding at the state's Medicaid match rate for child care expenses; however, matching rates for child care administrative and other costs are determined by separate formulae. Given the variety of formulae involved, determining the match rate for a particular expenditure can be problematic.

Federal Regulations

The details of a statute are generally spelled-out in regulations. In addition to stating the rules of entitlement, the regulations document enforcement procedures, including, as appropriate, incentives and sanctions. Regulations further clarify the benefits to be provided, define the target population, and specify eligibility criteria and administrative authority. They also may identify areas of federal involvement such as technical assistance provision, plan and program reviews, evaluations, and audits.

The regulations provide the guidelines for implementation, but often do not address who is responsible for monitoring task completion nor how this monitoring is to occur. Mechanisms to ensure accountability are not always clearly stated, although the penalty for noncompliance is usually explicit. Thus, each level of government involved in policy implementation often develops a separate, and potentially conflicting, system of accountability. Together, the enabling legislation and the federal regulations establish a binding legal contract between federal and state officials for policy implementation.

The nature of implementation of federally-mandated, state-administered programs rests, although not exclusively, on fiscal and structural contracts. The contracts adhere to the elements of organizational control. By stating the function for which funds must be spent, the federal government specifies the conditions and purposes, and regulates the processes by which state governments are to accomplish federal objectives (Chilman, 1992). Grant giving acts as an incentive, an inducement, and as a facilitator, for the continued influence of the federal government in state capacity building and problem solving. Money, plus regulations, is the medium through which the federal government influences state affairs (Chambers, 1986; Chilman, 1992; Glass, 1990).

To begin operating a JOBS program, each state must submit a plan to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and must receive HHS approval. The state plan must include a description of services to be provided and a description or flow chart explaining the progression of clients into and through the JOBS program. The plan must also present the state's decisions on a number of state options, e.g., whether parents of very young children will be required to participate, whether the state will permit or assist post-secondary education, and how the state will define "good cause" for failure to participate (Greenberg, 1992). In addition to the JOBS plan, the state is required to submit concurrently for approval a Supportive Services Plan, describing such things as the methods used to provide child care, the amount the state will pay for such care, and the other supportive services that will be provided.

Responsibility is vested with the Governor to assure that JOBS activities will be coordinated with programs under the Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and with any other relevant employment, training, or education program available in the state. In developing the state JOBS plan, and in carrying out the JOBS program, the state AFDC agency must consult and coordinate with other providers in order to: identify existing resources; prevent duplication of services; assure that other program services are available to enable participants to achieve self-sufficiency; and assure that the costs for these other services (e.g., JTPA or other employment services, adult education, early childhood education programs) are not incurred by the JOBS program (Chilman, 1992; Greenberg, 1992).

Yet the regulations for the JOBS program may be at variance with those for JTPA or other education and job training programs. Although these programs share the goal of facilitating employment, contradictory regulations guiding the state towards this end may constrain actual programmatic coordination. Funding commitments within each program also may affect JOBS participants' access to these other services. And competition about how individuals are "counted" or "credited" could well develop among the various programs.

Organizational Structure

Where a program is located within federal and state administering agencies is important because the policy outcome may be more a reflection of the implementing organization and the persons responsible for implementation than the legislation itself. Two key factors in the organizational structure which influence implementation are the appropriateness of the bureaucratic organization to the policy and the capabilities of the officials responsible for carrying out the policy.

The degree of fit between the mission of the implementing organization and the goals of the program to be implemented will affect: the length of time it takes to put the program into operation; the extent to which accommodations are made to opposing or supporting groups; and the relationship between government officials at different levels of the administering organizations (Chambers, 1986; Chilman, 1992; Glass, 1990; Goggin, 1987; Magill, 1984; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983; Palumbo & Harder, 1981). If there is a good fit between the program being implemented and the implementing organization, interpretation is simplified; goals may not need further renegotiations; resistance is lessened; and implementing officials can get on with the job of making the policy work.

A good fit also is determined by the professional competence of the officials authorized to carry out the mandate. The personnel responsible for administering the new program should possess the professional knowledge, skills, and training needed to increase the success of both program development and program performance. Implementors within the organization must deal with intra- and inter-organizational procedures, resource allocation, bureaucratic norms, and the values and preferences

of governmental and nongovernmental actors concerning program development, service delivery, and the target population (Chambers, 1986; Goggin, 1987; Magill, 1984). Nongovernmental stakeholders include lobby, constituency, and consumer groups who pressure implementors to administer policies in ways that advance their own interests.

The requirements of the FSA are numerous and complex and are likely to be burdensome to many states. For example, effective service coordination with other relevant programs is a major feature of the JOBS program. Meeting this requirement may be a challenge for many states, especially for those without prior experience in welfare-to-work programs.

The legislation also requires that all funds for the program be administered through the state AFDC agency, whether these funds are from public or private sources and whether they go to public or private services, such as child care or family service agencies. Not surprisingly, previous research has found that problems can arise with this method of fund collection and disbursement (Chilman, 1992).

Moreover, initial enthusiasm and high hopes about the possibilities of using JOBS as a way to address barriers to employment for families receiving AFDC have begun to give way to an increased sense of pessimism (Chilman, 1992). The Act's "pay-offs," in terms of lower welfare costs and increased recipient self-sufficiency through employment and child support, are not immediate and will probably be very small or nonexistent, at least without displacing other employees. State officials' primary concern has become, not unexpectedly, the expected financial outlay for their state (Chilman, 1992).

Program administrators will need to work closely and persuasively with various antiwelfare, low-tax political groups in their communities, as well as with numerous advocacy and client rights' organizations. Implementors will need to be highly skilled at managing competing and conflicting demands arising from actors in their organizations and in their communities. In addition, technical competence and practical skills are needed for the program design and service delivery phases. Yet most staff members of public welfare agencies are not equipped to carry out the necessary job skills training assessments (Chilman, 1992).

Organizational Process

Inter-organizational procedures such as communications, administrative distance, and administrative complexity have an effect on the bureaucratic structure and thereby influence the functional procedures of policy implementation. As Palumbo and Harder (1981) point out, policies are implemented to produce as little disruption as possible within the existing structure of the implementing organization.

Key factors that affect the way in which the organization functions include: the internal decision-making structure of the organization; the degree of reliance placed on intermediaries; the degree of disruption caused by the innovation; the degree of resistance to change in organizational procedures; and the number of officials from different organizational levels who are engaged in the implementation process (Sosin, 1990; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). Layers of “red tape” between the major decision makers at the top of the policy sphere and the service personnel at the bottom of the operations, coupled with a lack of clear lines of communication, permit program implementors to use their discretion as they attempt to turn specific policies into public services.

The JOBS program expressly encourages states to find ways to promote welfare recipients’ self-sufficiency through employment and job training. However, due to ambiguous and controversial rules for participation, some state officials find it problematic to answer questions about how JOBS is operating. It is often extremely difficult to get accurate calculations of the number of recipients participating in assessment or other activity components of JOBS (Greenberg, 1992). What counts as participation? Who counts as required participants—children and/or custodial parents? What is the unduplicated count of families assisted by a JOBS program?

The issue of “counting” intersects with organizational processes in two ways. First, is how what is to be counted is defined. In the JOBS program, decision making by local officials regarding participation is complicated by the need to balance numeric requirements against edibility criteria. When calculating the number of persons required to participate, officials must work to assure an acceptable rate of participation, according to HHS

guidelines, in order to receive federal funding. At the same time, they have to make decisions about who is to participate on a case-by-case basis. Officials must exclude those who: (1) are exempt; (2) have a good cause for not participating; (3) reside in an area where there is no JOBS program; or (4) are not required to participate because the state cannot guarantee needed child care. The case-by-case exclusion method will vary at the local level and will cause considerable variation in participant characteristics across and within states. And after all the exclusions are considered, according to Greenberg (1992), the number of persons required to participate is substantially reduced, thereby posing a potential threat to local achievement of an acceptable participation rate.

Second, is how counting is to be accomplished—that is, the organizational processes and procedures that need to be instituted or modified to obtain management information on participation. The accountability system required for the JOBS program may well represent an additional burden to local and state program implementors. Moreover, since accountability systems are not standardized, acquisition of data beyond what is needed by a particular level of organization may be viewed as an external demand that conflicts or interferes with usual work processes.

Program Performance

Policy outcomes cannot be evaluated unless the policy has been implemented and services delivered. "The delivery of services shapes policy outcomes more than the design of the policy" (Palumbo & Calista, 1990, p. xiii). "Outcomes," in this framework, refer to the degree to which the policy's goals are achieved. Since implementation is a process related to outcome (Goggin et al., 1990; Palumbo & Calista, 1990), it is central to the policy cycle. Examining the relationship between the implementation process and the policy's outcomes permits one to make inferences about program performance and the conditions under which intended outcomes can be maximized. Further, clarifying the rationale for political decision making during the implementation process generates information needed to redesign and restructure the policy to improve program performance.

The following types of questions would allow us to gain a better understanding of how a state's choices in JOBS implemen-

tation relate to the results observed. First, what do program participants actually do? What percentage of participants are in: basic education? post-secondary education? a training program? a job through on-the-job-training or wage subsidy? What proportion are engaged in job search activities that don't improve their skills or literacy?

Second, what is the program's sanction rate? A program's sanction rate is a good indicator of whether the state emphasizes the program's benefits or its punitive aspects. When a participant is sanctioned, her share of the AFDC grant is cut off for a period of time, with an escalating penalty structure. In a two-parent family, the share for both parents can be cut off. Despite the sanction rules, states can attempt to minimize the coercive features of JOBS by emphasizing program access for volunteers, participant choice, and conciliation efforts that seek to resolve problems without resorting to sanctions (Greenberg, 1992).

Third, what choices and services are offered to the three groups targeted by the FSA? What proportion of teenaged parents are served? Of long-term recipients? Of those within two years of becoming ineligible? What is the proportion of the total participant pool that each of these groups represents? What special service packages, if any, are used to accommodate each of these target groups?

Depending on the research goals, other issues that could be investigated include: How many participants get child care assistance? What do they get? How much does the state actually pay or reimburse? What is the role of recipient choice? What type of recipient seem to benefit most from the program? How much of the state's federal entitlement is being spent?

Ultimately, however, the central question is whether or not the JOBS program and its related services actually assist welfare recipients to leave the welfare rolls and to obtain jobs that will allow them to support their families at an adequate level. Research that sheds light on how this can be achieved—what particular mix of local circumstances, experiences, actors, and interventions is necessary—will make an important contribution to the ongoing national debate about welfare reform and to the lives of welfare recipients.

CONCLUSION

Research on policy implementation, to date, has provided a description of what implementation is and how it varies across time, policies, and units of government. Advances have been made in linking certain characteristics of the policy's design and setting with outcome (Goggin et al., 1990). While there is no shortage of variables to explain implementation and its outcomes, critical indicators have neither been specified nor quantified. The operationalization and measurement of key variables and the careful testing of hypotheses have just begun (Goggin et al., 1990). Focusing on the mechanisms that are used to implement programs, rather than solely on the programs themselves, is the best way to develop a theory of implementation.

Social workers are often directly involved with the implementation of federally-mandated, state-administered initiatives such as the JOBS program. Working in a variety of capacities within and outside of implementing agencies, social workers play key roles in shaping how services are ultimately delivered. These occupational vantage points afford social workers unique opportunities to be both producers and consumers of implementation information. Social workers can contribute to this body of research by sharing their experiences with and insights into the implementation process. Implementation studies offer social workers, whether employed as an agency bureaucrat or as line staff, an information base for advocacy. Developing an understanding of implementation as a process entailing multiple decision points subject to leverage will allow social workers to exert their influence more actively and effectively.

While implementation research has added much to our knowledge of what implementation is and how and why it varies, it has not been as helpful in providing a generally accepted theoretical framework; in differentiating among types of implementation outcomes; in specifying the causal pattern associated with these outcomes; or in explaining the frequency with which these patterns occur (Goggin, 1987). The framework proposed here represents a beginning effort at the synthesis that needs to occur to advance the development of implementation analysis in social welfare. As such, it serves as a heuristic for investigating and

understanding the transformation of a public law into a social program.

Federally-mandated, state-administered programs, by their very nature, entail ambiguous legislation and regulations in order to allow for local "fit." Increased federal specificity about the choice of implementing organization or the provision of technical assistance might enhance program goal attainment without sacrificing local discretion. In addition, inclusion of precise monitoring and evaluation requirements could enhance the accountability of local implementors to federal policy makers and intended beneficiaries. Yet which facets of a program should be accompanied by explicit federal criteria necessitates value judgments about social objectives as well as assessment of local responses. The questions of where and how a balance can be struck between federal and state interests remain pressing. Case studies of various federally-mandated, state-administered programs would enhance insight into this tradeoff and further the dialogue on policy implementation in social welfare.

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Note

1. In this article, federally-mandated, state-administered programs refers to social welfare programs that are mandated through federal legislation but implemented and administered by state authorities, e.g. Medicaid, Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Maternal and Child Health Services (Title V), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program (EPSDT).

A version of this paper was presented at the 1992 CSWE Annual Program Meeting, Kansas City, MO.

The authors would like to thank Kristine Siefert for the helpful comments made on earlier drafts of this manuscript.

Researching Social Networks in Action

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Many communities across Canada today are challenged by conditions that approach social and economic disintegration. As agencies of the state cut back their financial support of welfare services, citizens are faced with both increasing levels of stress and fewer forms of relief provided by established institutions. For researchers, the challenges of a shrinking resource base are compounded by ongoing epistemological and methodological controversies within social science. The recent emergence of a "postmodern" critique of traditional social-scientific methodology arises from some profound reorientations in the philosophy and the social context of the social sciences, reorientations that are reflective of fundamental economic and political transformations. This paper describes the action-research program we have designed and implemented in response to these challenges.

Starting with a small core of citizens from the community of Hespeler, Ontario, we have been using ethnographic methods to trace the networks of which these people are part and the ways in which those networks are constructed and maintained. The insights gained from this inquiry process are being used, in turn, to develop methods of strengthening local support structures, through collaborative processes of research and action. Such strengthening forms of interaction are not only desirable on their own terms. They also provide a model for restructuring relationships among research participants, and among forms of knowledge and being.

Many communities across Canada today are challenged by conditions that approach social and economic disintegration. As agencies of the state at all levels cut back their financial support of welfare services, citizens are faced with both increasing levels

of stress and fewer forms of relief provided by established institutions. In this atmosphere, people often have little choice but to turn to their personal support networks, and to rely more than ever on family, friends, and neighbours to help get them through hard times. At the same time, however, the erosion of traditional geographic bases of community, the reduction of government assistance, and the increasing competition for scarce resources work to undermine social cohesion. Many social workers and their colleagues are distressed that the state, having earlier assumed moral responsibility for the welfare of thousands of disadvantaged citizens, now seems to be abandoning that obligation. The deepening crisis of community demands both better forms of understanding, and improved forms of collaborative action.

The "downsizing" of the government safety net also has important implications for the conduct of social research. Governments determined to curtail spending are slashing support for education, social welfare, and health-related services. The reduction of resources for what had been well-established state agencies has inevitably affected the scope and nature of research related to the functions of those institutions. Publicly-supported universities are themselves such institutions, and as such are increasingly under attack. The search has begun for alternative forms of social support, and social research, which will require something other than the continued expansion of government-funded bureaucracies.

The challenges of a shrinking resource base are further compounded by ongoing epistemological and methodological controversies within social science. Recent critiques of established forms of research methodology are reflective of some profound reorientations taking place in the philosophy of the social sciences. Those reorientations, in turn, reflect some fundamental transformations in the economic, political, and social context of social inquiry. As developed economies shift from material production to an information-based economy, the extent to which academic knowledge-production is implicated in the semiotic politics of the new economy has become more topical, and more problematic (see Manning, 1991). Within the academy, many are beginning to question the very foundations of the historical quest for a scientific understanding of society.

To some, these various challenges may appear to be coincidental, but for a growing number of social theorists, they represent interrelated manifestations of the exhaustion, and the declining final stages, of "late modernism" (see Giddens, 1991; Harvey, 1990). The modernist model was based upon an economy driven by manufacturing, in which the means of production were controlled by corporate capital. Successful versions of such economies could afford to support the meliorative (but still hegemonic) functions of a large welfare state, which in turn was provided with policy guidance by positivist forms of social research. For a growing number of social theorists, however, the modernist paradigm is simply no longer tenable, either as a description of the present, or as a model for the future. In its place, a concept of "postmodernism" which emphasizes the layered, symbolic, fragmented, contradictory, and multivocal nature of social reality is becoming increasingly important.

Concepts of postmodernist social inquiry challenge the monolithic authority of traditional scientific paradigms, and insist upon the importance of the local and particular. Some streams of the postmodern perspective are bolstered by the critiques of historically disempowered groups: feminists, people of colour, and others who have not often found their experiences fully or accurately reflected in social-scientific reporting (see Lather, 1991; Richardson, 1991). Those who have usually appeared in social-scientific writing only as "objects" of research are increasingly demanding the right be heard as "subjects", speaking of, by, and for themselves. Their claims are impossible to ignore.

Together, these challenges place a heavy load on social research—especially those forms of research which attempt to remain engaged directly with current social problems. In fashioning a response to the postmodern critique, many researchers have found a starting point in a rejection of positivism, and the adoption of more interpretive approaches. A number have been attracted to a symbolic-interactionist perspective, and an ethnographic approach to field research, which attempt to preserve and be true to the nuances of particular social contexts. Such research paradigms are, however (and perhaps intentionally), far from being tightly-defined, precise prescriptions for the conduct of inquiry. As Cohen and Manion (1989) have said of symbolic

interactionism, "the term does not represent a unified perspective in that it does not embrace a common set of assumptions and concepts accepted by all who subscribe to the approach." (p. 34). It is this situation which has caused us to devote a good deal of attention to the construction and justification of a research model, and an approach to field work, which we feel is adequate to the demands of our discipline, but which also addresses the needs of those who are seeking a better understanding of their social conditions.

We hope that, through this paper, we will be able to locate ourselves within the traditions of qualitative research, and to contribute to the development of those traditions. Contemporary practitioners of socially-engaged research must respond, we believe, to the philosophical demands of the postmodernist critique of science, even if they do not accept entirely the postmodern program. They must also answer to the ascendant ethical demands of the people they have so long claimed to serve. At the same time, engaged social research must cope with the shrinkage of its own immediate base of support, and the decline of the state institutions through which its findings have hitherto been implemented. In this way, the decline of old forms of working and thinking can provide opportunities for reconstructed forms of inquiry, forms which have the potential to be both more enlightening than traditional approaches, and more satisfying in the human relationships they engender.

In this paper, we will first describe the ways in which our approach attempts to come to terms with some of the epistemological challenges facing engaged social research. We will then illustrate the application of our approach to a large, privately-funded research project in neighbourhood relations which is currently under way in southern Ontario. Finally, we will suggest some of the ways we believe this model of engaged inquiry can address the need to strengthen social networks, at the same time that it contributes to theory through improved forms of dialogical understanding.

The Postmodern Critique

The postmodern critique of social science is not an attack on any particular methodology *per se*, but primarily on entrenched

views of what constitutes the "truth", and the socially-organized procedures for gaining access to that truth (see Manning, 1991; Marcus, 1994). Those procedures have historically tended to privilege the pronouncements of trained experts over the discourses of "ordinary" people, even to the extent of saying that the experts knew better than people themselves what those people were actually doing. Postmodernism questions the grounds for such practices. Postmodernists maintain that there is nothing inherent in expert testimony which can give it final authority over the discourse of other interested parties, who are informed by their own life experience. To some extent, then, the postmodernist critique of social science may be seen as a reaction against the submersion of individual experience and personal meaning in an abstract concept of society, which often denies the importance and the rationality of individual citizens and the forms of life with which they are familiar.

Another facet of the critique has its roots in the failure of modernist science to produce a more just, peaceful, and habitable world. It is aimed at all investigative techniques which rely on authority relations to privilege the discourse of elites over the understandings of situated participants. Postmodernist theorizing has thus brought forward for scrutiny a subject usually relegated to only incidental notice in social research: the essential power differences between researchers and researched, power differences based in class, gender, race, and a whole panoply of cultural disparities.

This is a particularly acute problem for what have come to be known as "applied" forms of social science. Social work, education, and a wide range of therapeutic disciplines are dedicated to acting in the world as well as studying it. They are committed to an effort to achieve some form of social betterment through the treatment of individual needs. They have come to be known as "applied" sciences because, within the modernist paradigm, they were expected to leave formal research and theorizing to the "pure" sciences, and simply act to apply the findings from sociology, psychology, economics, etc. This situation has traditionally relegated "applied" disciplines to a secondary status within the academy, where they have struggled to define for themselves a body of theory and a set of methodological procedures which

they can claim as truly their own. One of the reasons we prefer the term "engaged" rather than "applied" social science, is to emphasize our engagement with current social problems without the connotation that we are merely an adjunct to some more "pure" form of inquiry.

For engaged social scientists, who are concerned with social action as well as the pursuit of a scientific understanding of society, there is a cruel irony in the confrontation with postmodernist thought. Such researchers are often in agreement with much of the critique of the rigid, dominating, and anti-human forms of modernist science. But the alternatives offered by the postmodernist paradigm sometimes appear to lead toward forms of radical relativism, cynicism, and impotence in the face of continuing social problems (see Bernstein, 1983). The preoccupation of postmodernism with issues of discourse analysis and the deconstruction of culture contains the danger that it will lead to a complete dead-end in terms of involvement with social needs and social causes.

