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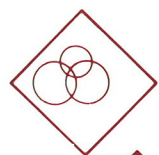
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Work-based Welfare as a Ritual: Understanding Marginalization in Post-Independence Lithuania

ARUNAS JUSKA AND RICHARD POZZUTO

East Carolina University

The paper analyzes the functioning of the newly created labor exchange in post-Soviet Lithuania. It is argued that the labor exchange in post-Soviet Lithuania operates under the conditions of a structural contradiction: welfare services are designed to reintegrate unemployed into the labor force under the conditions of (a) increasing competitiveness of the labor markets and (b) a rapid decline of employment within the Lithuanian economy. As a result, labor redundancy is produced which consists predominantly of low skill/education individuals. Because the economy is unable to generate employment, job searches for this segment of the population are transformed into a highly bureaucratized and ritualized activities directed and supervised by the labor exchange. The purpose of the activities is to impose social order and control over those marginalized from the labor force via the creation of the divisions between deserving and undeserving poor. Foucault's theory of governmentality is used to examine two types of rituals employed by the labor exchange: individual and group based. The effectiveness of the labor exchange as a mechanism of social control and the impact the labor exchange has on the marginalization of some categories of the unemployed are discussed.

Key words: *work-based welfare, marginalization, Lithuania, ritual*

Introduction

In the former Soviet Union social policy was a part of the industrial policy. Work was not only guaranteed by the constitution but also was an obligation. Universal social insurance was implemented by the state and a wide range of social services and fringe benefits were provided by state-owned enterprises.

While the system had numerous drawbacks and inefficiencies, it functioned reasonably well in providing basic social security of the population (Emigh and Szelényi 2001; Rein et al. 1997; Standing 1996).

Post-independence reforms, driven by neo-liberal ideological commitments and fiscal constraints imposed by international organizations (International Monetary Fund, World Bank, European Union) introduced a competitive labor market in the region. In addition, privatized enterprises ceased to provide social services to employees. Unemployment, poverty and mortality rates increased alarmingly (United Nations Development Program 1999; Grinspun 2001). In response welfare reforms were initiated. While not identical, all post-socialist countries restructured their universalistic social insurance systems into "residual social nets" providing varying degrees of coverage. The goals of the reform were to (a) provide temporary relief during the economic transition and (b) support the development of a competitive labor market (Collier 1999; Esping-Andersen 1996; Genov 1998; Pestoff 1995).

Especially representative of this trend was the creation of unemployment benefits, which did not exist during the Soviet period. By the late 1990's newly created unemployment services increasingly resembled *workfare*, which required conducting both means tests and behavioral tests for eligibility. Critics asserted that instead of integrating the unemployed into the workforce, the newly created restrictive welfare provisions themselves were becoming a tool for controlling the lives of the poor by creating new social divisions. Of these, the division of deserving and undeserving poor was most prominent (Lorenz 1999; Scherr 1999; Standing 1996).

In this paper we argue that the labor exchange in post-socialist Lithuania, in addition to integrating some unemployed into the labor force, is also increasingly used as a means to control the excluded and/or marginalized individuals from the labor force. This is done by subjecting the labor exchange clients to a variety of disciplinary mechanisms, which differentiates clients into the social categories of the deserving and undeserving poor. Unemployed males with low skills and limited education are especially targeted for surveillance. Declining employment and increasing

competitiveness of the labor markets in Lithuania have made many individuals in this socio-demographic group "redundant". Because the economy is unable to generate employment, the search for non-existing jobs for low skills and education individuals is transformed into a highly bureaucratized and ritualized activities directed and supervised by the labor exchange.

For the purpose of analysis we will use the notion of a bureaucratic ritual derived from Foucault's theory of governmentality (Foucault 1991; also see Burchell et al. 1991) to examine how those excluded or withdrawn from the labor market, an economic characterization, are classified by the labor exchange into deserving or undeserving poor, a moral characterization. This translation of economic characteristics into moral distinctions requires an individual to engage, for long periods of time, in high intensity ritualistic activities mandated by the labor exchange. Unsatisfactory performances in rituals, scripted by the labor exchange, in terms of intensity and kind of activities prescribed such as not showing/being late for verification of unemployment status, unsatisfactory levels of activism in searching for job, declining jobs or training that is being offered relegates individuals to the status of undeserving poor.