Within every dilemma lies an opportunity, however. The attack on the kinds of modernist science which involves only the discourses of elites may allow for a reconsideration of engaged forms of social inquiry within the academy. Research with a restructured agenda, which is willing to tackle the difficult ethical and methodological problems head-on, may be capable of addressing the postmodernist challenge, and of providing some tangible results of worth to the participants. It may even provide ways of coping with the shrinking resources of the welfare state.

The Grounds of Action-Research

The philosophical grounds for a research paradigm which discards positivist notions of truth, and which is self-consciously aware of its own position in the world, are well articulated by Winter (1987). Winter sets out to re-constitute the epistemological grounds for engaged social research by seeking to return to first principles regarding the construction and defense of reliable, empirically-grounded forms of sociological knowledge. Recognizing the ways in which historical accretions of ideological authority have distorted the sources of scientific reasoning, he seeks to locate "a criterion whereby an analytically justifiable

formulation of validity may be distinguished from the conventional authority of institutional roles *and* from the conventional authority of 'science'." (p. 5).

Winter finds some of the criteria he is seeking in the basic insights of ethnomethodology, although he also recognizes the shortcomings of this discipline. Writers such as Cicourel and Garfinkel pointed out that traditional social science, by drawing attention to the gaps and failures of everyday reasoning, ignored the great bulk of its effective and sensible accomplishments (see Cicourel, 1964; Garfinkel, 1968). Common-sense reasoning, they pointed out, is usually adequate "for all practical purposes". Such practical reasoning acknowledges the ever-present *necessity* of action in the world. Underlying its concentration on the practical, however, is ethnomethodology's almost botanical model of data analysis, and its conviction that there are "invariant structures" guiding everyday action, which can be discovered by close observation and analysis.

Ethnomethodology thus counters the modernist tendency towards grand theory by insisting on the value and interest inherent in practical, micro-level, everyday action. However, ethnomethodology by itself risks elevating common sense to the position of being the *only* knowledge of interest, and its analytical processes remain largely isolated from the sources of its data. It thus risks falling back into a form of unproductive essentialism. In a similar way, interpretive paradigms, such as hermeneutics and phenomenology, have in some ways posed an alternative to positivist science by erecting its mirror-image. Concentrating exclusively on micro-level phenomena and/or the interpretation of texts, such paradigms discount the utility of social theories which encompass macro-level concepts of stratification and exploitation. By contrast, we are seeking a position which acknowledges the importance of situated knowledge, but which also recognizes its limitations.

Engaged social research which is to be useful in providing grounds for social action must recognize that the simplistic generalizations and superficial analyses which Bourdieu calls "spontaneous sociology" often support prejudices and stereotypes, which in turn act to perpetuate many forms of social oppression (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1968/1991). Well-grounded

forms of engaged inquiry must recognize the ways in which public discourse is routinely distorted through its domination by powerful groups, acting in their own interests. What is needed, then, is a form of social science which recognizes and respects common sense, while trying to transcend its limitations. For Bourdieu and his colleagues, the starting point for such a science is a radical "epistemological break" with the everyday (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1968/1991; cf. Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992); but this may also go too far in reacting against common forms of reasoning.

As we review these traditions of social research, then, we find ourselves back in the alteration between versions of science as completely alienated from, or completely immersed in, everyday life—what Bernstein (1983) characterizes as the choice between "objectivism and relativism". What is needed is a way of reconciling this conflict, not through some final victory by one vision over the other, but by the propagation of a productive dialectic between them. In this regard, the conclusions of Winter and Bernstein are strikingly similar. Winter advocates a form of action-research which confronts its own context as directly as possible, and which attempts to involve subjects as active participants in the formulation of a theoretical analysis, as well as a plan for concrete action. Bernstein, as a philosopher, is less explicit about forms of empirical research, but the themes of his analysis are clearly resonant with our own goals. After reviewing several prominent philosophers of the twentieth century, Bernstein concludes:

At a time when the threat of total annihilation no longer seems to be an abstract possibility but the most imminent and real potentiality, it becomes all the more imperative to try again and again to foster and nurture those forms of communal life in which dialogue, conversation, *phron—sis*, practical discourse, and judgement are concretely embodied in our everyday practices. (Bernstein, 1983, p. 229).

The kind of engaged social research we are advocating seeks to narrow the gap between scientists and other social actors, and to bring everyday knowledge and scientific knowledge into a constructive, dialogical relationship. It seeks to resolve the polarity between common sense and scientific discipline, but not out of a naive belief that some form of inoffensive compromise can be

attained. On the contrary, we will argue for a fluid, provisional construction of scientific knowledge which is always open-ended, sometimes contentious, and in a constant state of dialectical tension and revision. Such a position will inevitably lead to a certain unease, a disquieting state of permanent uncertainty that results from the abandonment of previous monolithic images of truth. That is the price demanded by a form of engaged social science which refuses to become another ossified set of bureaucratic practices.

Clearly, there is a great deal more that could be said about so large and difficult an area as the philosophical grounds of contemporary social research. As our emphasis is on action as much as deliberation, however, we prefer to move at this point to a description of our actual field methods, and to some of the preliminary findings of our current research. In assessing the challenges confronting engaged social research, we have been compelled to re-examine the "minority traditions" of action-research and community development which have shaped our own forms of praxis to date. These minority traditions have by now long histories of inquiry and activism, but they have never come to occupy centre stage in the academy. They derive from the basic recognition that many kinds of ignorance are imposed forms of social and political oppression, and that a lack of skills and information prevents many dispossessed people from acting in their own defense. The traditions we are trying to incorporate into our research designs include forms of critical inquiry which can open up the dialectical processes of knowledge production, as required by the epistemology we have described above.

The Company of Neighbours

"The Company of Neighbours" is an action-research project funded originally by the Donner Canadian Foundation, and now by the Trillium Foundation, and based at the Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University. Under the leadership of principal investigator Ken Banks, the project began its field work in the fall of 1992 (see Banks & Wideman, 1994). The site which was selected was Hespeler, Ontario, a formerly prosperous and close-knit town which has been profoundly impacted by recent economic and social restructuring.

The basic theoretical perspective of The Company of Neighbours has been heavily influenced by the work of Philip Abrams (see Bulmer, 1986). The intent of the project is to learn, through dialogue with communities, about the strengths and weaknesses of mutual aid relations engaged in (or not) by local people, and where relevant, to suggest how forms of support for such mutual aid might be reconfigured. In addition, the project attempts to identify ways in which professional social workers can restructure their roles, in order to become facilitators who can support local people in clarifying, and then achieving, their own goals. While this project depends upon community member participation throughout, The Company Of Neighbours remains primarily a research project, and is *not* devoted to introducing new social programs, expanding existing programs, or taking old programs away.

From the beginning, we have conceived of this project as a form of "participatory action-research". This form of inquiry now has a fairly long and well-established history, especially within engaged forms of social research such as social work (see Lees, 1975), economic development (see Fals-Borda, 1991; Friederes, 1993), and especially in education (see Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982). According to Carr & Kemmis (1986), there are "three important characteristics of modern action research: its *participatory* character, its *democratic* impulse, and its *simultaneous contribution to social science and social change*." (pp. 163–164; emphasis in original). Guided by these impulses, action-research has struggled to define a style of ethnographic investigation which successfully bridges the gulf between researchers and researched, and which can be effective in promoting indigenously-defined forms of constructive change in the settings where it is used.

One of the commitments which action-research shares with emerging postmodern forms of ethnography is the importance of locating the "voices" of authors within their own context (See Dawson, 1994). The effort to do so is always partial, but it may help readers to know that the authors of this text first met as doctoral classmates at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, in the late 1980s. Ken's background is primarily in social work, and in the study of the social construction of professionalism. Marshall's background is in sociological research methodology and critical

pedagogy. Ken's role as Principal Investigator has put him close to the action of the project. As an external consultant, Marshall has contributed both technical expertise and the perspective of a somewhat more detached "outsider". Gail Wideman, the project co-ordinator, has interacted most closely with the participants, and contributed to other reports from the project (see Banks & Wideman, 1993; 1994; 1995-in press).

Without wishing to separate or reify these roles excessively, in what follows it will be primarily Ken's voice providing the story of action within the project, and Marshall's which provides the commentary upon that action.

The Company of Neighbours set out to investigate the local neighbourhood ecology, with a concentration on personal helping networks. To this end, the university-based researchers began by identifying, contacting, and interviewing a number of "key informants" in Hespeler. We did not wish to restrict our information-gathering to those traditionally identified as "community leaders", however. One of the most fundamental parts of the methodology developed for this project is the use of local citizens as field workers. It seemed to us that a clear implication of the research paradigm we adopted was that an inquiry into neighbourhood structures and personal networks was best conducted by the neighbours themselves. Local residents could be expected to feel at home in the community, and be able to draw upon their own knowledge of the area in selecting other participants. Through conversations with the key informants and other local residents, Ken located five volunteers who represented to some extent a cross-section of the inhabitants of the area. These five people were designated as the primary interviewers, and because of the fairly technical nature of their role, were paid by the project as research assistants, and given more formal kinds of training than the other participants.

Training for the research assistants was designed to be as participatory as possible. In addition to reviewing information about basic interviewing techniques, time was spent developing the framework for the interview questions in joint sessions with these participants, based on the goals and objectives of the project. Ethical requirements of field research were reviewed with the interviewers, and the need for strict confidentiality discussed.

Each neighbourhood interviewer was asked, in the first of two series, to interview twenty people that were in their network.

Although an action-research project assumes a different set of relationships among the various participants than that in more traditional research projects, the day-to-day field methods are similar to other ethnographic projects. We began work on an ethnographic network analysis, that is, an analysis that examines the contexts and key elements in the character of the relationships identified in interviews. In total, the university research team conducted 32 key-informant interviews, and the local interviewers conducted 160 interviews with members of their social networks. Field notes, reflective process notes, and transcripts of groups meetings have also been compiled.

Using a version of "grounded theory" analysis techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), and a computerized database system (see Mangan, 1994), the field data are assembled, labelled and stored. These data are then analyzed, not on the basis of pre-defined research hypotheses, but through a process of examination which leads to the identification and refinement of emergent themes which appear to be important topics among respondents. To illustrate this process, we will discuss some of our preliminary findings, and the implications of our approach for future efforts in engaged social research.

Establishing Emergent Themes

The key-informant interviews gave us personal contact with local school teachers, social workers and business people, whose interests we recorded and categorized in field notes on the database. We developed a coding and sorting process which allows us to work from a large selection of keywords to collect similar statements that different respondents have made to interviewers. The coding is a layered process, with the researchers reflecting on the impact of new transcriptions as they are entered into the database, then culling and printing clusters of data by different combinations of keywords, until themes become apparent (see Tesch, 1990). Next, the participating interviewers are drawn into the discussion. By the time we decided on certain themes for our preliminary analysis, for instance, we had involved interviewers,

consultants and research assistants in the discussion of more than a dozen candidate themes over a six-month period (see Banks and Wideman, 1994).

When it comes time to produce reports from the computerized database, the researchers sit down with selected printouts of highlighted and edited data, and draft an initial version of the story that the collected interviews tell, using quotes frequently to preserve the flavour of the original responses. When this is done, the team takes these reports to the following two groups for verification: First, the "reflective groups" of interviewees who have volunteered to stay involved in the project by critiquing the meaning that we are drawing from the interviews. The reflective groups include one that grew out of our interviewer training, and a group of senior citizens who meet regularly to tell us of historical networks and patterns in the Hespeler community. Secondly, there is the "advisory group", made up of senior social-work administrators, public policy specialists and academicians, whose role in reviewing the process is more technical. At regular intervals, the research process is reviewed with this group, in order to confirm the intelligibility of the research for an external audience.

As can be seen from the structure of these two feedback groups, the research project is intentionally positioned between the traditionally-defined "service providers" and their "clients". Our goal and our expectation is that we can serve as a mediator between these groups, and foster new forms of interaction between them and other interested parties. Being more firmly grounded in local experience, we expect that these forms will prove to be more durable and self-sustaining than would externally-imposed forms of restructuring.

The Action-research Cycle in Action

Action-research of the kind we are describing has frequently been characterized as a "cycle" or "spiral" of reflexive activities: data-gathering, analysis, innovation, assessment, and reflection (see Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p.186). One story from the early phases of the project may serve to illustrate the kind of action-research cycle taking place within the Company of Neighbours.

After we recruited and trained the interviewers and met members of their networks in the community, we realized that there were many small gatherings around the community that were characterized by respondents as "hardly worth mentioning", but that were important for us to take notice of. Several of our interviewers and their friends had often talked about the evening gatherings of friends and acquaintances at a local donut shop. Membership in these gatherings was fluid, active participation was not required, and attendance was only noted if someone did not appear for several weeks.

One of Ken's early thoughts was that the Company of Neighbours should try to duplicate the donut-shop type of gathering at "Mom's Place", a restaurant next door to the site office. However, local ambivalence about the idea cooled his ardour for that initiative. In discussing this possibility, though, we found that local people who were members of our research networks were bringing memorabilia about Hespeler to our office. They would come in with collections of pictures and articles, discuss them, and perhaps inquire of others as to the names of certain people in the pictures. We put some of the pictures in our storefront window, which attracted still more people. Soon we established, at their bidding, a regular Tuesday afternoon gathering of various interested people to tell stories of "Old Hespeler", perhaps with a view to publishing them in newspapers, or even in a book. Within a few months, the "History Group" assembled a wealth of memorabilia. Motivated by their own enthusiasm, they have staged several open-houses at the site office, arranged for local-history monographs to be copied and sold at cost, and presented regular shows of memorabilia at the St. Luke's nursing home.

The general lack of structure of the History Group came in part from the lesson that we had learned in hearing about the other informal groups that were "hardly worth mentioning". Instead of imposing a conventional form of organization on these informal groups, we loosely followed the discussion-group model that we were told worked in Hespeler. By listening, and not talking much ourselves, by not imposing tight time-frames nor rules for membership or leadership in the gatherings, we supported these groups without trying to control them. Even so, we remained

uncertain of the outcomes of this process, pending the formation of the reflective groups, which followed the community dinner.

Reflective Group Activities

In December, 1993, a "thank-you" dinner was put on by the research team. Guests included our interviewers, the people that they had interviewed (who were invited personally by the interviewers), and members of the History Group. The group ate and sang Christmas carols together, and Ken asked those that were interested in helping the research team to assist in reviewing and interpreting the interviews we had collected. This invitation was the basis for membership in the new "Reflective Group". It was a moment of great risk, as in any action-research project, when participants are asked to take part in analytical activities which they may or may not be interested in, and to offer responses to the researchers which may or may not be complementary. As it turned out, these groups became linked in an action-research cycle that became even more egalitarian than we had hoped.

At the third meeting of the Reflective Group, three central ideas were articulated: first, it was suggested that, in order to strengthen community communications, a newsletter could be organized, if materials could be found within Hespeler. Second, some of the older people in town expressed a desire for more dialogue with local teenagers. They stated that they would like to compare notes on living conditions in the 1930s, as compared to now. It is interesting to note that, resonant with the themes of postmodernism, both of these felt needs concerned the decay of local interaction, and a longing for the re-establishment of a dialogical context.

The third theme that emerged repeatedly was that of rootless or unsupervised youth. The present situation among young people in Hespeler was clearly perceived as one of the strongest contrasts with the image of the community in the past. As shown by the following quotations, the remedies suggested were both repressive and supportive.¹

- R1:** Get the kids off the street. I think they should have a law. They should have curfew. I don't think it should be ridiculous like 9:00, but 3:00 in the morning is a bit much.

- R2:** The older kids need skate parks, for instance—areas where they can go and play. There are lots of playgrounds for the children, but there is nothing for the youth.
- R3:** They had no supervision in growing up for one thing, and they could care less about other people's property. They need a community centre or whatever it's called, where they can go and do things so they won't be causing trouble.
- R4:** I would ask that they have the recreational facilities that keep the young people happy, playing together, neighbours and everything else, and not walking the streets looking for trouble, looking for something to do, because there's nothing to do in the community. . . .

In addition to comments such as these, several of the older people expressed an interest in hearing directly from young people what their experience of Hespeler was in the 1990's.

In response to these suggestions, Ken called the high school principal, who was one of the original "key informants". The principal enthusiastically referred him to the head of the History and Sociology Department of the School. This teacher invited Ken and a member of the Reflective Group to talk to students about the request for dialogue. Ken, in turn, invited the teacher and students to the next gathering of the newsletter group. The teacher arrived with several boxes of his own memorabilia, and five students arrived soon thereafter.

The participants admitted that, at first, they did not know how to "do" dialogue amongst the several generations present. Scrap books were passed around, then several of the older members told some stories. There was some discussion amongst the older people about conditions then and now. In order to keep older people from dominating the conversation, Ken kept prompting the students for their perspective on conditions, on their dreams and wishes for conditions in the community. After much over-talking and anxiety on both sides, several of the young people spoke out.

One young woman said that this was the first time that she could remember having been in a group consisting of such diverse ages where there was an exchange of ideas expected. Another young woman spoke of a desire to gather with friends to hear

"their music" live. Another thought that there might be interest in a coffee house. Other ideas were also mentioned, ranging from miniature golf, to integrated environments for housing, school, and work.

Ken noted later that the students appeared interested, and perhaps encouraged, to hear that older people who appeared successful and comfortable had also had a very difficult struggle at the beginning of their careers, and that by staying with it they had made a life for themselves. The older people were touched that these youngsters were interested in them and wanted to talk. Several students expressed an interest in doing a youth column in the newsletter. Since that gathering, the teacher has developed a plan to spend the summer researching and, along with both young and old neighbours, videotaping the memorabilia at the site office for use in the school as well as in the community. Later they plan to arrange for community members to come to the school to do "living history" dialogues, and to bring students out to the community for special classes and historical outings. Neighbours are also staffing the site office on Sundays and evenings and are planning inter-generational days in the park as we write.

Conclusion

The story of the Company of Neighbours so far is not terribly revolutionary. It remains to be seen whether the initiatives described above will sustain themselves. But it is worth noting that, as local residents expressed a need for new or renewed forms of communication and interaction within Hespeler, project researchers were able to listen, to clarify, to facilitate, and to re-inforce the community's ideas. Such a process does not solve all of Hespeler's problems, nor can it be applied as a rote formula to other sites and kinds of research. Within Hespeler, we must continue to seek out voices from the community which have not yet been heard, and the ways in which those voices are connected with social networks. There are conflicts within the community which must still be confronted. In considering the implications of this project for other research endeavours, the conditions of local context and the goals of the research must be scrutinized carefully.

Even with these caveats, however, we feel that this project has begun to formulate a concrete response to the postmodern critique of traditional social work and traditional social science. The participants have developed collaboratively an action-research cycle which is promoting dialogical understanding among everyone involved, at the same time that it provides new insights for a restructured social-scientific understanding of the community.

Whatever the postmodernist critique of the foundations of social-scientific truth, we know that all people act all the time on the basis of information which may not be certain or complete, but which is often adequate for the practical purposes at hand. This simple fact may provide for a response to the postmodernist critique, which will allow for the continuation of engaged social science through the deflation of its more arrogant claims. Instead of searching for eternal verities of social structure and action, a more useful paradigm may be the identification and reduction of specific, strategic "areas of ignorance" (see Wagner, 1993).

As we write, our research project is still in progress, and it is too early to assess fully its implications for ourselves and all the participants. However, we believe that our approach holds great potential. Through our engaged action-research, we are attempting to address the long-standing paternalism of university researchers, and of social work and social assistance agencies generally. We are trying to locate forms of social action which do not require the sacrifice of individual dignity in the process of seeking, receiving, and offering neighbourly help. Such new forms are not only desirable on their own terms, but may also provide a constructive complement to the welfare state in response to the erosion of the publicly-supported safety net. As tax-funded supports are steadily weakened, action-research along the lines described can provide ways of fashioning an informed and self-reliant community response. In addition to promoting models of neighbourly co-operation, we hope that the legacy for participants in *The Company of Neighbours* will be an enduring model of how they themselves can conduct purposeful inquiry into their own social needs. This form of praxis is particularly appropriate given that we, as students of social policy, are morally challenged to reconfigure ways of doing social support in response to the state's capitulation of responsibility in this area.

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Note

1. Respondents are identified here only by code letters, in order to preserve the confidentiality promised to them. In later reports, however, we plan to ask respondents if they wish to be identified, in order to recognize their contributions to this research (see Shulman, 1990.)

The research reported in this paper was supported by grants from the Donner Canadian Foundation and The Trillium Foundation. An early draft was presented at the Annual Qualitative Methods Conference: "Studying Human Lived Experience: Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research," in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, May 18–21, 1994. The authors are grateful for the helpful comments received at that conference, and from the members of the Qualitative Methods Study Group at the University of Western Ontario.

Constructing an Ecology of Foster Care: An Analysis of the Entry and Exit Patterns of Foster Homes

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This paper aims to illustrate the viability of using concepts and theoretical arguments from organization ecology to analyze dynamic change processes in foster care. The general topic is the relationship between foster homes and their environments. The specific focus is the effects of the environment on the entry and exit patterns of new foster homes. Drawing on our earlier studies of the 23 year history of a population of foster homes, various hypotheses shown to have validity in accounting for the processes underlying the founding and disbanding of formal organizations, also apply in the case of the entry and exit processes of foster homes. One important contribution of this paper is in re-asserting the role of theory in studying foster care, and in helping organize existing knowledge. A second contribution is in reminding us that foster homes should be conceptualized and studied as existing in relation to their social context. They are embedded in social and organizational communities, and the nature of this embeddedness has important implications not only for understanding their behavior but also for how they should be approached in policy terms.

INTRODUCTION

Recent literature in the field of child welfare leaves little doubt that the system of foster care is under severe stress. Yet foster care is seen as having too much value to simply abandon in favor of other forms of care. The need, experts argue, is for new ways to attract foster families, along with new ways to support and

strengthen their capacity to persist in the difficult task of caring for others' children (Child Welfare League of America, 1991; Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, 1988).

The system's problems, though perhaps increasingly critical, are not new. Since the 1960's, the literature has been replete with articles documenting the decline in the numbers of foster homes, and identifying factors affecting the willingness of families to become and remain foster homes. A review of the literature reveals a problem-oriented approach with two dominant foci. In one approach, the individual foster home is selected as the unit of analysis, with researchers studying the social, economic and psychological factors which affect any given family's reasons for becoming and remaining, or ceasing to remain a foster home (e.g. Boyd and Remy, 1979; Poulos, 1972; Jones, 1975; Whiehe, 1982). The second type of study focuses on the activities of child welfare agencies and government in their efforts to recruit and retain foster families (e.g. Smith and Gutheil, 1988; Moreland, Reid and Chamberlain, 1992; Titterington, 1990). Implicit in both approaches is the belief that the behavior of major actors best explains and addresses occurrences and problems in the field of fostering.

These problem/solution foci on the individual foster family and on the actions of agencies and governments have flourished, overshadowing earlier calls (Fanshell, 1966) for the development of theories of fostering that would seek to understand the dynamics of foster care itself. Only recently have researchers begun to pursue this avenue, expanding their focus to ask questions about how broader environmental conditions affect the patterns of foster home entries and exits, thereby influencing the overall supply of foster homes and the stability within the foster care system (Campbell and Downs, 1987; Market Facts of Canada, 1981; Simon, 1975; Tucker and Hurl, 1992).

This paper reports research developed along the lines of this more recent orientation. Using concepts and theories drawn from organization science we attempt to construct a framework in which micro-level analysis of the behavior of individual social actors is complemented by macro-level analysis of the overall dynamics of population change. In this paper, we integrate and expand analysis and findings from our earlier work on the cir-

cumstances surrounding the entry and exit processes of foster homes in a child welfare system (Tucker and Hurl, 1992; Tucker, Hurl and Ford, forthcoming). In addition, we comment on the implications of our findings for policy and practice in foster care as well as for future research directions.

THE STUDY POPULATION

The study population comprises all new foster homes associated with the Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth, Ontario, Canada, in the period January 1968 to June 1990. We define a foster home as a family that is paid to provide continuous substitute care for children in a natural family setting. Population size is 629. Similar to other populations of foster homes, this population is quite diverse. It includes single parent as well as two parent families from a wide variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 20 percent had formed as families 5 years or less before becoming foster homes and nearly 50 percent had formed more than 10 years before entry. Finally, at the time of entry, over 70 percent of the foster mothers were not working outside the home.

DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

Like other types of social actors, foster homes can be studied at different levels of analysis. To date, they have been mainly studied at either the social-psychological or structural level, meaning that the focus has been on explaining individual behavior within foster homes or on explaining features and processes that characterize individual foster homes. Here we focus on foster homes at a population level of analysis. A *population* is an aggregate of social actors that share some common characteristic, for example, all foster homes associated with the public child welfare system in the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth. Our basic objective is to explain the population-level attributes of patterns of entries and exits. An *entry* is defined as the point at which a home, after a successful application, is officially available to take children requiring care. An *exit* is said to have occurred when a foster home is formally closed and is no longer eligible to receive pay for caring for children. Our use of the terms entry and exit,

and not the more conventional terms of recruitment and retention is deliberate. Recruitment and retention describe the activities of child welfare agencies whereas entries and exits are activities of foster homes. Failing to distinguish between the meanings of recruitment and retention and entry and exit obscures the significant empirical question of how factors additional to the recruitment and retention activities of child welfare agencies affect the patterns of entry and exit of foster homes.

Key concepts used to analyze patterns of entries and exits mainly refer to institutional and ecological components of the environment in which foster homes are embedded. *Institutional components* refer to socially created conceptions of appropriate fostering practices, competencies, and behaviors that are supported and reinforced by significant institutional actors such as governments, child welfare agencies, and relevant professional bodies and associations. *Ecological components* define foster home environments in terms of the availability and distribution of resources. Important ecological variables include *density*, the numbers of foster homes operating at a given time in the population, *demand*, the difference between the numbers of children coming into care and the number leaving care in a given unit of time, and *economic incentives*, adjustment in payment schedules aimed at making fostering an economically viable career option.

FOSTER HOME ENTRIES

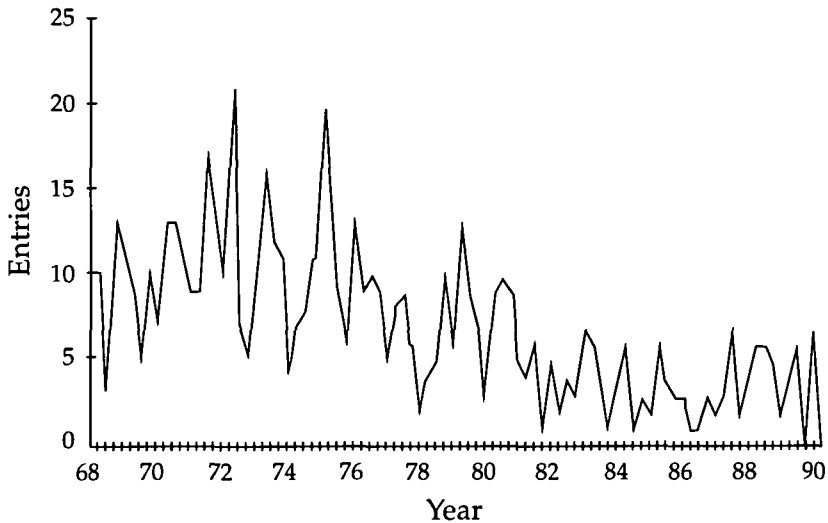
Figure 1 shows the pattern of foster home entries by quarter for the period January 1968–June 1990. The overall pattern is one of increasing entries until the mid 1970s, followed by a period of decline until the early 1980s, at which point entry rates tend to stabilize. Within this general pattern, the data show frequent alterations of peaks and valleys, indicating the possible existence of cyclical processes at work within the population of foster homes.

In looking to the foster care literature to explain these findings, we found there has been little direct study of factors influencing the entry of new foster homes into the child welfare system. Instead, researchers have tended to deal with the topic of foster home entries on a more indirect basis, using findings from research on other aspects of foster care to suggest hypotheses;

about what might explain changes in numbers of entries. There has been little emphasis on testing such hypotheses directly.

Figure 1:

Foster Home Entries by Quarter, 1978–1990



Significantly, researchers who do use empirical findings to derive hypotheses about foster home entries emphasize the importance of external or environmental factors, such as low pay rates, competition from other public services, and legislative changes that impose increasing demands on foster homes (Campbell and Downs, 1987; Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, 1988; Simon, 1975). We build on this earlier research, incorporating such factors into our examination of how selected institutional and ecological components of the environment affect the entry rates of foster home. We conceive of the environment as comprised of superordinate as well as intrapopulation dimensions. The superordinate dimension of the environment refers to aspects of the general environment in which the overall population of foster homes is embedded. It encompasses broad social and

economic conditions, as well as such factors as significant institutional actors, e.g., relevant departments of government and/or regulatory agencies, and relational networks of other types of social actors. The intra-population dimension refers to interdependencies among population members. It encompasses considerations of factors like levels of intra-population competition, cooperation, and information exchange. We examine four arguments concerning the effects of foster home entries of superordinate environmental variables, and two arguments concerning the effect of intra-population variables.

Our arguments concerning superordinate environmental variables include both ecological and institutional components. In the ecological category, we deal with the possible effects on entry rates of economic incentives, changes in the role of women and in the nature of child welfare caseloads. Regarding institutional aspects, we consider how the actions of government in changing child welfare legislation may have affected the entry rates of foster homes. We study the effect on entry rates of economic incentives to determine whether earlier findings based on cross sectional data indicating a positive relationship hold up when longitudinal data are used in the analysis. An important reason for studying changes in the role of women and changes in the nature of caseloads is that, in both cases, it is generally believed that changes are responsible for declines in the numbers of foster home entries. However, to our knowledge, these claims have not been demonstrated empirically. We study the role of government because other research has established that the actions of various agencies and programs of government have important implications for understanding the occurrence of change in the human service sector (Hurl and Tucker, 1986; Tucker, Singh and Meinhard, 1990; Baum and Oliver, 1992).

Our ecological argument concerning intra-population processes deals with the possible effects of change in the overall size of the foster home population (density) and change in numbers of children coming into care (demand). We study density because research on other populations of social actors has shown it has having important explanatory power in relation to the rate new entrants join such populations. We study demand because it seems logical that changes in the numbers of children in care would have a bearing on foster home entries.

Our general approach to modelling the effects on entries of superordinate and intra-population variables is outlined in the appendix. More detailed discussion can be found in our earlier published work (Tucker and Hurl, 1992).

Superordinate Environmental Factors

Economic Incentives – The argument around increased rates of pay to foster homes suggests that foster parents, like others, are interested in self-advancement and want to be paid adequately for their work. Hence, higher pay will make the work more attractive, thereby attracting others to become foster parents (Campbell and Downs, 1987; Moreland, Reid and Chamberlain, 1992; Simon, 1975). This was a relatively simple argument for us to test because in the case of our population of foster homes a major increase in pay rates was initiated in September of 1973. The overall average rate increase for taking one foster child was in excess of 50 percent, with increases for different age-groups ranging from 30 to 65 percent. The rate for taking two children aged 12 or over was increased by approximately 110 percent. These increases were followed by routine reviews and regular increases over the remainder of the study period. Surprisingly our analysis found that economic incentives had no effect on entry rates.

We think there are two plausible explanations for this finding. First, foster parents might be a unique population who, when it comes to caring for the children of others, are not motivated by self-interest. A second possible explanation is what we call a "threshold of payment" view. This view posits that, though the rates were increased substantially relative to the existing baseline, they were not raised enough to attract families from outside the usual pool of potential homes. This implies that if agencies are to expand the pool of potential homes and increase entry rates, they must raise their rates sufficiently high to attract families who are currently exposed to more financially rewarding vocational preferences.

Women in the paid laborforce – The second hypothesis we explored concerned the argument that increased participation of women in the paid labor force resulted in fewer families being available to become foster families. Given the significance of the role of the mother in the decision to provide foster care (Fanshell, 1966) we expected our data to confirm this hypothesis. An ex-

amination of reports of Statistics Canada on the 1968–1990 local labor force participation rates of women ages 15–65 years showed a substantial increase, from approximately 34 percent in 1968 to over 60 percent by 1985, coinciding, it appears, with the decrease in entry rates over the same period. However, when we subjected the data to rigorous statistical analysis, we found no relationship.

Reflecting on this surprising finding, we have come up with two possible explanations. First, as suggested above, it may be that the pool of families from which foster homes come is a unique subpopulation. For whatever reason, the women from the families in this pool may be unlikely to enter the paid labor force. Thus, though increasing numbers of other women are entering the paid labor force, women from this group are not. Second, it may be that the measures we used (based upon estimates as opposed to direct survey results), and the age categories they covered, were too imprecise to provide the findings we expected. We would note, however, that even if the measures were more precise, they still may not provide the expected results. It is quite possible, we believe, that the experience for many women of being in the paid labor force may engender the motivation to contribute economically to the family even once they return home to raise and care for their own children. One possible way to do this is to provide in-home care for the children of others, including foster children. This implies, that in the long run, increases in the labor force participation rates of women may lead to increased as opposed to decreased foster home entry rates. Generally speaking, our findings and our reflections on this issue lead us to conclude only that it is a highly complex issue that requires study in its own right.

Change in Care Requirements – The basis of the third argument we tested is the observation that families are discouraged from becoming foster homes because children coming into care are more difficult to manage. To test this argument, we examined how change in the average monthly entry age of children coming into care for the first time affects foster home entry rates. The underlying assumption is that a higher average age at entry implies that the children coming into care will have relatively more problems, resulting in fostering being more demanding and intrinsically less rewarding. Our data showed that although the pattern is cyclical,

with average age at entry going through several cycles of increase and decrease, overall the average age at first entry did increase over time. When we tested this increase against the corresponding decrease of foster home entries, we found a statistically significant relationship, thereby supporting the argument that change in the nature of the child welfare caseload affects the propensity of families to become foster homes.

Institutional Change – This argument is based on the idea that institutional change in child welfare, as reflected in changes in rules, regulations, and expectations pertaining to fostering, has produced a set of assumptions about how families are supposed to behave as functioning foster families that does not fit how many actually behave before becoming foster families. This discourages families from entering because it implies they will have to undergo some level of internal change.

The traditional theory of fostering argued that the main task of the family was to provide the foster child with the experience and benefits of normal family life. The foster child was to be regarded as any other child in the family, subject to the authority of the foster parents, and expected to conform to existing family rules and processes. The child welfare agency accepted this view and worked to support the foster family as a natural unit in its relationship with the foster child.

More recently, this theory has been adjusted to one that conceives of foster care as a means to an end as opposed to an end in itself. No longer are foster homes to behave as autonomous, selfdirecting family units. Instead they are now viewed more as partners, cooperating with child welfare staff in setting goals and implementing plans for the children in care. Moreover, the relationship between foster child and foster home is different from that of natural children. The home is monitored by the agency to ensure that the family's behavior conforms with predefined formal rules.

This change in the theory of fostering carries with it a change in the conception of family as applied to foster homes. Generally families are treated as natural systems, with their formation and functioning construed as reflecting the needs and interests of family members. In contrast, families seeking to become foster homes now confront the expectation of functioning more as

rational systems (Scott, 1991). That is, they can anticipate being required to adjust at least some elements of internal structures and processes so as satisfy the requirements of pursuing specific goals and following formal rules not necessarily related to the needs and interests of natural members. Because families can be expected to prefer not to threaten their own stability by entertaining the possibility of changing processes and procedures they have evolved to deal with the problems of family life, it is plausible that the internal changes in family life implied by changes in rules and regulations around fostering might actually discourage families from entering the child welfare system as foster homes.

We tested this argument by including in our analysis a variable measuring institutional change in the context in which our population of foster homes was embedded. This change was instituted in 1978 when the Child Welfare Act was amended by the Ontario government in a manner that gave foster children certain additional rights and protections. By setting in motion actions where the rights and needs of the individual foster child formally achieved increased priority against the collective rights and needs of the foster home, this amendment created conditions supportive of a fundamental realignment in the relationships between and among foster parents, foster children, and the agency in the manner described above. If our theory is correct, the effect of this amendment should be lower foster home entry rates. The statistical analysis strongly supports this prediction. This raises the paradoxical question of whether our attempts to expand the individual rights of children are also helping to restrict options with regard to the conditions under which they are being asked to live.

Intrapopulation Factors

Although environmental factors investigated above help us understand the overall decline in entry rates, they do not explain the cyclical pattern of peaks and valleys. To account for these, we turned to the work of organization theorists. Currently, organizational researchers mainly rely on an ecological theory of organization to explain cyclical patterns of growth and decline in populations in resource-limited environments (Hannan and Freeman, 1989). In particular, ecological researchers propose that

patterns of Soundings are regulated by population density, that is, the numbers of organizations in existence at a particular time. We also believe that demand, the pressure in the environment supporting the creation of additional organizations, will have an effect on entry rates.

Density – In organizational ecology, density is conceptualized as influencing Soundings by setting in place legitimization and competitive processes that initially encourage and subsequently discourage new organizational Soundings. In the case of foster care we think the idea of density has importance as a way of recognizing that there is an upper limit on the level of resources available to support foster homes. In addition, we think the processes regulating these cycles are likely to involve the actions of the agency with which the foster homes are associated and the circulation of information about the opportunities and benefits of becoming a foster home. When overall numbers of foster homes are low relative to the agency's needs, we think it is likely that the agency will try to increase entries. Fostering will be publicized as an important task for which one can receive tangible and intangible rewards. Selection criteria may be relaxed. New foster homes will find that children are placed with them with little or no delay. Under these conditions, it can be predicted that entries will increase.

Building on this, we believe there are incentives for child welfare agencies to have available more homes than they can actually use. A surplus of homes means that more emphasis can be placed on matching child and home. Moreover, because opening a home places less demand on an agency's resources than using it, the availability of a surplus of homes has limited implications for resource outlays by the agency. However, having a surplus of homes may bring with it certain other consequences. Recruitment efforts are likely to decline in intensity. Selection procedures may stiffen, and workers may begin to filter inquiries on the basis of what they understand the agency's more pressing needs to be. These conditions may result in a decrease in numbers of subsequent entries. Overall, therefore, these arguments suggest that the effects of changes in the total numbers of foster homes on entry rates will be curvilinear, with lower numbers operating

to increase entries but increasing numbers operating to decrease them.

Demand – The argument that demand, or the difference between numbers of children coming into care and those leaving care at any given time, effects entry rates complements the density dependence argument. When there is little or no increase in demand, there is limited pressure on the agency to recruit new homes. Indeed, selection criteria might tighten, and word will get around that opportunities to foster are restricted. Under these conditions, it is possible that rates of entry will decrease. Moreover, initial increases in demand are unlikely to change the pattern of decreasing entries. The agency will first draw on whatever surplus capacity it has and work to increase its existing capacity—for example, by appealing to existing foster homes to take additional children. However, these options lose their viability as demand continues to rise. Under these conditions, it is likely that additional effort will be diverted into recruiting new homes. Subsequently, the pattern of foster home entries will increase. Based upon these arguments, we suggest that, like density, change over time in demand will also have a curvilinear effect on foster home entries. However, the effect will be reversed—low levels of demand will be associated with decreasing rates of entry, but increasing levels of demand will result in increasing rates of entry.

When we tested our data to ascertain the validity of both the density and demand arguments, we found that both were significant factors in explaining the observed pattern of entry rates. Entries increased when density was low and demand was high; they decreased when density was high and demand was low. Overall, therefore, it is clear that there are forces at work within the population of foster homes, as well as in the context in which it is embedded, that have significant effects on patterns of entry.

FOSTER HOME EXITS

Of our population of 629 foster homes, 509, or nearly 81 percent, exited during the period of observation. Figure 2 presents a plot of the instantaneous exit rates of the foster homes in our study population.¹ I Note that the hazard, or the exit rate, is plotted as

a function of age, and not as a function of chronological time as is the case for entries. Two foster homes may be dissimilar in the sense that one entered the system in 1980 and the other in 1985, but similar in the sense that both exit the system at age four. This is not to say that chronologically specific events such as institutional change or adjustment in the rate structure do not influence foster home exits. We have treated such events as historical happenings in the life cycle of foster homes and have analyzed their effects on exits rates by entering them into statistical models as covariates. By combining in the analysis the effects of both age and historical events, it is possible, for example, to explore whether a change in government regulations affects all foster homes equally, or whether older homes are better able than younger homes to survive such change.

Figure 2:
Plots of Empirical Hazard for Foster Homes



Examination of figure 2 shows that the propensity to exit is not random, but depends upon the age of a foster home. Overall, older homes have a lower propensity to exit than younger ones. On a more specific basis, propensity to exit is initially low, increasing to a maximum at about age three years, declining to age six, increasing again to age nine, and subsequently declining.

To explain our findings, we began by turning to the foster care literature. While a number of studies suggests that new foster homes are more likely to leave than older ones, explanations tend to be inferential, positing a link between exits and such factors as changing legislation, increasingly difficult children to care for, and women in the work force (Campbell and Downs, 1987; Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, 1988). To our knowledge, prior to our earlier work (Tucker, Hurl and Ford, forthcoming), none of these hypotheses has been tested empirically. Moreover, references to such factors relate to points in historic time when individual relies might cease fostering; none have been used to explain the apparently age dependent pattern of exits that we found in our data.

Foster Homes and the Liability of Adolescence

One framework that may help explain the pattern of exits described in figure 2 has been called by its originators the "liability of adolescence". This hypothesis holds that whether you are dealing with organizations, relationships between people, or foster homes, the relevant survivorship curve is nonmonotonic in nature—initially it increases until it peaks, and then begins to decrease. This is due to three considerations—conditions extant at entry, a sorting process, and development of relation-specific assets. With these in mind, we begin with the question of why older homes would have a lower risk of exit. We propose two answers, one dealing with the institutionalized nature of family life and its bearing on the sorting process, and the second dealing with the role of relationship-specific assets. Considering first the nature of family life, much family behavior is habitualized action in the sense that patterns of behavior used in solving the common problems of family life are accepted as typical and appropriate by family members and are most frequently automatically invoked (Cherlin, 1978; Reiss, 1981). While such institutionalized behav-

ioral patterns enhance family unity and stability, they also invoke inertial pressures (Zucker, 1977) thereby making families resistant to change. This would not be a particular problem for foster families if caring for foster children were the same as caring for one's own children. But it is not. Caring for others' children moves caring into the realm of emotional labor (England and Farkas, 1986; Hochschild, 1979 and 1983; Lynch 1989 Nelson, 1990) meaning that caring adopts a purpose that is more instrumental than merely the development of social bonds, and involves considerations of material or symbolic gain. As such, emotional labor requires the differentiation of one's own feelings from those that go with the job, and subsequently the determination of how to govern and present them in a manner that other relevant parties agree is right for the circumstances.

In the context of foster care, this is a particularly difficult task. Involvement with young and perhaps troubled children evokes strong emotions. Moreover, because this work is done in the privacy of the home where external guidance and supervision tend not to be available, care-providing families themselves need to create relevant "feeling rules" governing the appropriate range, intensity and duration of emotions.