The differentiation into deserving and undeserving poor is a very complex and highly contested process. The labor exchange practices are only one of the factors implicated in the differentiation. Nevertheless, a critical analysis of the labor exchange policies and practices are crucial since post-socialist societies are beginning to confront problems associated with a post-socialist "underclass" (Emigh and Szelényi 2001; Gassmann 2000; Genov 1998; Warzywoda-Kruszynska 1999).

The paper is based on ethnographic data collected during the summer of 2001 to investigate the workings of the Klaipeda labor exchange in Lithuania. A series of interviews with the personnel of the Klaipeda social services department and the labor exchange officers were conducted to investigate their decision-making process concerning unemployment benefits. Special attention was paid to young males, 18–35 years of age, since this demographic group has disproportionate rates of unemployment and socially disruptive behavior. Job-training sessions for young individuals organized by the labor exchange were also observed. In addition

the members of the Klaipeda police force were interviewed to investigate the links between male unemployment and criminal behavior. Finally, in depth interviews with 20 long-term unemployed and semi-homeless males were conducted. This social group was selected in order to investigate the social trajectory leading to the marginalization and exclusion of individuals, i.e., to the formation of the "undeserving poor."

Theoretical Considerations: Social Differentiation and Classification of the Poor

From a theoretical point of view the emerging divisions between poor/underclass, deserving/undeserving poor, employed/unemployed constitute a problem of the relationship between social stratification and social categorization. Leaving "culture of poverty" explanations that focus on behavioral deficiencies of the poor aside (Lewis 1969), two types of approaches to the relationship between social stratification and classifications can be discerned. Social stratification can be viewed as independent from the classifications used in defining unemployment, poverty, and the poor. This assumes poverty to be an objective category produced by a combination of economic deprivation (Wilson 1978; 1987; Wright 1994) and exclusion resulting from disintegration of social relations within primary or secondary social groups (Andersen and Kempen 2001; Strobel 1996; Tosi 1996).

Alternatively, it can be argued that classifications used to characterize the poor are directly implicated in the production of social groups. Such an approach falls within the social constructivist perspective and interprets emerging divisions among the poor as an outcome of classificatory struggles within a society.

This paper draws upon the social construction of poverty approaches and contends that social differences among the poor emerge in a process of "classificatory struggles in shaping the nature, experience, and trajectory of poverty" (Stewart 2001, p. 191). These struggles result in the creation, imposition, maintenance, and change of divisions and distinctions between employed/unemployed, deserving/undeserving poor, rich/poor, etc. (see Bauman 1998; Handler and Hasenfeld 1991). If deserving and undeserving poor are interpreted as relational categories, their

definitions are bound to change and shift. These shifts can occur for a variety of reasons, such as formation or decline of different coalitions interested in policies regarding the poor, changes in economic situation in the country, dissemination of media reports on spectacular crimes being committed by the poor, or popularization of stories on heartbreaking injustices befall on people living in poverty. The pressure of international organizations to adopt or modify various policies also influences definitions of social categories.

Two approaches within social constructivist perspective concerning classifications of the poor can be discerned. The first is derived from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Bourdieu argues that class stratification in contemporary societies is reproduced in a process of classificatory struggles occurring within multiple and relatively independent "fields," such as politics, education, culture, etc. Classificatory struggles have as their ultimate target the formation, reproduction and change of what Bourdieu identifies as a "habitus" of an individual, i.e., the internalized set of predispositions that operate at a subconscious level. For Bourdieu classificatory struggles simultaneously reproduce and legitimate patterns of class stratification. Once internalized into habitus, class based classifications are perceived by individuals as "natural." Bourdieu's approach was especially influential in contributing to a critique of racialization and/or feminization of poverty, i.e., in critiquing the understanding of poverty as produced by biological or inherent characteristics of minority individuals such as low intelligence and high fertility rates (Emigh and Szelenyi 2001; Omi and Winant 1994).

Despite important contribution to understanding the relationships between classificatory struggles and social stratification, there are significant problems with Bourdieu's theory and its derivatives. The most important among them is the failure to spell out the workings of the mechanisms by which some of the classifications are internalized into habitus and become perceived as "natural", while others are not (see Jenkins 1992).