Because of what they bring to the task by way of pre-existing patterns of habitualized behavior, families will vary in their capacities to make this transition to providing emotional labor. Some families, perhaps because they have broader repertoires of problem-solving routines, will persist. Other families, with perhaps narrower and more rigid repertoires, will exit. In either case, we think that few families are likely to have awareness of whether they possess the capacity to deal with the requirements of providing emotional labor before actually undertaking the task. Because mismatches are likely to be detected earlier than later in a family's care-providing tenure, risk of exit for any given family will be negatively correlated with the length of its tenure. Thus, what eventuates is a sorting process in which families that persist in providing care for longer periods will have lower risks of exit because poor fits will have been sorted out.

The second explanation of why risk of exit declines with age, that of the presence of relationship-specific assets, is drawn from both organization theory and economics (England and Farkas,

1986; Fichman and Levinthal, 1991; Levinthal and Fichman, 1988; Williamson Williamson, 1975). Relation-specific assets, developed in the context of exchange relationships, entail learning how to get along with a partner. They are specialized to the immediate context, with limited utility outside it. In the case of foster care, we construe these assets to include the development of communication patterns with other relevant social actors (e.g. child welfare agency, other foster homes, community services) and the development of interpersonal trust, as well as the development of idiosyncratic knowledge, skills and understandings (Nelson, 1990). Because these assets accrue over time and have diminished value in other contexts, the probability of exit should decrease with the passage of time.

Alone, the two foregoing theoretical arguments help us understand why older homes have a lower risk of exit. However, they do not account fully for the pattern of exits described in Figure 2 as they imply a steadily declining pattern of age dependence for exits. The "liability of adolescence" theory, it must be remembered, predicts an initial pattern of increasing exits before decline sets in. This period, called the 'honeymoon' period, results from conditions extant at founding that buffer the new endeavor from the onset of age dependence effects. Applying this to foster care, we believe that some of these conditions are particular to the families, themselves, and constitute a stock of initial assets they bring to the task of fostering; other conditions are external to the families, and are realized as the particular environmental conditions under which the families enter the foster care system. The argument follows that the more assets a family has, or the more conducive the environmental conditions at founding, the longer the honeymoon period and the later the point of maximum risk of exit. We test these predictions by identifying what we believe are relevant family assets and environmental conditions, and examining their effects on the duration of time lapsed prior to the point of maximum risk.

Family Characteristics as Initial Assets

The potential assets we identify are drawn from the child welfare literature, and from our study on entries. To understand the importance of these factors, we devised a means for measuring

each, and tested for the significance of their effects on exit rates. For more detailed discussion of methodology and methodological issues, refer to the Appendix and to our earlier works (Tucker, Hurl and Ford, forthcoming). Our findings on the significance of selected family characteristics are reported under model 1 in Table 1.

Commitment – Our focus on commitment, defined as the pledging of oneself to behavioral acts such that they become less changeable (Keisler, 1971; Fichman and Levinthal, 1991) is suggested by the reality of the circumstances surrounding the care of children. Caring for children means taking on special and sometimes legally enforced responsibilities. At the same time, because child care is not regarded as requiring special talents, it is not an economically rewarding job. These observations suggest first, that the decision to care for others' children reflects at least some emphasis on doing the job for its own sake. Second, because caring for children is thought to be a relatively simple task, it will be difficult to accept that you cannot do it. These two factors, a willingness to do the job, as well as a desire to avoid the stigma of failing in the 'natural' task of caring for children, are conditions appropriate for inferring commitment (Salancik, 1977). Following from this, we expect a positive relationship between level of commitment and initial propensity to exit.

To measure commitment, we used the family's initial orientation to caring for others' children. The families in our population differed in how restrictive they were in establishing conditions for caring for children. 20 percent of our families proposed very specific conditions, stating they would only care for a certain child or a certain type of child; the other 80 percent of families were less restrictive, agreeing to care for a broad range of children. We assume that a less restrictive orientation indicates a higher level of pre-entry commitment. A care-provider who asserts, "I am prepared to care for children" is behaving less equivocally than one who says, "I am prepared to care for children if . . ." Testing for the significance of commitment in our population, we found that it had a significant positive effect on the length of the honeymoon period. All families demonstrated an increasing rate of exit over the initial 2–3 year period of fostering but families

Table 1

Maximum-likelihood estimates of two-time period models of age dependence in foster home exit rates, 1968–1990
(Standard errors in parentheses)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Time Interval 1		
Constant	0.029 (0.242)	1.161 (0.618)
Commitment	−0.354*** (0.080)	−0.299*** (0.079)
Family Age	−0.021 (0.049)	−0.025 (0.062)
Mother Employed	−0.063 (0.101)	−0.118 (0.094)
Training	−0.875*** (0.191)	−1.753*** (0.202)
Density		−0.005*** (0.001)
Demand		0.008 (0.008)
Economic Incentives		−0.535*** (0.148)
Institutional Change		−0.466*** (0.134)
Care Requirements		0.047 (0.079)
Scale parameter	0.451*** (0.056)	0.343*** (0.041)
Shape parameter	2.307*** (0.519)	3.753*** (0.684)
Log-likelihood Ratio	−775.52	−756.63
G ² vs. Baseline		38.58
Time Interval 2		
Constant	1.387*** (0.237)	1.387*** (0.237)
Scale parameter	0.525*** (0.112)	0.525*** (0.112)
Shape parameter	2.090** (1.017)	2.090** (1.017)
Log-likelihood Ratio	−170.05	−170.05

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

with higher levels of initial commitment reached the peak exit rate at a later point in their tenure.

Training – For some time, child welfare agencies have stressed the importance of adaptive problem-solving behaviors to successful fostering. To this end, many have instituted formal periods of training for foster parents. This may take a variety of forms, including formal instruction, support group sessions with experienced care providers, and observation and practice opportunities. We have two reasons for proposing training as an initial endowment that will help buffer a family against quick exit. First, training helps establish problems not only as expected, but also as solvable. This creates an incentive for persisting in an effort that might otherwise be abandoned (Nelson and Winter, 1982: 124). Second, training alerts the family that caring for others' children is not the same as caring for one's own. While this will not cause a fundamental shift in a family's existing repertoire of problem-solving routines, it is likely to result in more deliberate decision-making about their use, thereby engendering potential for increased flexibility and adaptability (Nelson and Winter, 1982: 85). Overall, therefore, we predicted that receiving training as an initial condition of caring for others' children will stave off the decision to exit.

The Hamilton-Wentworth CAS initiated a program of formal training and on-going support services for foster parents in 1985. Intended to lower the risk of exit for new foster homes, this program allowed us to gauge the effects of training on our population of foster homes. As we predicted, the training was a significant factor in extending the initial honeymoon period. The combined effect of introductory training and commitment was to extend the honeymoon period by slightly over 10 percent, from 24.84 months to 27.36 months.

Experience – Associated with the notion of training as broadening the flexibility or range of problem solving skills is that of life experience. Because it takes time for families to develop their routines and character, we believe it is reasonable to expect that the family's longevity at time of entry will affect propensity to exit. It is not immediately clear, however, what the effect might be. Experience could serve to broaden one's repertoire, thereby aiding the transition to emotional labor; alternately, it might serve

to rigidify caring and coping patterns, thereby hindering the transition. With no clear basis for prediction, we looked to our data in exploratory fashion.

To indicate family life experience, we used the measure of the time elapsed from family formation (marriage) to date of entry as a foster home. Approximately 80 percent of our families had been constituted as families for 6 or more years before becoming foster families. Upon testing for the significance of this in exit patterns, we found it had none. In explaining this, it is possible that older more experienced families were given more troubled children to care for, thereby increasing the demands upon them and the likelihood of an earlier exit. Concomitantly, less experienced families might have been given less troubled children to care for, thereby decreasing their exit rates. The net result of such actions might have been offsetting. Or perhaps our use of family age was not a good indicator of experience. Better indications might be number and age of a family's own children. Clearly, more research is warranted in this area.

Mother working outside the home – We found in our study of entries that women's employment opportunities outside the home did not decrease entry rates as expected. Nevertheless, it is plausible that whether the mother works outside the home will have some effect on a foster home's longevity. The rationale for this has both philosophical and instrumental aspects. Mothers who remain at home to care for children are often thought to receive more pleasure from and to be more committed to raising children. In addition, at-home mothers can direct more time and energy towards involvement with the child and its problems; at the same time, they have fewer stresses and diversions caused by outside employment. All of these factors led to the prediction that the mother at home will have a negative effect on foster home exits.

Looking at our data, we found that 70 percent of the mothers were not employed outside the home at time of entry. When we examined the effect of this on initial propensity to exit, again we found no significant effect. Overall it made little difference, in terms of propensity to exit, if the foster mother was employed inside or outside the home at the time of entry. Given the presumed significance of the mother in the provision of foster care, this is an interesting finding. By way of explanation, it could be

that less troubled children were placed in homes where mothers were otherwise employed, thereby avoiding many problems and obligations, and reducing what otherwise might be a high risk of exit. Or, it could be that foster fathers play a more significant role than has been previously assumed. Clearly, this too, requires further study.

External Environmental Conditions at Entry

In the same way that the assets a family brings to the task of fostering may affect its initial propensity to exit, so might the external conditions under which entry occurs. Some conditions may lead to increased longevity and others may work against it. In testing this argument against our data, we explored the effects on exit rates of the following five factors: institutional change, numbers of existing homes, i.e., population density, care requirements, demand for homes, and economic incentives.

The findings for the effects on exit rates of external environmental variables are reported under model 2 in table 1. Before commenting on the effects of specific variables, one general point needs be made from this analysis. The difference between models 1 and 2 in table 1 is that model 2 contains the effects of the external environmental variables as well as the effects of selected family characteristics (model 1). Thus, the null hypothesis of the external environmental variables having no effect on exit rates can be tested using the likelihood ratio test. The resulting G^2 value is 38.58, which is statistically significant. This means that adding the effects of the external environmental variables to the model significantly enhances its explanatory power. This supports our general assertion that initial risk of exit for a foster homes is determined not only by its initial assets but also by external conditions extant at the time it entered the child welfare system.

Institutional environment – We earlier defined the institutional environment of foster homes in terms of rules, regulations, and expectations that govern the functioning of foster homes. Also, we pointed out that over the period of our study there was change in the institutional environment in the sense that government enacted legislation requiring foster homes to behave more as rational as opposed to natural systems. Earlier we noted that the change resulted in decreased entry rates. The question here is how

this institutional change affects foster homes' initial propensity to exit. The "threshold of talent" argument from organizational ecology suggests an answer.

As developed in organizational ecology (Tucker, Singh and Meinhard, 1989), the "threshold of talent" hypothesis posits that for every configuration of environmental conditions, there is a minimum amount of talent and energy required for organizations to be founded. Whereas favorable institutional environmental conditions lower this threshold, making it easier for organizations to get founded, unfavorable environmental conditions raise it, making founding more difficult. Because it is easier to found organizations when institutional conditions are favorable, more organizations will come into existence that do not have the talent to survive in the long run. Thus, when environmental conditions change and become more demanding, these organizations are more likely to be selected out, causing an increasing disbanding rate. Conversely, under unfavorable environmental conditions when it is more difficult to found organizations, fewer 'low talent' organizations will be founded, and will subsequently demonstrate a lower propensity to disband.

Applied to foster homes, and considered in the context of our liability of adolescence arguments, the threshold of talent argument suggests that when institutional conditions are less demanding, meaning that families enter without the expectation of internal change because they are treated more as natural than as rational systems, more relies not suited to the requirements of fostering will enter the child welfare system. Subsequently, however, these families are more likely to be sorted out. Hence, favorable institutional conditions at entry will be associated with a shorter honeymoon period. By the same token, under unfavorable institutional conditions when becoming a foster home is more difficult, fewer "poorly fitting" families will enter, meaning that the length of the honeymoon period will be extended because fewer homes will be sorted out. Hence, families coming in prepared to care for children on a more instrumental basis are less likely to exit quickly.

The findings under Model 2 in Table 1 support this argument. The coefficient for institutional change is negative and statistically significant. This implies that the more demanding institu-

tional conditions signifying the more rational approach to fostering lower a home's initial propensity to exit and, thus, lengthen its honeymoon period.

Density – It will be recalled from above that density refers to the numbers of foster homes extant at a given time. It indicates that there is an upper limit on the availability of resources to support foster homes (Tucker and Jurl, 1992:624). Based on this, it is reasonable to expect that variation in density at founding will affect foster homes exit rates. However, different views can be identified regarding the nature of this effect. One view is that the lower density at entry, the better the survival prospects of the foster home and, thus, the longer the honeymoon period. The rationale is that under conditions of low density (i.e. when there are fewer foster homes already in existence), new homes are more likely to have children placed with them. Also, the agency will have more capacity to provide supportive services (e.g., fewer homes assigned to each worker). Thus, new homes are more likely to persist as they will be receiving income for caring for children as well as support in dealing with transition problems. A competing view is that when density is low, entry will be easier, resulting in higher numbers of "poorly fitting" homes being sorted out of the population. Following from this is the implication of a shorter honeymoon period due to higher initial exit rates.

The findings under Model 2 in table 1 show the coefficient for density as negative and statistically significant. This supports the first argument that lower density at founding contributes to a longer honeymoon period because it implies higher levels of support to new foster homes in dealing with transition problems.

Demand – While it is reasonable to presume that differences in demand at the time of entry will affect initial propensity to exit, it is not clear *a priori* whether such difference will improve or diminish survival prospects. Entry under conditions of low demand, i.e., when there is limited or no change per unit of time in the numbers of children coming into care, could mean delayed or limited utilization, leading to higher initial exit rates due to lowered motivation to continue. Alternatively, it could result in lower initial exit rates because the fact of entry at a time of low demand suggests the presence of some unique and perhaps sought

after capability that the agency subsequently works to retain. The findings show demand as not having a statistically significant effect on initial risk of exit, thereby supporting neither of these arguments. We think this is an area of our research requiring additional investigation.

Financial Incentives – Our findings on entries revealed that the increased boarding rates instituted by the agency did not encourage more homes to enter the foster care system. Interestingly, however, our data reveal that they did have a significant effect on delaying the risk of exit. This suggests that economic incentives do not play a role in explaining why families took on the task of caring for others' children, but do play a role in explaining their persistence. A plausible explanation of this is that the increased pay helped offset some of the hardships involved and affirmed fostering as having some status, factors logically associated with lowering exit rates. This finding points to the not unreasonable conclusion that in and of itself, altruism is not enough to have people stick at hard work even though intrinsically they value it.

Care Requirements – We expected change over time in nature of foster care required, indicated by variation in the average age of children entering care for the first time, would have a positive affect on initial risk of exit, thus contributing to a shorter honeymoon period. The rationale is straight forward. Older children impose more demanding care requirements, thereby making fostering intrinsically less rewarding. In addition, it is more acceptable to admit that caring for older, troubled children is too demanding.

The findings under Model 2 in Table 1 do not support this argument as the coefficient for care requirements is not statistically significant. This suggests that the nature of children cared for does not effect initial willingness to persist. Upon reflection, this finding makes sense. Recall our finding that families' willingness to enter is negatively effected by the changing nature of care requirements. Here we find age of children requiring care as having no effect. The implication is that families whose persistence is influenced by the kind of child they care for are selecting themselves out and not entering the foster care system. Hence, the factors influencing the longevity of homes that are founded are items such as a family's initial commitment and the type and

amount of support provided by the agency. Generally, it seems that fostering is a task like many others. People persist in doing it because they value it in and of itself, and because of external support and incentives.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our study found that theory from organization ecology could be used to organize and justify observations previously made in the foster care literature regarding the effects of selected variables on entry and exit rates of foster homes. In addition, it suggested other avenues for research, notably selected environmental conditions and intrapopulation dynamics. In relation to entries, we found support for our theoretical arguments that the changing nature of the caseload and the changing role of foster parents would negatively effect entry rates. We also found support for our arguments that intrapopulation processes would effect entries. Specifically, foster home density and demand had significant curvilinear effects on entry rates, explaining the cyclical patterns in our data.

In regard to exits, we found support for the liability of adolescence hypothesis that exit rates would show a curvilinear pattern of age dependence, initially increasing and then decreasing. We also found support for our arguments regarding the buffering effect of initial assets. Both commitment and training had the effect of extending the honeymoon period. Our arguments that selected founding conditions would effect exits received mixed support. Specifically, homes entering under conditions of higher remuneration were significantly more likely to remain in the system longer. Also, density and the nature of the institutional environment were found to have a significant effect on exit rates.

There were predictions, however, from both foster care literature and organizational theory which were not borne out. For example, the movement of women into paid labor outside the home did not have the expected positive effects on entries or exits; increases in remuneration rates did not have a positive effect on entries though it did on exits. These unexpected findings and others (e.g., the second period of high risk of exit from 6 to 9 years into tenure; the failure of the changing nature of the child welfare

caseload and increased demand for homes to lower exit rates) point to the complexity of foster care and the need to conduct further studies to aid in our understanding of particular aspects of it and in our development of theories concerning its underlying dynamics.

The notion of theory development, of course, raises the question of the generalizability of ecological organization theory to other dimensions of child welfare/foster care systems. We suspect that it can be used to guide research in other areas. However, this carries with it the implication of additional methodological work. For example, our use of increasing age as a measure of "harder to care for children" might be changed to one of decreasing age and/or the presence of physical disabilities in agencies dealing with increasing numbers of crack addicted babies; our measure of commitment might be modified to include blood relationships, etc. Despite our suspicions of general ability, however, the question is an empirical one which can only be answered by the results of further studies.

Before closing, we would like to address some issues raised by our research for policy, practice, and future research. First, we believe that our research has direct policy implications. One of these pertains to the provision of support and training for foster parents. Our finding of a liability of adolescence suggests the possibility of dealing with foster homes in different ways, depending upon where they are in the aging process. Pressures to exit are greatest not on new or older foster homes, but on foster homes in their "adolescence," after they pass through their honeymoon phase, and begin to decide about their suitability to fostering. A possible implication is that training programs for foster parents should take on different primary foci, depending upon stage of the foster home life cycle. Relatedly, it would seem appropriate that these training programs be designed with the aid of adult educators, who emphasize the relevance of imparting knowledge appropriate to the context in which people find themselves.

Secondly, we need to pay more attention to the issue of foster home reimbursement and its implications. Our studies suggests that if agencies want to expand the numbers of foster homes and attract a more career oriented foster parent, they will have to consider raising payment schedules to levels that make them

competitive with other forms of professional care giving. This alternative has not only financial implications for agencies, but also philosophical ones—do they want to move closer to a system that emphasizes the career and financial aspirations of foster parents as opposed to their commitment to caring for children. Our studies suggests that it would take a significant outlay of resources to make this change. Moreover, even if higher pay is successful in drawing on an enlarged pool of foster parents, our study suggests that a shift away from the primary commitment to child care as an end in itself might well have negative implications on the longevity of newly attracted homes. As we note below, it might also have consequences for the kind of care children receive. Clearly, the issue of remuneration is highly complex.

Our studies also raises questions about current practices and policies in relation to the placement and care of children. These questions result not only from changes in the nature of fostering, but from the pattern of exits from the foster care system. We have posited that the orientation to the role of fostering is changing, with the traditional natural systems view being replaced by a rational systems perspective. Indeed, recent developments in professionalizing fostering imply the acceptability and perhaps the superiority of caring for foster children under rational as opposed to natural systems conditions. To our knowledge, however, there is no research supporting this shift, or investigating its implications for children. Our research indicates one possible outcome of this shift—a decrease in the number of homes from which to choose in placing children. No doubt some would argue that these fewer more professional homes provide better care, yet we know of no research investigating the consequences for children of being cared for under rational as opposed to natural conditions.

In a similar vein, questions might also be asked about the consequence for children of the liabilities of adolescence found in foster homes. Does being placed in a newer home as opposed to an older home have implications for children in terms of their mental health, prospects for being returned to their natural family, and/or for subsequent propensities to five multiple placements? Again, research is lacking in this area.

We have not attempted to address such questions in our study, but we do believe we have highlighted their significance. Hope-

fully, too, we have provided a framework that future researchers might find useful in conducting additional studies at multiple levels of analysis to investigate these and other pressing issues in foster care.

APPENDIX

Methods of Analysis

This research tracks the time paths of change in a population of foster homes, and assesses how changes over time in various external and internal factors influence the shape of the time paths. Consequently, we used dynamic forms of analysis to test the empirical implications of our arguments. We modeled foster home entries as event count data resulting from a Poisson process. The basic formulation is the Poisson regression model;

$$\Pr(B = b_t) = \frac{e^{-\lambda} \lambda^{b_t}}{b_t!}$$

where b_t is the number of Soundings that occur in time interval t , $\lambda = e^{b^8 x_i}$ and x_i are measured covariates.

We used a gamma distribution as a model for patterns of foster home exits. It has been used extensively across a variety of research domains and has the advantage of allowing for the description and estimation of both monotonic and nonmonotonic patterns of exit. It also controls for unobserved heterogeneity, or the effect on the exit rate of unmeasured differences among foster homes.

For the gamma distribution, we model the hazard function using a Weibull model with gamma heterogeneity. This model has a hazard function, $h(t)_{\text{gamma}}$, which breaks into two multiplicative components:

$$\begin{aligned} h(t)_{\text{gamma}} &= S(t) \cdot h(t)_{\text{weibull}}, \\ s(t) &= [1 + \theta(\lambda t)^\rho]^{-1/\theta}, \\ h(t)_{\text{weibull}} &= \lambda \rho (\lambda t)^{\rho-1}, \end{aligned}$$

where ρ is the shape parameter of the gamma distribution, λ is a transformation of the intercept and covariates, such that $\lambda = \exp(\sigma + \beta X)$, and ρ defines the scale parameter σ , such that $\rho = 1/\sigma$. When $\theta > 0$, the gamma distribution provides an estimate of a nonmonotonic hazard rate, first rising, then declining.