Most recently, there has been an increased interest in Foucault's theory of governmentality (a neologism for governmental rationality) in analyzing poverty (Foucault 1991; also see Burchell

et al. 1991). Numerous studies of poverty, policy and discourses on poverty were conducted using Foucault's notion of governmentality (Dean 1999; Donzelot and Hurley 1997; Knowles 1999; Procacci 1998). This occurred, in part, because Foucault, unlike Bourdieu, outlined the workings of the mechanisms by which classificatory systems are translated into social distinctions. He refers to these mechanisms as "disciplines" and/or "professional gaze."

Foucault argued that in contemporary societies control and order are produced not by repression or exclusion, but by focusing on the governing of whole populations. Instead of repression, governing the self-government of individuals, i.e. managing their "conduct of the conduct" increasingly creates order in the modern societies. From this perspective divisions between deserving/undeserving poor are produced to shape or discipline the behavior of the poor and unemployed.

Governmentality of the poor is realized by a set of micro mechanisms of power that are simultaneously totalizing and individualizing. In *Discipline and Punish* (1979) Foucault used the metaphor of the panopticon to suggest how various forms of deviance are controlled through surveillance. Foucault borrowed the notion of panopticon (from Greek, *pan-* all and *optikon* for seeing) from English philosopher Jeremy Bentham who proposed a design for a new type of prison allowing the inspector to see each of the prisoners at all times, without himself being seen (Foucault 1979, pp. 200–228).

On a societal level the disciplinary panopticon acts as a normalizing mechanism of whole populations. Normality may be defined by divides between obese/not obese, sane/insane (Foucault 1973), homosexual/heterosexual (Foucault 1978), deviant/normal, healthy/sick (Foucault 1975), and deserving/undeserving poor.

Panopticon functions through what Foucault calls "the power-knowledge" nexus. Knowledge on deviation of an individual from the norm is produced through surveillance and observation. It is then used in various medical, pedagogical, psychological, penal, or social work interventions to make individual "normal" (sane, slim, healthy, deserving social welfare, etc.) The outcome of the normalization process is the production of a social order through the imposition of social control over the populations in

question by the creation, maintaining, imposing and negotiating, legitimizing and de-legitimizing old and new social divides.

The Labor Exchange as a Disciplinary Institution

Following Foucault's perspective the newly established labor exchange can be seen as a disciplinary institution regulating behavior of its clients by distinguishing between the deserving and undeserving unemployed. The emphasis on categorization and differentiation of the unemployed by the labor exchange has increased since the early 1990s when The Law on the Employment of Population was adopted. In 1993 unemployment in Lithuania was 4.4% with 30% of the unemployed receiving unemployment benefits (Statistikos Departamentas 2000, p. 21). By January 2002 unemployment in Lithuania increased to 13.1% with only 13% of the unemployed receiving unemployment compensation (Respublikine Darbo Birza 2002a).

Especially hard hit were low and unskilled workers who during Soviet times were employed in manufacturing industries. In 1999 their unemployment rate reached 34.1% (Statistikos Departamentas 2000, p. 20). Simultaneously their eligibility for already meager unemployment benefits which varied from 135 to 259 *Litas* a month (1 Lt = \$.25) continued to decline as the number of long term unemployed among them continued to rise. By 2001 the proportion of long term unemployed among those registered at the labor exchange reached 33.3% (Respublikine Darbo Birza 2002b, p. 4). The situation for the low skill and unskilled workers will continue to deteriorate since the demand for their labor is continuing to decline. In 1999 the country's labor exchange on any particular day had identified about 2,000 job openings. Approximately 5% of these jobs were for unskilled and elementary occupations. The rest, 95%, required vocational education (Statistikos Departamentas 2000, p. 22).

The restructuring of the Lithuanian economy continues to generate labor redundancies. In 1989, 1.9 million or 91% of those of employment age (18–65) were employed. By 2000 employment declined to 1.6 million, about 74% of the labor force. Despite growing labor redundancies, the activities the labor exchange remain almost exclusively focused on re-integrating the unemployed into the labor force. Given the current conditions, integrating all

unemployed, especially those with low education and limited skills, into the labor force is unrealizable. It is estimated that by balancing the labor demand and supply the labor exchange can reduce unemployment in the country by about 1% (Respublikine Darbo Birza 2002b, p.7). Given the conditions of growing labor redundancies, the search for non-existing jobs, as directed and supervised by the labor exchange, acquires a highly ritualized bureaucratic character.

The labor exchange attempts to supervise and control individuals marginalized from the laboring population by a combination of two types of measures. One is the provision of incentives to the unemployed to participate in ritualistic search of jobs, i.e., welfare benefits. The other is punishment via stigmatization and removal of welfare benefits for those who avoid engaging in such activities. The legitimacy of the moral screening and categorizing of unemployed individuals by the labor exchange is based on the occurrence that a majority of individuals registered at the exchange do find an employment, though many of them only temporary. In 2001 the labor exchange registered 224 thousand unemployed and offered them 135 thousand jobs. Of these, 35% were temporary positions (Respublikine Darbo Birza 2002a, p. 4–5). This leaves tens of thousands of unemployed with very little chance of obtaining, within the near future, full-time employment in the formal economy.

Such a ritualistic social service model in which individuals need to continuously demonstrate engagement in a search for non-existing jobs de-politicizes and individualizes what is essentially a societal problem. What starts as a structural issue, fitting workers to available positions, almost unnoticeably is re-framed into the “moral screening” of the clients. From the point of view of the labor exchange, finding or failing to find a job becomes a criteria for sorting individuals into deserving and undeserving unemployed.

Classifying Unemployed:

Active, Passive and Formal Joblessness

The labor exchange officials interviewed agreed on the types of clients they served. They can be called ‘active’, ‘passive’, and

'formally unemployed' (*aktyvūs, pasyvūs, ir formalūs bedarbiai* in Lith.; also see Pocius 2002; Sabajevaite 1999, pp. 131–132). The active are deserving, the passive undeserving, and the formally unemployed have qualities of both the deserving and undeserving. The classification is informal and implicit. The criteria for assigning individuals to one or another category may not coincide with the legal or administrative definitions.

The active unemployed were those who "really want to find a job and who usually do not have much trouble in finding it" (Interview June 5, 2001). They have lost their jobs through no fault of their own or by circumstances over which the individual has no control. Estimates of the active unemployed ranged from 25% to about 35% of those registered at the labor exchange (see also Pocius 2002, p. 8). These are individuals who were willing to work any type of job as well as participate in professional and educational training offered by the labor exchange. Active unemployed treated the job search as primarily their personal responsibility. For them the labor exchange was one among several resources that were used in the search for employment.

In comparison the category of passive unemployed was constituted from individuals who failed to find employment either because of a chronic deficit of interest or inappropriate behavior. To be categorized as 'passive' at the labor exchange also meant to be a 'freeloader' (*išlaikytinis* Lith.). According to some estimates the passive unemployed constitute about 40% of those registered at the labor exchange. Unlike active unemployed, passive ones often refused to be employed in public works projects because of very low wages and unsatisfactory working conditions. They also expressed little interest in educational or professional training programs offered through the labor exchange.

At the same time, passive unemployed rejected claims that they are jobless because of their moral failures, lack of initiative, or "choosiness." They also tended to have more confrontational attitudes toward the labor exchange authorities. They asserted that it is the responsibility of the labor exchange officers to find employment for them and often blamed their unemployment on the lousy job the labor exchange is doing. As one of our respondents asserted, "What are they (the labor exchange officers) doing in these offices and why are they being paid if they cannot

find jobs for us?" In response, the labor exchange officers were complaining, "Some of them are coming to the labor exchange and demanding jobs. Where could we get jobs for them? Can't they see that we don't own factories or shops! . . . Those who shout most are usually the first to decline the jobs offered to them." According to the officials interviewed, about one in three refuses a job offer due to low wages or poor working conditions and therefore becomes ineligible for unemployment benefits.

Being a "freeloader" had gender specific connotations. Passive unemployed males tended to contribute significantly less to the maintenance of their households than did women. In addition unemployed males were more often supported by the other family members and tended to engage more frequently in various kinds of asocial behavior than other unemployed groups. Alcohol and drug abuse, violence, and association with the marginal populations such as vagabonds, alcoholics, homeless, etc. was more common for passive unemployed. Younger unemployed males were very often included in this category:

Sometimes I talk to the mothers who bring their sons to the labor exchange and ask or even demand that we find jobs for their sons. These women are very frustrated. They are fed up with supporting their grown up and healthy sons who do not work for months and months and are spending their days drinking, hanging in the streets, or watching TV. Some of women are in tears. They simply don't know what to do with their sons. These so called "boys" would stand behind their mothers silently with their heads turned down. . . . What we could offer if they don't have education or vocational skills? Even if we send them to the employees, many of them don't show up for the interviews or refuse our offers because they consider wages to be very low or working conditions bad. (Interview with the labor exchange officer, June 13th, 2001).