A gamma distribution with $\theta = 0$ collapses to a monotonically declining Weibull distribution. In turn, a Weibull model with $\rho = 1$ ($\sigma = 1$) collapses to a constant rate exponential model, with $h(t) = \lambda$. The further the shape parameter θ deviates from 0, the greater the effect of heterogeneity. If heterogeneity were not controlled, the estimations could produce either inconsistent parameter estimates or inappropriate standard errors, with the latter being the most common problem. All analyses were implemented using the statistical package LIMDEP (Greene, 1992).

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Notes

1. The hazard rate can be thought of as “approximately” the probability of an organization disbanding at a particular time, given that it has survived until that time. Strictly speaking, however, it is not a probability but the instantaneous rate of disbanding at each instant of an organization’s life. It is given by:

$$h(t) = \lim_{\Delta t \rightarrow 0} \frac{\Pr(t, t + \Delta t | \text{alive at } t)}{\Delta t}$$

where $\Pr(t, t + \Delta t | \text{alive at } t)$ is the probability of disbanding between t and $t + \Delta t$, given that the organization is alive at age t .

Family Functioning and Migration: Considerations for Practice

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International migration is increasingly dominated by family considerations. Despite conflicts and tensions, the support system of the family is the main agent through which the adjustment to migration occurs. Social workers are in the front line in the treatment and acculturation of new immigrants. The present study explores how 145 social workers, comprising about 70% of those who treat new immigrants in the northern part of Israel, perceive family functioning in two very different migrant populations: arrivals from the former Soviet Union on the one hand, and from Ethiopia on the other. Results indicate that practitioners viewed families from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia as less adaptive and more cohesive than the norm. Families from the former Soviet Union, however, were seen as more adaptive and less cohesive than families immigrating from Ethiopia. Implications for culture sensitive practice are suggested.

Major political and social changes have multiplied the number of international migrants in recent years. Demographers point out that international migration is increasingly dominated by family considerations (Boyd, 1989). Migration may involve many families from a particular country, region, or culture, or it may be an isolated experience for a single family; mostly it falls between the two extremes. The ease with which a family, individual, or group undertakes and resolves the transition process is also greatly influenced by the level of choice that determined the decision. Forced migration is far more likely to result in transitional conflict than is a move or change by choice (Landau-Stanton, 1990). Another consideration is the compatibility between the host culture and the culture of the migrating family (De Anda, 1984).

The factors determining the ease with which each family resolves issues of transition are both intrinsic and extrinsic to the family unit. If the resources of the family itself and the support

systems of the community around it are adequate, and more particularly, if the other families in that social group are at a similar stage, problems of acculturation are more easily overcome. If such resources are not encountered, the family may face a migratory conflict and severe migratory crisis, which may lead to symptomatology.

The focus in this paper is on the family as the agent of change and acculturation. Families from two very different parts of the world have recently migrated to Israel: from the former Soviet Union about 150,000 families, and from Ethiopia about 8,000 families. Social workers are the first to encounter the families in their distress and hardships. The way services are delivered to these families depends in large part on the attitudes and perceptions of the service deliverers, the on-line social workers. The present paper examines perceptions of family functioning in these two culturally very different populations by social workers and the implications of these differential impressions for culturally sensitive practice.

Migrants and their families: Millions of people migrate each year from one part of the world to another. During the years of its existence, Israel has been regarded as a safe haven for Jews escaping persecution in a variety of the world's troubled regions. Unfortunately, a safe haven is not necessarily a familiar one. A successful cultural transition can be affected by a myriad of considerations, including the degree of consonance with the culture of origin (De Anda, 1984) or degree of harmony between the cultures (Landau-Stanton, 1990).

Most immigrant families experience a prolonged period of acculturation (Bar-Yosef, 1980). During this period immigrants have to sever ties with places and people, and to transplant their home base, their life projects, their dreams and their memories (Sluzki, 1979). During these periods of transition, migrants tend to cluster more around the family. On the one hand migrants need and value the support of the family more during these periods of instability. On the other hand, the family may become a source of conflicts which may impede the adaptation process of individual family members. In any case, it is clear that the family is an important agent in the acculturation process, and in the adjustment and adaptation to the stress of migration of the family members.

One approach to understanding the adjustment to migration centers on the responses of the family to stress. Theories of coping under stress focus on the process of adjustment to changed conditions which can result in a breakdown of family functioning (Figley & McCubbin, 1983; Carter & McGoldrick, 1989; Falicov, 1988). Generally, coping is viewed as a combination of cognitive process and behavioral response by which the family tries to maintain balanced functioning. Coping resources have been found to play a considerable role in determining family adaptability and functioning in times of stress (Ben-David & Lavee, 1992; Ben-David & Lavee, 1994).

The two main components of family functioning that have been found to be related to family coping under stress or during transitional periods are cohesion and adaptability (Olson, 1989). However, the family dynamics prevalent among different cultures profoundly affect the way these two factors are viewed (Comas-Diaz, 1992). Traditional norms do not apply equally to families from different cultural origins, and what can be considered dysfunctional in one culture is considered functional in another. This approach reflects the values of cultural pluralism, where there are no absolute norms for family functioning.

The present study reflects on how these issues affect social work practice by asking social workers about the family functioning of migrant families from two very distinct cultural origins. A short review of the family characteristics in these cultures follows.

The Ethiopian family: Families coming from Ethiopia constitute a significant minority in Israel. As blacks they are visibly different; but more important, they come from a world into which modern technology never penetrated.

The families coming from Ethiopia lived in rural communities and were based economically on farming. As in any community that had struggled to preserve religion and tradition, the community was closed, and the rules were rigid. Life was based on the extended family. The core family lived alongside the multigenerational extended family, a well-developed community in which each member had responsibilities to each of the others and to the community in general. The family was patriarchal and traditional and the eldest was the leader (Barhani, 1990). The extended family was highly cohesive and roles were interchangeable. A

large family was an advantage because of its ability to protect and support its members.

Marriages were arranged by heads of families and were extremely important in community life. The wife, a girl of about 14 went to live with her husband's family which became, upon her marriage, her family. Only after a while did the young couple go to live separately but in close proximity to the husband's parents (Ben-David, 1993).

Bar-Yosef (1980) contends that "migration is one of the most obvious instances of complete disorganization in the individual's role system" (p. 20). This has a direct effect on the family life, its sets of values and role system. Following the Ethiopian immigrants' arrival in Israel all their customs changed radically, when the Ethiopian culture clashed with the Westernized-Israeli culture (Schindler & Ribner, 1993). The old community base was lost, and with it the family lost nearly all its cohesive-protective-security functions. Ethiopians came to Israel as a very visible minority, with little or no economic or educational resources. These conditions led, on the one hand, to assimilation in the majority culture: young people moved to the large cities, where they found themselves isolated from their families and their community. Without a model for imitation and with no norms for a new family life, their families started to disintegrate. On the other hand the degree of commonality between the majority culture and the migrant's culture determine, among other things, the degree of assimilation and socialization in the host country (De Anda, 1984). Since the overlap was meager, the difference between the two cultures was presumed to function as a buffer against rapid and radical change. Thus two contrary forces worked against each other in the process of absorption of the Ethiopian community.

The Soviet family: In the early years of the Soviet regime, when the state and its official ideology were in a position of ultimate authority, the official doctrine was that the family is ceasing to be a necessity for its members as well as for the state (Lapidus, 1978). The state, in its drive to minimize private pursuits and private life, encouraged a myriad of public activities and social duties, aimed at demonstrating loyalty to the regime, which minimized the time and energy devoted to family life. In addition, squalid

living conditions, which characterized the family life of millions of Soviet people since the Revolution, made home itself less than attractive for most people (Shlapentokh, 1991).

In the mid-1930's the official Soviet position started changing, and the undeniable attachment of the Russians to the institution of the family was acknowledged. The collapse in the 1970's and early 1980's of the ideology and material practice of socialism sent shock waves through Soviet society, with powerful effects on the family. The data collected over the last two decades by Soviet sociologists have demonstrated that the family has replaced official ideology as the chief determinant of societal values (Lapidus, 1978, 1988; Kharchev & Matskovskii, 1982; Shlapentokh, 1991).

Ever since the Iron Curtain was lifted, hundreds of thousands of Soviet families migrated. Two main factors influenced the family in the last wave of immigration: first, there were structural changes in the family as a result of the migratory process and the economic constraints of refugee migration. Many families found it necessary to reside three or more generations together either because there was a scarcity of cheap lodgings or because parents needed the grandparents to help care for the younger children while parents were either working or looking for work (Ben-David & Lavee, 1994; Mirsky, 1992).

The second influence on the family was that many migrants from the former Soviet Union felt frustrated in their inability to satisfy their employment needs, they were often underemployed, and their skills were under-utilized or unappreciated. This problem was especially upsetting for immigrants from the former Soviet Union, since work and employment were two of the pivotal ideological bases of the Soviet society (Ben-David & Lavee, 1994).

Research Questions: The present study focuses on the front-line social workers who deal with client families from two very different cultural backgrounds—the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia. Specifically, this study examines how social workers perceive the differential family functioning of these immigrant families in relation to the process of migration and absorption in a new culture. Particularly, the question is whether family characteristics such as cohesion and adaptability are viewed as dysfunctional in different cultural contexts.

Subjects

All social workers who deliver services to either Russian or Ethiopian immigrants in the northern part of Israel (about 200 in all) were approached to participate in the research. The final sample size was 145 (73% response rate). The mean age for the sample was 35. In terms of academic background, 104 (72%) of the participants held a B.S.W. degree, and 31 (21%) held an M.S.W. degree, while 10 participants (about 7%), had an M.A. in psychology. The origin of the participants was: 73% born in Israel, 10% born in Eastern Europe, 7% born in North Africa and Asia, and the rest born in North and South America. Women constituted 91% of the sample. Half the therapists had less than 7 years experience, and the other half had been working in the field up to 20 years and more. Most of the participants (92%) had participated in workshops sensitizing them to both the immigration experience and Ethiopian and Soviet family culture.

Design and procedure

A survey instrument was constructed consisting of four possible intake vignettes. Two of the vignettes had to do with a possible case of child abuse, and two concerned neglect of an elderly family member. The case vignettes were identical for both populations.

This design produced a two (population: Russians and Ethiopians) by two (case: child abuse and elderly neglect) design. Each participant was randomly assigned only one case situation in order to avoid contamination and bias. The master case situations were presented accompanied by a cover letter requesting participation in a research project on immigrant families; a demographic information sheet; and a detailed questionnaire on detailed processing of case management of the specific master case. All questions in the questionnaire referred to the master case only and to the family and situation described in the master case. This procedure ensured homogeneity of responses to the specific immigrant minority family.

Of the 145 respondents, 81 (56%) completed the questionnaires dealing with Russian immigrants, and 63 (44%) completed

those dealing with Ethiopian immigrants. Approximately half of each group completed questionnaires dealing with child abuse (73), and half the questionnaires dealing with neglect of the elderly (71).

Findings of the demographic characteristics of the four groups of practitioners who answered queries about how to treat immigrant families are shown in Table 1. There were no significant differences among the four groups for all the demographic variables.

The present paper reports on a segment of the study where the respondents were asked to answer questions regarding family functioning (FACES III) about the family presented in the vignettes.

Instrument:

Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale III (FACES III): FACES III (Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985), is the third in a series of FACES instruments that operationalizes the Circumplex Model of Family Functioning. Thus, FACES III is a theoretically derived self-report instrument developed to assess two dimensions of family process: cohesion and adaptability. The Circumplex Model was developed by David Olson and colleagues (Olson, 1989) in an attempt to bridge research, theory and practice. The Circumplex Model classifies families into 16 specific types or three more general types, i.e. balanced, mid-range, and extreme. In the Circumplex Model, cohesion is defined as, the emotional bonding that family members have towards one another. Adaptability is defined as the ability of a marital or family system to change its power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress.

Internal consistency estimates for Cohesion and Adaptability, are .77 and .62 respectively and test-retest estimates are .83 and .80. The correlation between the Adaptability and the Cohesion scales was reduced significantly so that the scales can be considered empirically independent. The FACES III instrument was translated and standardized to Hebrew (Taichman & Navon, 1990). Internal consistency for a sample of 400 was found to be .85 for Cohesion and .67 for Adaptability.

Table 1:
Characteristics of the sample

Group	Russian Clients		Ethiopian Clients		Total
Variable	Child	Elderly	Child	Elderly	
N	38 (26.2%)	43 (29.7%)	35 (24.1%)	29 (20.0%)	145 (100%)
Sex F	36 (95%)	37 (86%)	34 (97%)	25 (86%)	132 (91%)
M	2 (5%)	6 (14%)	1 (3%)	4 (14%)	13 (9%)
Origin					
Israel	27 (71%)	28 (65%)	31 (89%)	19 (66%)	105 (72%)
Eastern Europe	6 (16%)	6 (13%)	0	2 (7%)	14 (10%)
North Africa	1 (3%)	3 (7%)	1 (3%)	5 (17%)	10 (7%)
Other	4 (10%)	6 (13%)	3 (8%)	3 (10%)	16 (11%)
Education					
BA	23 (61%)	31 (72%)	29 (83%)	21 (72%)	104 (72%)
MA	11 (29%)	10 (23%)	4 (11%)	6 (2%)	31 (21%)
Other	4 (10%)	2 (5%)	2 (6%)	2 (7%)	10 (7%)
Age (Mean + SD)	34.4 (7.2%)	36.6 (6.9%)	32.9 (6.1)	36.6 (6.9)	35.1

RESULTS

Two way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were performed for each of the dependent variables, cohesion and adaptability. A 2(groups: Russian and Ethiopian) X 2(content: child and elderly abuse) ANOVA was performed for each of the two components of family functioning. Table 2 shows the means, SD, and F values for each of the dependent variables.

Difference in perception of Russian and Ethiopian family cohesion: The results indicate that there are differences in how social workers perceive the cohesion in the families of migrants from the former Soviet Union and from Ethiopia, regardless of the issue being treated. There is a significant main effect between groups in cohesion [$F(1,142) = 7.81, p < .005$]. Significantly more social workers tended to view families from Ethiopia as more cohesive than families from the former Soviet Union.

Difference in perception of Russian and Ethiopian family adaptability: The results indicate that, regardless of the issue being treated, there are differences in how social workers perceive family adaptability in families originating from the former Soviet Union or from Ethiopia. Significantly more social workers thought that families from the former Soviet Union are more adaptable than families from Ethiopia [$F(1,142) = 15.26, p < .0001$].

Table 2:

Means, SD and F scores of cohesion and adaptability

		Cohesion	Adaptability
Russians	Child	2.95 (0.51)	2.11 (0.5)
	Elder	3.73 (0.4)	2.73 (0.5)
	Total	3.36 (0.6)	2.43 (0.5)
Ethioians	Child	3.33 (0.5)	1.90 (0.5)
	Elder	3.88 (0.4)	2.31 (0.5)
	Total	3.58 (0.5)	2.09 (0.5)
F	Russian/Ethiopian (Group)	7.81**	15.26***
	Child/elder (content)	71.09***	38.82***

** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Differences between child abuse and elderly neglect: Participants thought that regardless of the family's origin, there is a difference when either a child or an elderly family member is targeted. Respondents viewed differently the level of cohesion of the family when the issue was child or elderly abuse [$F(1, 142) = 71.09, p < .0001$]. Significantly more social workers saw the family as more cohesive when the family had to deal with taking care of an elderly family member neglect rather than child abuse, assuming, probably, that child abuse brings the family more apart than elderly neglect. In the same vein, more practitioners saw the family as significantly more functionally adaptive when the issue was elderly neglect than child abuse [$F(1, 142) = 38.82, p < .0001$], implying that the family is less functionally adaptive when it has to resort to child abuse than to elder neglect.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that social workers tend to perceive family functioning of families from different cultural contexts in different ways. Practitioners tend to see migrant families in general as less adaptable and more cohesive than the norm, with the Ethiopian families as less adaptable and more cohesive than the Russian families. In addition, the results seem to support the assumption that regardless of family background, social workers see the family as more dysfunctional when they deal with child abuse than with elder neglect.

Migration and family adaptability: Adaptability is defined as the ability of a system to change its power structure, role relationships and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress (Olson, 1989). As stated above, migration is regarded here as a stressful event for the family. This requires a measure of flexibility from family members enabling them to change and adapt to the new circumstances.

For the Ethiopian family the changes in the structure of power, roles, and rules were radical. The main change that occurred was that the man lost his source of power as main provider, since he moved from being an independent farmer, to being dependent on government provision. Concurrently, his wife gained in status. Since she had to take care of her children and household needs,

she was automatically more in touch with community resources like social workers, nurses, and teachers. Due to her enhanced contact with the Israeli environment, the woman acquired Hebrew language skills more quickly. Many women used their contacts to obtain work in the unskilled labor market, thus affording them a degree of independence previously unknown to them or their husbands. For the first time the woman had control over money, since even without work, the children's allowance was paid by the government in her name (Ben-David, 1993). All of these circumstances brought about radical changes in family and couple rules.

The Soviet family, on the other hand, came from a culture which had been shaped by 70 years of Soviet ideology. Central to the Soviet approach—as it was to Marxist and Leninist theory—was the conviction that women's entry into social production held the key to the creation of a genuinely socialist society (Lapidus, 1988). Historical materialism was the "grand theory" and in this framework, the family held only a subordinate position in the functioning of society as a whole. A genuinely socialist society was based on sexual equality. This equality, however, meant only that women, as men, have to do productive work. It held nothing as to what should happen inside the family and the home. Thus, Soviet society devised policies that guaranteed women equal treatment as workers and citizens. To this day, however, women tend to be concentrated in lower status and lower pay positions than men (Lapidus, 1982, 1988).

From the above, it is clear that the main avenue for absorption of the Soviet family is through work. Soviet women immigrants readily adapted to the conditions of the Israeli labor market: they were more willing to change their occupation, they had a lower degree of frustration with labor conditions than the men, and their work satisfaction was higher (Ben-Barak, 1989). Thus, women found work more easily than their husbands, and as a consequence, role reversal occurred and the power structure of the family changed. Many marriages were not equipped to deal with these changes, and different forms of distress set in, either by marital conflict, problems with the children, or somatic complaints (Ben-David & Lavee, 1994).

It is evident that both families had adaptability problems, which was indicated by the fact that social workers perceived both sets of families to be less adaptable than the norm. However, the Ethiopian family was seen as significantly less adaptive than the Russian family. It seems that the Ethiopian family had to go through a more basic transformation in terms of adaptability and cultural transition than families from the Soviet Union. Thus, two factors combined to produce the workers perception of the difference in adaptability between the two families. First, the change in the Ethiopian family was much greater, but it was brought about by external circumstances, by the necessity of living in a new country and a new culture. Thus, the change, even now, seems external and dystonic to the Ethiopian family. It will take much longer for the Ethiopian family to make the necessary adaptational adjustments to the Israeli culture. Second, the change in the Soviet family seemed negligible since in so many ways the Soviet society is very similar to the Israeli society. This discrepancy between the need to change and the difficulty in changing, explains the perception that the Soviet family is more adaptable, but not yet at the level of the norm, and not quite as much as the workers would have liked to see them.

Migration and family cohesion: In contrast to the inclination to perceive immigrant families in general and the Ethiopian family in particular as less adaptive, the social workers perceived immigrant families in general and the Ethiopian family in particular as more cohesive.

The families that emigrated from Ethiopia fled religious and social persecutions, and in addition, some waves of emigrants escaped famine and political instability (like the last wave of the summer of 1991). Amongst the Ethiopian immigrants, there were two forces which worked in opposite directions. On the one hand, the cultural, economic, racial, educational, and social differences between the host and the Ethiopian cultures were immense. This factor promotes assimilation in the host country, because of the need of the new immigrants to become similar to their host country, with the consequent elements of loss of family cohesiveness and values. On the other hand, this was a minority community in Ethiopia that preserved its uniqueness because of its strong religious beliefs. This factor has a buffering effect in

terms of assimilation. The more different the immigrants are from the host community, the more they need their old and customary ways to protect them from losing their whole world outlook (Bar-Yosef, 1980). Both processes are at work at the same time in Israel. The more veteran families have started the process of assimilation with their movement to the large cities. There, young people found themselves not only isolated from their families, but this being a visible minority, from the large white majority of the country. However, social workers in this study, are more in touch with the families that have more recently arrived in Israel. These families live in more closed communities, and are going through the alternate process, more cohesiveness and less conversion.

The workers' perception of the diminished cohesiveness in the families from the former Soviet Union, may reflect the increasing rate of family dissolution, which resembles that of their country of origin (about 30%), but is still considerably higher than in the majority of the Israeli society (about 20%). The viable alternative of the dissolution of marriage (divorce) as an adaptive solution to marital distress as a consequence of the migratory process, (Ben-David & Lavee, 1994) contributes to the perception of these families as less dependent emotionally on the wholeness of the family.

Child vs. Elderly Abuse: Another finding in this study was that practitioners viewed families with child abuse as less cohesive and less adaptable regardless of the cultural origin of the families. Mistreatment of family members has not been viewed as a generic problem but rather in terms of the status of the victim (Finkelhor, 1983). Thus, practitioners cope with different types of family mistreatment with separate sets of agencies, separate sets of theories and separate histories of the process through which each emerged as a social problem.

A possible explanation for these results may be that Protective Services for elderly abuse are not yet as developed in Israel, and practitioners are not as aware of an elderly family member as of a child who is abused. These results are similar to other studies in which victim groups are compared (O'Toole & Webster, 1988). It appears that different norms are at work when dealing with elderly or child abuse. Perhaps, as Hudson (1986) says, norms for the mistreatment of elders are just now developing, and in the

early stages of a newly recognized family social problem, specific meanings are not yet differentiated (O'Toole & Webster, 1988).

Implications for Social Work Practice: In view of the key role played by social workers in the integration of immigrants, the differential perceptions on the part of practitioners regarding ethnic and cultural backgrounds and traditions raise some important issues. A particularly relevant question is whether they are more sensitive to the minority that is more dislocated, or to the group that is more similar to the majority culture. Viewing migration as the primary origin of family difficulties presumes that barriers to well-being and success may be created more by situational factors, such as ignorance or poverty, than by intrapsychic elements, such as an abusive personality or structural family dysfunction (e.g., inappropriate disciplining techniques). Sue (1977) posited a theoretical model in which minority-group clients and counselors hold different world views. Workers may hold an intrapsychic view of difficulties, while minority clients may have a more situational explanation for their troubles. These different world views would very likely result in incongruency (and probable failure) of treatment and interventions (Latting & Zundel, 1986).

The findings of the present study suggest some directions for context responsive practice with immigrant families. Family adaptability and cohesion are always targeted when intervening at the individual, or more familial level. When working with cross-cultural groups whose lives and traditions have been interrupted by immigration or unplanned displacement, workers must be sensitive to the need for higher levels of cohesion due to the loss of customary and well known ways of functioning. For many immigrant families, from Ethiopia, for example, the Western emphasis placed on competitive individualism can be painfully incongruent with their own values which may emphasize more interdependence and cohesiveness with kin and extended family, and for whom the competitiveness and individualism of Israeli/Westernized society is strange and alien. Helping such families find ways to preserve and cherish their customs and old ways may be crucial in helping them make the transition to a new country. For other immigrant families from the former Soviet Union, for example, separation and autonomy are unfamiliar. These families function in a high multigenerational inter-

dependence, which is demonstrated by three generational living arrangements. Since the tightly-knit family unit is the strength of these families, any threat to family harmony may cause much anguish among the already grieving migrating families with multiple losses. An implied message of "enmeshment" in these families is somehow suspect. DiNicola (1993) views "enmeshment" as a culturally biased way of identifying family interactional styles. He prefers to reframe such styles as familism.

The social worker is called upon to be extra sensitive to the transitional stress of the recently arrived immigrants who may have been highly functional individuals in their country of origin but who are unable to find jobs at all in their new country because of their lack of language skills (Lieberman, 1990). This may apply equally to the Ethiopian and the Soviet family. They may be forced to work long hours at menial works to make ends meet. The former Soviet Union immigrant's prior sense of control may be restored only when they are able to find a niche in their new homeland commensurate with their education and training.

One of the most valuable benefits of studying and dealing with cultural diversity is that it promoted sensitivity to the gradients and nuances of different functioning aspects among families. Such individualized practice is consistent with basic social work values and principles. Practitioners attention and openness to looking for strengths in the wide variety of ways clients adapt to their environment fosters empathic connectedness. The resulting "togetherness" between the worker and the family client can serve as a growth promoting leverage for both sides to experience aspects of each other and enrich both cultures.

Finally, two qualifications are in order. First, the generalizability of this study may be limited to the specific cultural ambience and demographic complexity of Israel. Second, additional research is needed with other immigrant populations and in other areas of the world, in order to arrive at more final conclusions.

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Video Review Essay:

"To Render A Life: LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN And The Documentary Vision" (1992) and "Long Shadows: The Legacy of the American Civil War" (1992). Both by the JAMES AGEE FILM PROJECT, 316 E. Main Street, Johnson City, TN 37601 Phone: (615) 926-8637.

Here are two first-rate videos that, while disparate, are nevertheless valuable classroom tools. "To Render A Life" is a 58 minute documentary on the career of author, poet, and critic James Agee. This work will interest scholars in a broad range of fields, including film and literary criticism, the sociology of culture, mass communications, and related endeavors.

The format includes interviews and narration, coupled with vivid images of Agee's boyhood surroundings, Harvard, New York in the 1930's, the conditions of southern sharecroppers, and Depression and World War II era Hollywood (where Agee and John Houston wrote the classic *THE AFRICAN QUEEN*).

What comes though more clearly than anything else is Agee's overpowering personality. Here was a literary genius who was so driven that he eschewed sleep in order to work. Agee was a man, as his second wife comments, that never took a full day off from his writing. A workaholic, Agee seemed to suffer from many of the same pathologies that plagued the writers of his day, excessive smoking, drinking, and incessant restlessness.

The sociological import of Agee's career probably lies in his investigation of Southern sharecroppers for *FORTUNE* Magazine in the 1930s. Agee's writings here alerted the nation to a previously undefined social problem. Agee recognized that this would happen even before setting foot in the South. In a letter to his father, Agee revealed his perception of the sharecropper assignment as a moral and sacred duty.

Agee also served as a film reviewer for *THE NATION*. There are small excerpts from a number of his reviews, and these gems are not to be missed. Agee's opinions of the young Liz Taylor, his honesty concerning films which he disliked, even though some had reached icon status with other reviewers, and the general tenor of his prose make this documentary well worth watching. If

you teach culture related courses, this documentary will stimulate your students to look into the culture of the era of their parents and grandparents. Otherwise, you will probably have a good deal more interest in the LONG SHADOWS effort.

LONG SHADOWS is a 58 minute video about the Civil War and, especially, the effects of that war on American culture and society. This is a first-rate effort to assess one of the most tragic episodes in American history. The Civil War marked one of the few periods in America's existence when its ruling elite failed to work out a compromise on an issue. The result was a war that killed more Americans than almost all other American wars combined.

More important, the legacy of the Civil War is still with us and manifests itself in a myriad of ways. The war reinforced the notion that violence is a solution to social problems, a remedy turned to often since 1865. In the South, the war was followed by decades of economic devastation, and the emergence of Southern stereotypes (rednecks, hillbillies, racist, authoritarians). So impugned was the South's reputation that no southern politician was elected president of the United States until 1976. Likewise, Reconstruction began an era of internal colonialism marked by brutal racial oppression of freed slaves. All of this, of course, set the stage for a prolonged civil rights struggle that continues to this day.

Another important offspring of the Civil War was the emergence of the oligopolistic corporation, and its robber baron founders. This is the one portion of the video in need of elongation. There is a brief interview with Studs Terkel, commenting on the robber barons and their selling defective weapons to the Army. There is also a few shots of some major corporate logos. Otherwise, scant attention is paid to the import of corporate social organization. Given the dominance of corporations in the American economy, and their influence at all levels of American political life,

Aside from these lingering effects, the video will be of interest to Civil War buffs as well. There are some interesting facts related about events such as the Battle of Gettysburg, the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln's support of General Sherman's scorched earth policy, and the importance of Stonewall Jackson

and Robert E. Lee to Southern culture. There is also some fascinating old news footage of Civil War veterans, the last one of whom died in the mid-1950s.

Above and beyond all else in this video, there is a valiant attempt to impart a sense of history as wisdom. Tom Wicker, himself a Southerner, says it well herein. Americans are not ignorant of history, but they are terribly unappreciated of its importance in shaping the nature of their character, culture, and institutions. It is not surprising that in this most individualistic of nations, few people are devotees of history and its impact on their lives. American individualism encourages the citizenry to eschew bonds of solidarity in favor of the pursuit of material ends. The historical imagination necessary for what C. Wright Mills described as the sociological imagination is lacking. This video is a valuable beginning in redressing this imbalance.

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Book Review Essay:

THE CONTENT OF OUR CHARACTER, by Shelby Steele. New York, N.Y: HarperPerennial, a division of HarperCollins, 1991 xii + 175 pp. \$11.00 (paper).

My intention when assigned to review Steele's *The Content of our Character* was to produce a more-or-less standard review essay suitable for publication in a refereed social science journal. I realized, however, even before completing the volume's first ten pages, that the review I would ultimately produce was unlikely to conform to that intention.

The overarching reaction generated by those first few pages was one of *deja vu*: It was as though I was back in 1968 or 1969 (I cannot recall which) reading the Grier and Cobb sizzler, *Black Rage* (1968). In my estimation, at that time, the Grier and Cobb volume was, indeed, a sizzler, but a sizzling and unfair indictment of a people. There was virtually nothing in my background, at least my conscious background, that prepared me for the volume's self-defeating landscape of Black people; a landscape of a people immobilized by their feelings of race-based inferiority and insecurity. "But these are psychiatrists writing about clinical populations" I cried to those as I vented the *rage* that reading *Black Rage* spawned in me. "These are not people typical of the race; they are people victimized by some form of insanity!"

I found the book, frankly, to be an embarrassment, as well as a lie. I certainly was not to be tarred (no pun intended) by the same brush that painted Blacks as consumed by thoughts of race, eviscerated by self hatred, and, consequently, unable to, in warrior-like fashion, wrest what was needed from a hostile environment in order to achieve their fullest possible potential, *and* their full humanity. As I would later say often—a statement that succinctly summarized feelings I had in 1969, and before—"We are going to prosper, regardless of the adversity, because we have no other choice!" Neither I, nor the people closest to me, were to be or had ever been Greenlee's *The Spook Who Sat By The Door* (1969), nor would we ever find ourselves subsisting in accordance with Fanon's existential views of the effects of racism as noted in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967).

Little did I know at the time that I was in for some rather shocking revelations. As I matriculated from university life into the occupation of my choice, that of being a community organizer of the social action ilk, I began to see that some of the afflictions described in *Black Rage*, and later, less sizzingly, in *The Content of Our Character*, indeed were borne by some Blacks who were not insane, nor ostensibly in need of psychiatric assistance. Some community people with whom I worked, as well some co-workers, in fact, did seem to bear an eviscerating hostility to self. My reaction, at the time, to this awareness, was rather meager: My thinking about the issue was engaged almost exclusively around the dimension of disappointment. Nor did I go much further in my thinking about this (the images produced by the revelations were too ugly to contemplate), although the disappointment that was generated was profound enough to shorten my career as a community organizer.

So, here we are, in 1994, and it would seem that there is little possibility of escaping these images: Twenty-five years after the appearance of *Black Rage* they are still pervasive enough, and powerful enough, to produce in *The Content of Our Character* a National Book Critics Circle Award Winner, and a *New York Times* BestSeller. As a reaction of "burying one's head into the sand," given some of the experiences I have had during the interim years, was less possible this time around, I began my inquiry by personalizing my thinking rather than, as was the case originally, distancing myself from the topic. Thus, I thought, it makes more sense to use the assignment of this book review, at least in part, to serve me as an exercise in self examination, as opposed to merely producing a standard essay suitable for publication in a journal.

"Why is it that I am not, as apparently many of my brethren are, consumed by thoughts of race?" I asked myself. What a waste it is, I said, to have one's consciousness preoccupied by issues associated with race, or at least to have race issues always "running in the background." "What must it be like to have a cosmology (i.e., way of looking at the world) that is so dominated by race and feelings of racial inferiority?" "Why is it that I feel I have nothing to prove to whites?" "Why is it that my feelings are so unequivocal that the question of personal race-related worth is never posed within myself?" "Could it be that I am in denial?"

I asked: After all, Steele and others have concluded that such feelings are impossible to avoid.¹ As I considered this prescription of Steele and others the thought came to me that "I must be very fortunate" in that, comparatively speaking, I need use very little of my life energy consumed in thoughts and/or behavior designed to prove something to myself, to people, *or* to whites, or even merely thinking about whites, i.e., "The White Man." Indeed, one of my biggest irritations in Black social settings is that so much conversation and energy is devoted to diatribes about "The White Man." How is it that as far back as I can remember, while being acutely aware that something was amiss and that whatever was amiss was race-related, that I have been so fortunate not to have to bear this cross?

Why was it, for example, that when my grandmother used to urge me to "tuck in my lips" to make them more thin, i.e., more "white," that I stuck them out to make them fuller, even as a four-and five-year old? I think, possibly, that the cosmology I carry may have to do most with my mother (the child of that grandmother to which I just spoke), and to several somewhat random childhood experiences.

Our family moved at the time I entered public school to a neighborhood that was in racial transition. Consequently, at four years of age, I had playmates of both races: In fact, my primary playmates, as these were the children who lived closest to me, were white. And, unlike children elsewhere, our play did not occur within a framework of inequality.

Too, because my parents sought to provide me with the best public school education they could, they enrolled me via a fraudulent address into a white elementary school, not the school that rapidly was becoming an all-Black school (which was the neighborhood school in which I should have been enrolled). I was not required when entering this school to contemplate the possibility of my inferiority because there was no inequality with respect either to aptitude or knowledge. I remain eternally grateful for this fact to my mother who, unlike the parents of most of my Black playmates, read to me while I was a toddler, took me to the public library in a way that made me think of the library as a resource rather than an alien environment, and, later, took me

to movies after which she sat me down to discuss those movies upon our returning home.

I recognize that in these remarks is one area where Steele's decrees and proclamations bear a bit of fruit because without my having benefitted from this "initiative" (what Steele refers to as a middle-class value) on my mother's part, who can say what cosmology I might be carrying around today? And Steele's remarks are buttressed further by the fact that my mother, because she was nearly blind in one eye, was never more than an average student in a Deep South segregated rural school. A la the logic of Steele, if my mother could do it, so could other Black parents.

But I cannot arrive at this latter conclusion: My mother was not the product of a sharecropper existence, for example, and she attended a school with Black teachers who had vision, knew everyone in their community, and cared about the community's children. She also benefitted by having a father whose resolve was so strong that every person, including the whites, who lived in their small Louisiana town, referred to him as "Mr. Bradley." She never had to work in the kitchens of white people, nor did any of her siblings, and her father was so accomplished at farming that when the federal government (through the Resettlement Administration) made land available for purchase by Blacks he paid off a forty-year mortgage in six years. Can it be that I am the beneficiary of a continuing legacy from my grandfather (a legacy of a sort not shared by most Blacks)? As important as this legacy must have been and continues to be for me, it does not entirely satisfy, nor do the other things I have mentioned. In other words they do not seem to measure up as a complete explanation of how it is I have come to escape the presumably pervasive power of race in adversely shaping my consciousness.

There is another element I must note as I am convinced it is a significant component in my freedom from, among other things, as Steele puts it, "race holding" (holding up race as a shield to keep us from seeing what we do not want to see in ourselves), and from "Being Black and Feeling Blue" (diminishing one's ambitions to avoid "integration shock," i.e., the shock of being personally accountable on strictly personal terms). My mother is a warrior. Engage her in a fight and it will be a fight to the death, especially if the object of that fight is related to her children.

I grew up witnessing, from elementary school through high school, my mother's battles with a racist, Flint, Michigan, school system. Indeed, one teacher resigned early as a result of my mother's efforts, and another was dismissed. The early resignation occurred because my mother understood process with respect to the local school board and was effective in proving her case against that teacher of being racist (among other things the teacher always failed the brightest Black students and passed those who were least capable). Perhaps more importantly, she was able to get a teacher dismissed who was not simply mean, but viciously mean, to children. I say that this may be a more important case because the teacher who was dismissed was Black,² which must have emphasized in my mind that it was the victimization that was not to be tolerated, regardless of the race of the offender. It had to have been significant to me that while we were aware of the school system's racism, and of the accompanying discrimination, that it was the victimization, regardless of the racial hands of the perpetrator, about which there was to be the fight: Thus race and victimization did not become inseparably entangled for me. This is in sharp contradistinction to Steele's assertion that it is our victimization at the hands of whites that, "more than any other variable," (p. 101) forms our personal identities as Blacks.

What, on the other hand, I did internalize, was the value of my mother's tenacity, her perseverance: She always "brought her lunch" and so I learned to bring mine too, meaning that I learned the value of being prepared. Put in the vernacular of Steele, being "prepared" means subscribing to what he refers to as the middle-class values of hard work, education, and initiative.

I do find it difficult to accept Steele's social class dichotomy with respect to these values. He also lists deferred gratification, stable family life, and property ownership, as values peculiar to the middle-class. I am aware of studies done in the fifties and sixties indicating that lower-class individuals, generally speaking, have less ability and/or willingness to defer gratification, but Steele appears to be unaware that there were many contradictory studies, resulting in inconclusive findings on this point.³ At the same time it seems to me that the lower-classes have no monopoly on the desire for immediate gratification: Witness the inability and/or lack of willingness of children, young adults, and others

from affluent backgrounds, for example, to defer their gratification [The works of Coles, *Children of Crisis* (1978), and Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart* (1985), are particularly pertinent here.] Too, I don't think one can argue the fact that it is often the poorest among us who work the hardest, and the wealthiest who work the least. I make this point fully recognizing that a current ethic, especially among big-city young Blacks, is that work at wages commensurate to their skill is beneath them. Yet lack of initiative is often not a problem in the lower classes: The problem, more accurately, with respect to initiative, is that a lot of enterprising ghetto Blacks, because of joblessness, and the effects of joblessness on family disruption, turn their initiative into criminal or quasi-criminal careers.⁴

Stable family life, desire for property ownership, and a stress on individual achievement, are not solely middle-class virtues. Studies have shown consistently that lower-class parents want no less for their children than other parents. But, in actual practice, conformance to these virtues means having income that is sufficient to realize them.⁵ The fact of the matter is that we do not have an economy that can employ everyone, regardless of what we, as individuals, do. Another fact is that a lot of this country's poverty is the result of conscious social policy designed to maintain a pool of available cheap labor,⁶ and that racial discrimination, versus other factors, are key in explaining poverty.⁷

Steele notes that:

By many measures, the majority of blacks —those not yet in the middleclass— are further behind whites today than before the victories of the civil rights movement. But there is a reluctance among blacks to examine this paradox, I think, because it suggests that racial victimization is not our real problem. If conditions have worsened for most of us as racism has receded, then much of the problem must be of our own making. (p. 15).

But has racism receded? Many of our cities are more segregated now than they have ever been, and acts of personal violence against Blacks have been rising. There is abundant evidence of disparate treatment in consumer contracting transactions, lending transactions, insurance transactions, and the delivery of medical care. It is true that the legal structure supporting discrimination

has been eroded substantially, but this is dejure, rather than de-facto, discrimination. It might be useful also for Steele to contemplate the fact that Blacks have made significant gains during the Great Society and Affirmative Action eras, and that the reason these gains are not evident in aggregated Bureau of Census data is because they are masked by another phenomenon: The increase in Black unwed teenaged mothers. If one were to disaggregate the data, i.e. eliminate this cohort of mothers from the analysis, we would find that Blacks have made substantial economic gains during the past thirty years. I am referencing this time period specifically because it is this period that Executive Orders 11246 and 11975 (affirmative action orders) appeared.

But as Steele would point out, the rise in the Black unwed teenage (and that of older Black females) pregnancy phenomenon has occurred during that same era he depicts as one of unparalleled opportunity. We as Blacks, thus, have not exploited the abundance of opportunity now available to us. But, is this really the case? The cornerstone of Black family stability, and of upward mobility, since WWII, has been the abundance of high-paying, union-protected, fringe-benefit bearing, industrial jobs. Some studies have shown that the percentage of Black teenagers getting pregnant has not differed dramatically from the percentage getting pregnant during the fifties (although many are getting pregnant at younger ages and more are keeping their children in independent households). What has changed is the ability of young Black males to secure those good-paying industrial jobs with which to form an economic foundation for stable family life.

Another phenomenon, which has received very little attention in the literature of the social sciences, is the fact that Black males are being displaced, by Black females, at a dramatic rate from those traditionally male unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled industrial jobs that do remain in our economy.⁸ As study after study since the Great Depression has taught us, if there is one sure way to fragment families, create conditions where the male is unable to secure gainful employment. Indeed, more recent studies have shown that differences in area unemployment rates even *within* financially strapped industrial "rust bowl" states are directly predictive of the ability of individuals in Black communities to form stable families; i.e., Blacks in low-unemployment

areas are much more likely to marry and form stable families.⁹ Considering the fact that we have an economy that cannot employ everyone, and that the present-era basis for stable broad-based Black family life—industrial jobs—is disappearing rapidly, can we characterize accurately the present day, as Steele does, as one of unparalleled opportunity?

Could it be said that Steele's failure to acknowledge this, or his statement that "the barriers to black progress are clearly as much psychological as they are social or economic" (p.34) are forms, as William Ryan put it, of *Blaming the Victim* (1971)? Using concepts such as "race holding," the "anti-self," and "race anxiety," all Freudian in character, he concludes that "the unconscious replaying of our oppression is now the greatest barrier to our full equality" (p. 49), and that "somewhere inside every black is a certain awe at the power and achievement of the white race" (p. 53). I am not quite sure how to characterize or how to think about these two statements. Could they be due merely to ignorance? Particularly with respect to the latter statement, which implies that other races have not achieved on a par with the white race, is Steele ahistorical? Is he rooted only in contemporary Western Civilization? Is his vision so limited he can see no further back than the Industrial Revolution (which some consider the achievement hallmark of the white race)? Does Steele know nothing of the great achievements of past African civilizations, and those of other races? [perhaps he should read Basil Davidson's *The Lost Cities of Africa* (1959), among other volumes].

Steele also is ahistorical with respect to his views on individualism, a view that harkens to the "rugged individualism" that has been part of this country's most sacred folklore. As Steele notes, "We are most strongly motivated when we want something for ourselves" (p. 29), that "racial development will always be the effect that results from individuals within the race bettering their own lives" (p. 158), and "from this point on, the race's advancement will come from the efforts of individuals" (p. 16). Steele's remarks notwithstanding, most of what been achieved in this society, as in all societies, has been the result of cooperative activities, not the efforts of individuals engaged in a "rugged individualism" form of competition against others within the species or the collective. As Kropotkin has demonstrated, and his

examinations go back further in time than even that of Europe's Barbarians, and include examinations as well of animal species, that "the practice of mutual aid has attained the greatest development, (species practicing it) invariably (are) the most numerous, the most prosperous, and the most open to further progress."¹⁰ Too, in this country, the vast majority of great fortunes have been made via monopolistic and oligopolistic cooperatives, acting in concert with a collusive federal government.¹¹

Steele also assails the educational under-achievement of Blacks, but fails to note that there are pervasive class-structured inequalities in public education,¹² and that we have the technology, should we choose to use it, to improve dramatically the performance of Black pupils in low-income ghetto schools.¹³ Similarly, he refers to the fact that there are more Blacks in the criminal justice system than there are in higher education, without any mention of the significant relationship of race to charging decisions and sentencing disparities.¹⁴

Perhaps the most revealing passage of Steele's volume is one in which he recounts his feelings following discriminatory treatment he experienced as a youth. As he noted:

When I would stray into the wrong restaurant in pursuit of a hamburger, it didn't occur to me that the waitress was unduly troubled by guilt when she asked me to leave. I can see now that possibly she was, but then all I saw was her irritability at having to carry out so unpleasant a task. If there was guilt, it was mine for having made an imposition of myself. (p. 77).

During the turbulence of the sixties Steele did make a transition wherein he began to react more harshly to racism. One case occurred when one of Steele's undergraduate college professors sought Steele's sympathy after being "forced" to reject a Black couple seeking to rent a flat because the white couple downstairs would have been offended. But even here Steele offers us reflections that possibly are conflicted and are almost apologetic in tone:

I might have found the means to a more dispassionate response, the response less of a victim attacked by a victimizer than of an individual offended by a foolish old man. I might have reported

this professor to the college dean. Or, I might have calmly tried to reveal his blindness to him, and possibly won a convert. (p. 105).

In fairness, Steele's remarks here are partly those of one who can see more clearly, due to maturation, than was possible for Steele as a young student in his junior year of college. The episode was recounted also because Steele was seeking to press forward with his analysis of the adverse effects of "racial vulnerability," a condition Steele links to the need of some individuals for Black nationalism. But one of Steele's points is that adherents to the ideology of Black nationalism are likely to damage themselves more than they are likely to be damaged by white racism.

This sort of analysis on Steele's part, though I follow the course of his thinking, was and is puzzling for me. This is notwithstanding my recognition that there is substance to a lot of what Steele has to say. One, for example, can indeed use Black nationalism as a shield to hide conscious or unconscious feelings of racial inferiority. On the other hand, can one so cavalierly fail to acknowledge the contributions Black nationalism has made to the psychological and economic well-being of many Blacks, and still be scholarly?¹⁵

Reflecting further on this I decided to phone, for a quick consultation on some of Steele's views, a person whose vision and judgment I respect highly. The urgent question I posed was something like this: "Bob, to what extent do you think the behavior of Black people is influenced by feelings of racial inferiority?" Much to my surprise, Bob (who many consider to be absolutely brilliant) replied that it was the dominant motivation of his life. I said "What?" Bob then said that nearly everything he does is the result of trying to prove to whites that he is not inferior. I then talked with Bob about my own, if you will, cosmology with respect to race, recounting stories about my grandfather, my mother, and of my experiences at the integrated elementary school. Bob commented that he, too, played with whites while growing up in Virginia, but that he "always had to drink from the cup *after* the white kids." This introduced another element into the equation: Perhaps there was something to growing up in Flint, Michigan during the fifties and sixties, as opposed to growing up in a place like Newport News, Virginia, during the thirties

and forties. But, ultimately, this was not an entirely satisfactory answer, either. After all, many of those same Black children I grew up with are afflicted with a "content-of-our-character" problem, some of them severely.

So, returning to the exercise in self discovery that I sought when starting this essay I find that I have no satisfactory answer as to why I am bereft of some of racism's abiding effects, namely those associated with feeling inferior to whites. At the same time, it is possible to make some summarizing remarks about Steele's *The Content of Our Character*.

First, I do not like the fact that one profound result of an analysis such as Steele's is that it provides an intellectual basis for federal and state policies of benign neglect. As noted by Steele, who believes that "preferential" programs result from the magnanimity of white guilt: "The point . . . is that the implication of inferiority that racial preferences (such as affirmative action) engender in both the white and black minds expands rather than contracts doubt" about Black competence (p.117). Can Steele not see that policies such as affirmative action result less from the largesse of whites than from the recognition by whites that such policies help to promote social stability by creating and expanding a Black middle class, of which Steele, himself, is a member?

Second, Steele cannot be dismissed out of hand as there appears to be much substance to what he is saying. (One point, to buttress his contentions, he likely would make were he speaking to me is that I witnessed, as a child growing up, the values of individual hard work and perseverance in my own home.) Too, he seems earnestly engaged in a search for truth, regardless of where that search may lead. Because of this, and because his remarks should serve as a call to arms on the part of those not active in their own interests, we must embrace Steele, regardless of whether we agree with him. At the very least he is opening up issues for discussion and analysis that may lead some disillusioned Blacks to act affirmatively (no pun intended) in their own behalf. For this, I applaud him.

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Notes

1. Cf. Stephen L. Carter, "A Dilemma of Identity," *The National Law Journal*, Vol. 14 (3) September 23, 1993: 15–16.
2. Ironically, I now think, years later, that this teacher was so mean because he was victimized by what might be termed as the Black Rage syndrome, or by what might be called a Content of Our Character problem: In despising his race-related lot in life, and, therefore, himself, he was neither able to control his rage against his own person, nor against other Blacks.
3. Vernon L. Allen, "Personality Correlates of Poverty," pp: 242–266, in V.L. Allen (ed.), *Psychological Factors in Poverty*, Chicago: Markham Publishing Co. (Univ. of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty Monograph Series), 1970.
4. Robert J. Sampson, "Urban Black Violence: The Effect of Male Joblessness and Family Disruption," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 93, No. 2 (September 1987): 348–382.
5. Other resources, of course, are necessary. Focusing on the fact that Blacks must take responsibility for their own self development, Steele points out, referring somewhat to himself, that: "A Ph.D. must be developed from preschool on. He requires family and community support. He must acquire an entire system of values that enables him to work hard while delaying gratification" (p.122).

Speaking as a Black person with a Ph.D., and as one unusually advantaged by the role model of my mother (and by a father who made a good income), I think it is important to note that while my mother went to the limits of her ability with respect to her children, she could not prepare her children for experiences she could not imagine. Consequently, even with my comparatively advantaged background I found myself entering college purely by accident, had virtually no conception of the structure of university life, had no idea of what an advanced degree was until the second semester of my sophomore year, and could not imagine what people with briefcases did work-wise in their offices until I was in graduate school. More than that, I had virtually no conception of the notion of a career (versus getting a job), and for most of my young adulthood, even following having the Ph.D. degree, I was lost in the miasma/complexities of professional life, for which my parents simply were unable to prepare me. What would have been my lot if I had been unable to benefit from the Great Society and the Affirmative Action eras? What about those countless Black children whose parents were even less able than my parents with respect to how one negotiates and navigates the institutions and processes that lead to professional or any other kind of job-related success, now that the good-paying unskilled, and semi-skilled jobs with which they were familiar, are largely gone? To what extent can they be blamed for their deficiencies, and to what extent can one assume reasonably that they can, within the limits of their own experiential

- resources, set out their children on the pathways to take advantage of those abundant opportunities to which Steele refers?
6. Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*, New York: Vintage Books, 1971.
 7. Oscar Ornati, "Poverty in America," pp: 24-39 in Louis Ferman, et al., (eds.), *Poverty in America*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1972; Paula L. Dressel, "Gender, Race, and Class: Beyond the Feminization of Poverty in Later Life," *The Gerontologist*, Vol. 28, no. 2, (1988): 177-180.
 8. R.L. McNeely and Melvin R. Kinlow, *Milwaukee Today: A Racial Gap Study* (monograph), A Research Publication of the Milwaukee Urban League, 1987: 73 pp.
 9. Andrew R. Gatewood, *The Social and Economic Status of Young Black Males and the Impact on the Formation of Detroit Area Black Families* (monograph), United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit, August, 1989: 34 pp.
 10. Petr Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, 1902 (first edition); Boston, Mass: Porter Sargent (Extending Horizon Books Series: 362 pp.), no date of publication indicated: p. 293; subsequent edition (400 pp.) published by Porter Sargent in 1976.
 11. Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books (1967); cf: Mark J. Green, et al., *The Closed Enterprise System*, New York: Bantam Books (1972).
 12. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*, New York: Basic Books (1976).
 13. Ronald R. Edmonds, "Some Schools Work and More Can," *Social Policy*, (March/April) 1979: 28-32.
 14. Coramae Richey Mann, *Unequal Justice: A Question of Color*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press (1993); Wm. Feyerherm, "Juvenile Court Dispositions of Status Offenders: An Analysis of Case Decisions," pp. 127-144 in R.L. McNeely and Carl E. Pope (eds.), *Race, Crime and Criminal Justice*, Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage Publications (1981).
 15. cf: John H. Bracey, August Meier, and Elliot Rudwick (eds.), *Black Nationalism in America*, Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company (The American Heritage Series), 1970.

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Book Reviews

Richard Munch, *Sociological Theory: From the 1850s to the Present*. Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall, 1994. \$51.95 hardcover.

This book organizes, presents, and interprets the perspectives of major sociological theorists from the middle of the nineteenth century to the present. The author begins with two claims. First, that most contemporary theory texts are narrowly-bound by the national origins of their authors and thus fail to adequately reflect the growing international character of sociological theory building. Second, that it is impossible to understand contemporary sociological theories without broad knowledge of classical perspectives. The author seeks to address and correct these shortcomings.

The author shares with a growing number of other contemporary analysts of sociological theories the belief that the best way to understand the growth and development of sociological theories is to group them into "broader current[s] of thought with common frame[s] of reference, common basic concepts, ideas, and premises." (p. 4) He labels these "paradigms" and argues that the development of sociological theory is an "ongoing discourse between different competing paradigms and theories" (p. 4), as each spans out into areas where it interrelates and overlaps with others. The author views this "interweaving" of different perspectives as a key requirement for the advancement of theoretical knowledge.

While sharing with other contemporary analysts an essentially "metatheoretical" approach to understanding the theory development process, Professor Munch's own framework for organizing theories into broader groups is unique. In his ambitious attempt to "reconstruct" sociological discourse, the author posits a framework composed of four fields, each with a corresponding view of the world: adaptation (the economics of social action); goal attainment (the conflict paradigm, which deals with the politics of social action); integration (the normative paradigm, which deals with the structure of social action); and latent pattern maintenance (the symbolic paradigm, which deals with the symbolics of social action). The author organizes these fields into an "action space" within which discourse on sociological theory is conceived

of as a "game" with different players (the different paradigms), different instruments (theoretical concepts and statements), different strategies (home players, area players, cross-area players, and world players), and different levels (national, international, periodic universal, and timeless universal).

The author divides his study into three major time-periods, each of which represents a distinct period in the evolution of sociological thought: "the foundation period" that extends from the 1850s to the 1920s; "consolidation and differentiation" from the 1920s to the 1960s; and "renewal and intermeshing" since the 1960s. For each of these periods, he stresses the different roles that the various players, instruments, strategies, and levels of theorizing have played and the resulting consequences for theoretical development in the discipline.

With this conceptual framework established, the remainder of the book discusses the perspective of key theorists in the discipline's, history. For each of these the author first details the perspective of the theorist. He then summarizes the theorist's perspective in a number of short statements. Then, he critically appraises the theorist's perspective and occasionally concludes with a discussion of further developments in the theorist's work.

The final chapter in the book offers a summary of the contents of the book that refocuses particular attention to the four levels in his model (the national, the international, the periodic universal, and the timeless universal, and on his claim that, throughout its history, theorizing within the discipline has increasingly moved beyond the boundaries of the nation within which the theorist constructed his/her perspective and toward the timeless universal level. This highest level of theorizing is characterized as "an accumulation of ever more finely woven overlapping theory nets within and across national periodic, and paradigmatic boundaries" (p.16).

This book has a number of strengths. First, it is an ambitious effort to lend coherence to the growing diversity within sociological theorizing. In particular, the author's use of the "games" analogy and the different "ingredients" of theories (i.e., players, instruments, strategies, and levels) to describe the process through which sociological theory develops over time is both interesting and insightful. Second, its breadth of coverage is extensive both

in terms of the time-period covered and the number of theorists whose work is presented. No other text incorporates so much material. Third, the author's presentation of the perspectives of these theorists is both concise and clear. The fact that he includes a summary of each theorist's perspective in short, simple statements should prove particularly attractive to both instructors and students. Finally, the author also provides a number of useful diagrammatic summaries of theories, paradigms, and their interrelationships.

The book also has its weaknesses. First, it is disappointing that the author devotes so little attention to detailing the rationale for the structure of his conceptual framework (its overlap with Parsons' four-functions paradigm is obvious). Despite the fact that he references other publications in which he does lay out his framework in greater detail, the absence of such detail in this volume clearly limits its utility as a teaching tool. This shortcoming also raises the question of whether the conceptual framework is too abstract for many undergraduate students to comprehend. Second, this problem is exacerbated by the fact that reference to the book's conceptual framework is not always present or adequate in the chapters devoted to the various theorists. Placing particular theories (and theorists) within the context of the conceptual framework inside the chapters devoted to them would provide the reader with more material with which to assess the utility of Munch's perspective. Third, the fact that the author includes so many theorists means that the amount of attention he devotes to each must be limited. Here, it is obvious that some sacrifice of depth of treatment for breadth of coverage was made.

Despite these weaknesses, the book makes an important contribution to the efforts of the discipline to understand the structure and dynamics of its theoretical underpinnings. No doubt, it will become a major resource for teachers, students, and practitioners within sociology. It should also be of interest to other social scientists.

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Irving Louis Horowitz. *The Decomposition of Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1993. \$35.00 hardcover.

Horowitz's book follows by over 20 years the well known "sociology of sociology" critiques by Robert Friedrichs and by Horowitz's former colleague at Washington University, Alvin Gouldner. Like them, Horowitz analyzes the present and ponders the future. Unlike them, his account is very, very personal, somewhat autobiographical at times. In the end, he gives us two books or at least two quite different parts to one book: In the first 129 pages, his target is contemporary sociology. In the remaining 130 pages or so, he focuses on social science, not just sociology. My review does likewise and I conclude with a personal reaction to each of these things.

Horowitz begins by lamenting sociology's current state. He sees the discipline as having become balkanized, especially along political lines driven by an expanding number of interest groups (both social—e.g., feminists, blacks, hispanics, gays, etc.—and intellectual—political economy of the world system, rational choice, environmentalists, etc.). Thus, "Sociology has become a series of demands for correct politics rather than a set of studies of social culture" (p. 17). Instead of traditional, separate spheres for the analytical and the ideological, they become fused and confused. The net effect to this balkanization is "the breakdown of any notion of a core discipline" (p. 18). In its ostensibly weakened state, then, "sociology has become a simulated replica of real-world confusions, rather than an analytical tool for explaining or predicting behavior. *Opera seria* turns into *opera buffa*" (p. 35). Lacking any coherent theoretical ideas to hold it together, sociology becomes a series of empirical exercises each of which can be given whatever meaning one chooses, depending on their politics.

Horowitz draws heavily upon historical events to provide the context within which American sociology evolved and changed into its present form. Along the way, his chapters touch on such themes as sociology's (and sociologists) relationship to subjectivity, fascism, communism, socialism (wherein he focuses especially on Jews and their relationship to American sociology), democracy, public (viz., scientific) access to information, and the rational

choice model from economics which has emerged so prominently in sociology (especially via the work of James Coleman).

He concludes the first part of his book with what for me was the most thought-provoking chapter, on "Social Contexts and Cultural Canons." Here, his prose takes on an edge that is especially sharp. It is also for this reason that many readers will react most strongly to this part of the book. His barbs find easy targets in such things as multiculturalism, affirmative action programs, and the new pluralism. The main lesson he draws from these things is rooted in the canons which guide the knowledge we create in sociology, especially "to appreciate the multiple sources of values, not to pontificate in the name of dogma which value is correct. For ultimately the cultural canon is not a thing but an awareness of a process" (p. 128-29). The importance of this need hardly be emphasized.

In the second part of the book, "The Reconstruction of Social Science," Horowitz's gloomy description of sociology is replaced by a more hopeful-sounding future for social science which he believes is undergoing a kind of renaissance. Here again, though, he worries about the politicization of social science activity: "We must finally get beyond the notion that a social variable is a political cause" (p. 185). This shift will occur in a reconstructed social science "not [by virtue of] the size or importance of the subject under discussion but [by] the generalizability of the finding" (p. 186). For Horowitz, then, the hope for social science comes from its potential to rise above any particular historic moment or political cause and seek the larger truths which may be drawn from these events. Only in this way do we achieve a more independent, depoliticized form of knowledge.

Irving Louis Horowitz has written a highly analytical but also very personal account of late 20th century American sociology. The story he tells is not a happy one. Indeed, it is one that will make most sociologists uncomfortable at the least and probably outright angry. Why? Because Horowitz describes a sociology which has veered sharply off course from its original intellectual underpinnings. It has, according to him, become so interest group driven that its intellectual breadth has been drastically curtailed and as a corollary, its intellectual breath has been stifled. To carry the metaphor one step further, sociology needs to be hooked up to

a life support system. To resuscitate itself, sociology must revisit and rediscover its intellectual roots; to recapture the things it did best and could still do well. Myopic empirical exercises must be replaced by broader theoretical questions and a willingness to engage in research less bent on proving what researchers want to have happen. (Horowitz cites James Coleman's unhappy exodus from sociology precisely because his data on school desegregation did not support what most sociologists wanted to believe.)

I found myself captured by Horowitz's analysis and the passion of his prose. I liked better his analysis than proscription for change but even there his writing is very thought-provoking. If he does nothing else, he will have served an important purpose in holding a mirror up to sociology (and its practitioners) and telling them: "Here's what I see. What do you see?" The knee-jerk reaction by many sociologists, I suspect, will be to disagree with Horowitz. They will neither like his analysis nor his proscription. A more detached, dispassionate, reflective reading, however, may lead them to my own conclusion. To wonder about where we are as a discipline and what future we have—in and out of the academy. Like Pogo, Horowitz has "met the enemy and it's us." I wonder. I wonder enough that I recommend the book as a "must read" for sociologists and social scientists more generally since his message must be heard and considered by them as well.

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Stanley Aronowitz: *Dead Artists Live Theorists*. New York: Routledge, 1994. \$49.95 hardcover, \$16.95 papercover.

This book represents a genre of literature that has come to be known as cultural criticism. To borrow from Tony Bennett, these writers examine "cultural practices from the point of their interaction with, and within, relations of power". Within this context, the exercise of power is broadly defined to exist in economic leverage, class domination, symbolic violence, gender discrimination, the literary canon, and a host of other covert and overt sources of influence and coercion. The aim of this kind of work is to demonstrate how power is both accumulated and undermined

through cultural practices. In many ways extending the writing of the Frankfurt School, cultural critics operate at the nexus of aesthetics, theory, and politics.

A quick glance of this book reveals that this is precisely the juncture at which Aronowitz stands. The focus of this collection of articles, he maintains, is "contemporary cultural politics and political culture" (xi). For example, there are essays devoted to postmodernism, the Frankfurt School, Roland Barthes, Mikhail Bakhtin, Raymond Williams, and Jürgen Habermas. The earliest of the fifteen chapters was published in 1977, while two, in addition to the Introduction, are appearing for the first time.

Readers who are looking for a primer on cultural criticism, however, will have to search elsewhere. There is a key problem with this book that is common to books of this type. Stated simply, each of these pieces was written at a different time, and thus holding them together is extremely difficult. Although unifying themes are present—and which are also at the heart of current debates among cultural critics—they are not prominent. Therefore, trying to ascertain Aronowitz's perspective or interest can be very frustrating. At times, this book appears to be directionless, or at least peripherally related to the concerns of most contemporary cultural critics.

Nonetheless, a persistent reader will find several points that are central to current cultural critiques. For example, Aronowitz seems to take a stand on the legitimacy of dualism. This controversy relates to whether subjectivity or *praxis* can be categorically removed from objectivity. He scoffs throughout this book at the attempt made by exponents of high art to rescue Cartesian dichotomies from the criticism levelled by postmodernists and other radicals. Yet a thorough examination of dualism is never forthcoming.

Related to the debate over dualism is the relationship between language and reality. In a manner similar to Lyotard, Aronowitz suggests that reality is mediated fully by language. "Works of fiction and other art forms", Aronowitz writes, "are signatures that indicate domains without representing them" (xi). And while discussing Bakhtin's view of speech, language is acknowledged to constitute the space-time dimension (154). Raymond Williams is also applauded for uniting language use and the social

world (170). But despite numerous examples, this topic is still approached only circuitously.

The link between objectivity and theory is handled a little more comprehensively. Reminiscent of Stanley Fish, Aronowitz apparently agrees with the postmodern position that truth is underpinned by ideology (43). While citing Robbe-Grillet, the practice of science is recognized to "constitute a 'reading' of reality" (65). Furthermore, in his evaluation of critical theory and Bachelard's philosophy of science, Aronowitz conveys the idea that scientific knowledge is inundated by theory and not valuefree (113–114). With respect to the objectivity of science, Aronowitz tends to side with those who argue that scientific knowledge rests on certain assumptions that are not necessarily universal.

Hardly any attention is devoted by Aronowitz to the issue of whether morality is reinforced by a reality *sui generis* or is dialogical. Mostly while discussing the work of Bakhtin and criticizing Habermas, Aronowitz seems to reject the Durkheimian claim that the centerpiece of moral order must be an ahistorical referent. According to followers of Durkheim, society will devolve into chaos unless an Archimedean point of available to support morality. Although Aronowitz does not find this prediction convincing, he fails to provide a serious assessment of dialogical morality.

In sum, Aronowitz's effort is interesting in places and convoluted in others. He is not very easy on his readers. So, anyone who wants to penetrate this book better be patient, and not expect immediate clarity or insights.

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Judith S. Modell, *Kinship with Strangers: Adoption and Interpretations of Kinship in American Culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994. \$35 hardcover.

"Mom, my teacher said I have to do a family tree." My adopted daughter's words triggered yet another bemused reverie on the questions that beset those affected by adoption: Which family? What is family? What does it mean to be kin? Such quandaries are not exclusive to members of the adoptive triad (birthparents,

adoptive parents, adopted individuals); they also create fodder for newscasters, talk show hosts, legal scholars, politicians, TV movie producers, and preachers (as witnessed by bitter and public custody fights, parent/child divorces, debates over surrogate motherhood and nontraditional reproduction, and the very public Dan Quayle vs. Murphy Brown exchanges on the core issues of family values).

Modell in her intriguing book, *Kinship with Strangers*, draws the conclusion that adoption is but a representation of the struggle of American society to shape and refine the boundaries of "family". According to Modell, adoption has been structured by law and policy to mirror a public conception of the perfect American family—and that family structure is based on genealogical bedrock: families belonged together because they shared the same blood line. By emphasizing the matching of parents and children, reissuing birth certificates in the adoptive parents' names, and legally treating adopted persons as if they were born into the adoptive family, public policy constructed modern American adoption to mimic genetic blood lines and to mirror the ideal nuclear family unit, complete with gender assumptions. Therein lies the paradox of American adoption, Modell contends: by reflecting the supposed importance of blood ties, adoption actually reinforces the notion that genetic kinship is paramount in defining "real family"—a conservative concept that many who believe in adoption would philosophically deny.

This book (which easily could have been called "The paradox of family") set me to thinking about other imponderables of kinship. What is the basis of the overwhelming human need to belong, to be part of some special group called "family"? Why do people want children, sometimes making the acquisition of children a primary life goal? In a society that gives generous lip-service to protecting vulnerable children, how can we determine what is really in the best interests of a child? Why do children, even children who have been mistreated by their parents, so frequently express a persistent, deep need to have relationships with—and approval of—their original parents? How do we protect the rights of children, of biological parents, and of substitute (including adoptive) parents? As our knowledge base of genetics

mushrooms, how do we make sense of the connections between genetic background and social environment?

Kinship offers no answers, nor was it intended to do so. The value of this book is that it highlights, using adoption as an interpretive model, the strange, even quirky ways, Americans view family relationships. After examining the background of adoption policy in the U.S., Modell considers the different experiences of relinquishing a child for adoption, of applying to be an adoptive parent, and of living as an adopted child. From that perspective she discusses the birthparents' and adoptees' experiences of searching for roots, while viewing the adoptive parents' reactions to searches. Through interviews and group meetings with birth parents, adoptive parents, adopted persons, and adoption social workers, Modell wades through these swamp waters, concluding that most of her interviewees experienced the adoption system as oppressive but felt powerless in that system. Even social workers, presumed to have power to disrupt and create legal parent/child relationships, feel impotent to foresee the future for any child and determine what "good family" means when the larger society and its laws have inconsistent guidelines for family integrity. One way some verbal members of the adoptive triad have begun to establish control is to develop support groups and take their stories to the public, with birth parents (the invisible but critical players in adoption) struggling to reconnect with their offspring, adopted people arguing for open records, and adoptive parents pleading for legal safeguards and recognition of their unusual commitment to parenting.

The operative word, here, is *some*: not all members of the adoptive triad, of course, are activists of change. Some people are either content with their adoptive situations, apathetic, or unable to fight for change. Such people are anonymous, largely hidden from researchers like Modell. Consequently, her sample reflects only the support, training, or change groups where she contacted subjects, all of whom seemed to have translated the experience of adoption into an odyssey of self-discovery and life-analysis. Nor does the sample (as Modell acknowledges) include many examples of the changing world of adoption: children considered unadoptable a few years ago (mentally or emotionally or physically handicapped, older, mixed-race, or sibling group children)

being placed with parents who were previously not candidates for adoption (foster parents, single persons, people with financial limitations, gays, individuals with health problems, etc.) with some degree of openness between all parties to the adoption. Modell contends that the move toward open adoption carries the potential of changing the foundation of American views of family, because of its dramatic departure from the accepted idea that biological, or *as-if* biological, ties are the truly critical components of family connectedness.

Who knows? Perhaps this society is moving toward Kahlil Gibran's admonition: "Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. They come through you but not from you. And though they are with you yet they belong not to you". Now that, like open adoption, is a truly revolutionary conception of kinship.

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Jonathan Turner. *Classical Sociological Theory: A Positivist's Perspective*. Chicago, IL: Nelson Hall, 1993. \$ 18.95 papercover.

This collection brings together twelve essays on classical sociological theory that were published between 1975 and 1990 and three new essays that were written to fill in the gaps. The essays are unified by one of the leading themes of Turner's writings: the claim that sociology can be a natural science that develops universal laws. To move the study of classical sociological theory in this direction, Turner adopts a presentist strategy for reading Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Marx, Simmel, Weber, Pareto and Mead. Concerns for context, authorial intent and biography are abandoned in favor of first extracting essential theoretical ideas and then presenting them formally as abstract laws and dynamic analytical models that can be tested. By systematically following this theoretical strategy, Turner wants to demonstrate that his way of reading classical sociological theory can contribute to culmination of knowledge and ultimately "make books of classical theory unnecessary" (p. ix).

The first two essays return to Comte's call for a natural science of sociology and set out the "dos" and "don'ts" of reading classical sociological theory from this positivist perspective. The next five essays apply these rules to Spencer and Durkheim. The discussions of Spencer's law of evolution, militant-industrial distinction, principles of growth, differentiation and adaptation and their empirical base, *Descriptive Sociology*, are intended to counter persistent misunderstandings of Spencer's work and its relevance for contemporary sociology. Turner's 1981 attempt to extract from *The Division of Labor in Society*, *Suicide* and *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* Durkheim's principles of social system differentiation, integration and disintegration is followed by a more recent attempt to capture the essence of Durkheim's theory first as a complex causal model that converts all of its concepts into variables and then as a series of formal laws of structural differentiation, cultural differentiation, sociocultural diversity and sociocultural integration. The fifth essay in this set reassesses the Spencer-Durkheim relationship and concludes that while they converged in their thinking on the causes of differentiation, Spencer and Durkheim offered divergent specifications of the process of differentiation.

The five essays on the sociology of conflict focus on the works of Marx, Weber, Simmel, Parson and the exchange theorists. Expressing Marx's ideas about conflict first as a set of propositions and then as an analytical model allows Turner to explain "where Marx went wrong" in his predictions about the transition from capitalism to communism as a specification error: in Marx's theory, positive curvilinear relationships between key variables are misspecified as positive relationships. Turning to Weber, Turner constructs a model of delegitimation and conflict that highlights the importance of feedback loops and a model of geopolitics complete with causal arrows. Through these and other essays in this set, Turner illustrates how his theoretical strategy allows sociologists (1) to clarify the classical foundations of contemporary sociology (e.g., by reassessing the influence of Marx and Simmel on the sociology of conflict), (2) to extract abstract principles that are still useful (e.g., by stating formally those principles of social system differentiation, political mobilization, political oscillation and political conflict set out by Spencer, Durkheim, Marx, Weber,

Simmel and Pareto that are useful in political sociology) and (3) to synthesize ideas to produce more powerful theory (e.g., by combining ideas from Marx, Weber and exchange theory into an analytical model that yields laws of conflict potential, conflict and conflict violence).

This emphasis on cumulating knowledge also informs Turner's positivistic refraining of Mead's sociology. Written to redirect attention to Mead's behaviorism and structuralism, the first essay locates Mead in the development of arguments for a micro-macro link. The second essay Bets out the core ideas of Mead's "social physics" through a series of abstract universal laws of action, human action, interaction and organization. Like Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Marx, Weber, Pareto and Simmel, then, Mead did develop abstract theoretical principles. But by taking the series of "detours from the early masters" that led them to ignore these theoretical principles, contemporary sociologists have failed to capitalize on the theoretical insights of classical sociological theory and, as a result, have failed to move sociology in the direction of a natural science that develops universal laws. For Turner the way around these detours is obvious: read classical sociological theory from a positivist perspective.

This collection covers much of the same ground as other studies of classical sociological theory. It is the way in which Turner approaches social theory and, therefore, his strategy for reading classical sociological theory that set it apart. As Turner acknowledges, both his positivism and his presentism are controversial. Readers who are familiar with the controversy about whether sociology can be a natural science will find in this book a clear statement of Turner's position and its implications for resolving the so-called historicist controversy. Those who are not familiar with these controversies will be unable to assess Turner's positivist perspective without reading this work against the backdrop of competing positions.

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- A. Paul Hare, Herbert H. Blumberg, Martin F. Davies, and M. Valerie Kent. *Small Group Research: A Handbook*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp., 1994. \$89.50 hardcover \$42.50 papercover.

Research on small-groups is located throughout a diffuse and diverse complexity of sources. For the individual interested in identifying and locating particular research, the task can be daunting. To address this problem, the authors provide a much needed resource by reviewing the small group literature and calling attention to available works. They accomplished this task by examining hundreds of articles, books, journals, and abstracts published between 1975 and 1988. No attempt was made to evaluate the research but rather to locate and catalogue what has been published.

The book is written as a companion piece to Paul Hare's earlier work, *Handbook of Small Group Research*, in which research on small groups was reviewed from its historical origins to the nineteen seventies. The two books in tandem provide students and experienced social scientists an excellent compendium of small group research from its early beginnings to the present.

Differentiating small groups from an aggregate or collection of individuals, small groups are defined by the authors as groups that have from 2 to 30 members and have face-to-face interaction. Characteristically, the group members have a set of shared beliefs, conform to a set of norms, have a specific goal or set of goals, and have acquired or developed resources and skills to be used for the activity.

The book is divided into six parts, each written by one of the author. Part I reviews factors that influence the physical situation of a group, such as physical space, seating arrangements, residential design, etc. Part II considers the influence of others on the individual, and the pressures of conformity. Parts III and IV deal with group structure and group process such as roles, leadership, means of communication and interactional patterns. Part VI addresses group performance characteristics, specifically conformity, conflict, and individual versus group productivity.

There is a brief section reviewing methods applicable to the study of small groups such as research design and experimental

methodology. Of particular value to the researcher is the index and 200 pages of citations referred to in the text by the authors.

The authors are to be applauded for doing what they proposed to do, that is to review the literature on small group research in an efficient and effective manner. The book, by design, is written as a reference work—not as a textbook, for individuals interested in group dynamics and process. Its easy to use and provides the reader uncomplicated access to a vast amount of information.

Researchers doing laboratory studies on small groups will find the comprehensive review of the literature a most enriching banquet with much to fill their scholarly plate. Sadly, practitioners leading groups, i.e., psychologist, social workers, and psychologist will not experience the same satisfaction. Rather, they will be frustrated that so little in the book relates to the helping process. Four pages in the appendix, titled “special types of groups”, address research on counseling-therapy groups, sensitivity training groups, education groups, and family groups.

In fairness to the authors, they make it clear that there was no systematic attempt to examine the research on other types of groups, and what is described as “special type groups” is a sample of the research. While it is hard to find fault with this excellent book, it is hoped that in future editions, the authors will put the same amount of energy into reviewing research on “special types of groups” that they put into reviewing laboratory group research.

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BOOKNOTES

Rand D. Conger and Glen H. Elder, *Families in Troubled Times: Adapting to Change in Rural America*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 1994. \$46.95 hardcover; \$23.95 papercover.

The economic upheavals of the 1980s had a pervasive impact on the lives of ordinary people in many parts of the country. Middle class flight and cutbacks in federal programs had negative consequences for inner city dwellers; the decline of traditional industries generated high levels of unemployment among blue collar workers; and in many rural areas, falling land and commodity prices hurt farming families that had worked the land for generations.

Concerned about the impact of deteriorating economic conditions on rural families, a group of sociologists at Iowa State University began in the mid-1980s to undertake research into the way economic decline affected family relationships and individual coping behavior. Their study, known as the Iowa Youth and Families Project, generated a wealth of information which will be of value to social scientists interested in knowing how families cope with the stresses induced by economic hardship. The project was based on theoretical perspectives drawn from life course studies and family sociology, and it utilized sophisticated research methodologies. Interviews were conducted with 451 families in the state. In addition to the interviews, video tapes and a variety of instruments and measurement scales were employed. Although the study identified significant differences in coping behavior between different families, it revealed that economic distress can have serious consequences on family relationships and especially the behavior of children. The authors conclude that in addition to economic support, counseling services are needed to assist rural families to cope with the economic crisis.

William G. Flannagan. *Contemporary Urban Sociology*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993. \$49.95 hardcover, \$14.95 papercover.

Urban sociology is a well established field within sociology. Urban sociologists have collected vast amounts of statistical data

about urban life, formulated spatial models about urban growth and extensively analyzed urban social problems. They have studied urban political processes and contributed to the development of policies and plans for improving urban conditions. They have also formulated interesting conceptual approaches to analyze urban phenomena. Over the last century, distinctive theoretical perspectives have evolved to frame discussions about urban reality and to facilitating understanding of its many complex forms..

Flannagan's book deals primarily with the theories which have emerged within urban sociology since the end of the 19th century. The book is not, as its title suggests, an introductory survey of urban sociology, but instead offers a comprehensive and sophisticated account of theoretical developments in the field. It is eminently readable, useful and up to date. The author not only reviews familiar theoretical approaches such as the Chicago School's urban ecology approach but covers recent debates on structuration theory and post-modernism as they affect urban sociology. The book is essential reading not only for sociologists but for anyone interested in urban issues. These issues can only be properly grasped if the conceptual ideas underlying urban phenomena are properly understood. Flannagan's helpful book will facilitate comprehension of these ideas.

Gordon Marshall (Ed.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. \$11.95 paperback.

OUP's well-deserved reputation for publishing high quality dictionaries is maintained in this publication which manages to cover a huge subject matter in just one manageable and reasonably priced volume. Although many dictionaries of sociology are now available, this one will be an invaluable aid not only to students but to academic and professional sociologists, and indeed the public at large. Compiled by a team of sociologists at the University of Essex in England, the dictionary not only contains entries on key sociological terms and concepts but happily strays into ancillary fields such as economics, politics, social policy and the other social sciences as well. Its coverage is huge but the entries are both inclusive and concise. The inclusion of biographic entries is particularly helpful. Indeed, it is remarkable that these entries not only list sociologists but economists, anthropologists

and philosophers as well. Although living personalities are excluded, the biographic entries provide excellent summaries of the lives and contributions of key thinkers who have helped shape the modern social sciences. The dictionary is an invaluable resource and should be on everyone's shelf.

Warren Schmaus, *Durkheim's Philosophy of Science and the Sociology of Knowledge: Creating an Intellectual Niche*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994. \$50 hardcover, \$24.95 papercover.

This book offers one of the most detailed analyses of Durkheim's contribution to scientific methodology which has yet been published. Schmaus shows how, in the wider context of social thought at the end of the 19th century, Durkheim's insistence on sociologism identified an intellectual niche which was to insure a permanent place for his ideas not only in the history of sociology but in the philosophy of science as well. Durkheim was the first to articulate a truly sociological perspective which located social phenomena in a realm quite distinct from the physical and psychological worlds. He was not only able to argue persuasively for a non-reductionist sociological approach, but by illustrating his methodology through the analysis of the division of labor, suicide, and religious forms, he convincingly supported his methodological arguments with case material.

The book has three parts which flow nicely in logical sequence, building on each preceding section. The first part begins by offering a perspective on Durkheim's ideas which emphasizes his contribution to the philosophy of science and the sociology of knowledge. Part II provides a detailed discussion of his methodological approach focusing on his conception of social facts, his philosophical perspective and his approach to explanation. The third part examines Durkheim's three major empirical works which elucidate his methodology. As noted earlier, these include his studies of the division of labor, suicide and the elementary forms of religious life. The final part concludes with an assessment of Durkheim's contribution to the sociology of knowledge.

This book makes a major contribution to understanding Durkheim's work. Although it would have benefited from more biographic detail, the book will be an essential resource for sociol-

ogists and others interested in understanding the epistemological foundations of contemporary social science.

Doug A. Timmer, D. Stanley Eitzen and Kathryn D. Talley, *Paths to Homelessness: Extreme Poverty and the Urban Housing Crisis*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994. \$55.00 hardcover, \$16.95 papercover.

Despite the widespread belief that homelessness occurs chiefly among alcoholics, the mentally ill and other special need groups, the authors of this informative book argue convincingly that it is ordinary working people who earn low incomes who are most of at risk of losing their homes. Their vulnerability is amply demonstrated in this book which traces the causes of homelessness to the profound economic and social changes taking place in American society.

While the authors recognize that personal factors do play a role in the complex etiology of homelessness, they show that homelessness is primarily a function of de-industrialization, changing labor market conditions, a lack of affordable low income housing, and a shrinking social service system that no longer cushions the impact of declining standards of living. To illustrate their arguments, the authors offer detailed ethnographies of nine homeless people and their families whose personal stories provide depressing support for the book's hypotheses. While statistical facts are also used to analyze homelessness, the narratives of the persons interviewed offer potent insights into the experiences of those who live on the margins of society.

Paths to Homelessness is based on extensive interviews undertaken in the late 1980s in different parts of the country. The interviews were conducted with people living in shelters, in streets and parks, and in abandoned houses in inner city slums. The author's 'unbounded' ethnographic approach facilitated the collection of firsthand information about what it is like to become homeless and to experience its effects. Each homeless person's story is related to wider sociological explanations and interpretations. As such, these accounts combine personal narrative and sociological analysis in ways that will be of interest to all social scientists working with deprived populations.

The authors are to be commended for producing an original and interesting book. While the section on the policy implications of their findings is sadly too brief, their analysis is incisive and compassionate. This book will make a major contribution to understanding both the causes and experience of homelessness in American today.

Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories and Political Significance*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994. \$60.00 hardcover. (Translated by Michael Robertson).

The Frankfurt School has exerted a profound influence on sociology and the social sciences generally over the last fifty years. Its founders and their successors are today recognized for their diverse contributions to social thought and for injecting into mainstream Anglo-American sociology new perspectives that challenged conventional approaches.

This scholarly volume traces the origins and subsequent history of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. It focuses on the writings of its leading personalities whose collective work later became known as the Frankfurt School. It also examines their key theoretical contributions. The chapters dealing with the School's early history in Germany and subsequent move to the United States during the Nazi period make for fascinating reading. They demonstrate how like-minded individuals can collaborate to create a new and powerful intellectual perspective with profound implications for social science endeavor. They also show how major theoretical innovations in turn spawn new ideas which modify the original approach and take it into new and intellectually stimulating directions. The author's account of the later history of the Institute from the time of its return to Frankfurt and the reformulation of critical theory by Habermas and others is equally arresting. The use of narrative is particularly effective.

However, Wiggershaus is not only concerned with historiography but with the analysis of the major theoretical contributions of the Frankfurt School. He shows how the original Marxist proclivities of the School's founders were augmented by psychoanalytical thought, by anti-authoritarianism and a pessimistic assessment of the supposed achievements of modernity. The account of Adorno's extensive contributions in so many fields is

comprehensive and incisive. Throughout, analysis is linked to narrative so that conceptual contributions are always traced to real people and events, facilitating comprehension and appreciation. While the history of the Institute and its leaders is compelling reading, the book also constitutes an important piece of sociological inquiry in its own right. It will take its place among other major commentaries of the history of the social sciences. It should be read not only as a definitive account of the Frankfurt School but as an interesting analysis of the production of knowledge.

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS
(Revised June, 1995)

JSSW welcomes a broad range of articles which analyze social welfare Institutions, policies, or problems from a social scientific perspective or otherwise attempt to bridge the gap between social science theory and social work practice.

Submission Process. Submit manuscripts to Gary Mathews, School of Social Work, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 49008. Send *three* copies together with an abstract of approximately 100 words. Since manuscripts are not returned by reviewers to the editorial office, the editorial office cannot return them to the authors. Submission certifies that it is an original article and that it has not been published nor is being considered for publication elsewhere.

Reviewing normally takes 120 days.

Preparation. Articles should be typed, doublespaced (including the abstract, indented material, footnotes, references, and tables) on 8½ x 11 inch white bond paper with one inch margins on all sides.

Anonymous Review. To facilitate anonymous review, please keep identifying information out of the manuscript. *Only the title* should appear on the first page. Attach cover pages that contain the title, authors, affiliations, date of submission, mailing address, telephone number and any statements of credit or research support.

Style. Overall style should conform to that found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Fourth Edition, 1994. Use in-text citations (Reich, 1983), (Reich, 1983, p. 5). The use of footnotes in the text is discouraged. If footnotes are essential, include them on a separate sheet after the last page of the references. The use of italics or quotation marks for emphasis is discouraged. Words should be underlined only when it is intended that they be typeset in italics.

Gender and Disability Stereotypes. Please use gender neutral phrasing. Use plural pronouns and truly generic nouns ("labor force" instead of "manpower"). When dealing with disabilities, avoid making people synonymous with the disability they have ("employees with visual impairments" rather than "the blind"). Don't magnify the disabling condition ("wheelchair user" rather than "confined to a wheelchair"). For further suggestions see the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* or *Guide to Non-Sexist Language and Visuals*, University of Wisconsin-Extension.

BOOK REVIEWS

Books for review should be sent to James Midgley, Office of Research and Economic Development, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803.

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