Unlike passive unemployed, the majority of formally unemployed did not come to the labor exchange asking officers to help them to find jobs. Most of them were already employed in an informal economy. Even more importantly, most were not considered 'freeloaders' since they used their income to support their families. They were also less inclined to engage in asocial patterns of behavior. Instead, the formally unemployed registered at the labor exchange primarily to receive written certifications (Lith.

pažymas) that made them eligible for supplemental wages, utility payments, and health insurance.

They (formal unemployed) are here mostly for the certificates. They do not need jobs. Most of them are working few jobs already or are engaging in a small business on the side—in construction, house and office cleaning, re-selling wares in the country market (*turgus* Lith.) Who could blame them? Most of what we can offer are minimal pay jobs. How one could feed the family on 420 Litas per month? Times are very hard now, good jobs are very scarce and hard to come by (Interview with the labor exchange officer, June 13th, 2001).

The labor exchange officials suggested that from 20 to 40% of those receiving unemployment benefits are simultaneously working without a labor agreement and, therefore, not paying taxes (see Pilypiene 2001; Serafinas 2002).

Although the formally unemployed were abusing the welfare system, the labor exchange officials did not harshly judge them. Several factors may explain this. First, unlike passive ones, formally unemployed did not represent a threat to the social order. They remained integrated within mainstream society. Second, abusing the welfare system in post-independence Lithuania has not yet acquired a connotation of being morally or ethically antithetical despite growing reports in mass media about actual and/or alleged abuses of welfare clients. During the Soviet era cheating the state, mostly through various forms of pilfering, was common. Those who managed to use their positions and connections to improve their material well-being were even admired for their capacities to wangle the state (*kombinuoti*). The attitude that cheating the state is a semi-legitimate activity remains widespread. At the same time, the Soviet state did provide, almost as an inborn right of a citizenship, all the social services that the formal unemployed were signing to receive. The Soviet state also ensured full employment. It is not surprising that the unemployed continued demand the provisions to which they were accustomed.

Principles of Classification of Unemployed: Social Control versus Integration into the Labor Market

The issue is how these three categories of unemployed (active, formal and passive) are derived. According to the labor exchange

officials this type of classification characterizes attitudes and behavior regarding employment in the formal labor market:

How do we evaluate them? By what they are doing to find an employment. Many of those who lost their jobs instead of doing something about it tend only to complain and to seek welfare provisions and compensations. Of course it is easier to complain than to persistently search for a new job or to change one's vocational qualifications. Increasingly I am encountering clients who refuse to get involved in any of our programs, be it educational or professional or any other type. They simply don't want to be bothered or do anything. I am skeptical when I hear my long term unemployed clients saying that they want jobs, because many of them refuse to take them when jobs are offered. Do they really want to have a job? Some of them even get disappointed when the job offer is made" (Interview June 20, 2002).

However, we see such classifications as only partially derived from the relationship of the unemployed with the formal labor market. Perhaps even more important in the production of such classifications is the function of imposing social control and order on those marginalized from the labor force. In other words, the classifications differentiate the unemployed according to the degree of dangerousness to the social order, or the degree to which they accepted the legitimacy of the new system.

For example, our interviews with semi-homeless unemployed men suggest that they are as likely to work and earn money, in the informal economy, as those described by the labor officials as formal unemployed. Income claimed in the interview by this group was close to and often very exceeded the maximum unemployment compensation of 215 Lt. Similar levels of income among the long term unemployed were also found by the other studies carried out in Lithuania (see Pajuodienė 2002). It seems there is little empirical evidence to categorize passive unemployed as "freeloaders," while categorizing formally employed as "providers." Instead, those characterized as passive had more characteristics of "socially marginal" individuals (*paribio žmonės* Lith.) and more frequent contact with other socially marginal individuals such as homeless, vagabonds, or addicts. In other words, the formal unemployed differed from the passive unemployed according to the degree of marginalization from mainstream

society. This marginalization was viewed as indicating a greater probability of engaging in asocial behaviors.

Job Search Rituals

For analytical purposes the bureaucratic rituals used at the labor exchange to classify unemployed can be subdivided into two types: formal and informal. Informal rituals consist mostly of face-to-face interactions occurring between a labor exchange officer and his/her client. As the client is surveyed and questioned by an officer, the instrumental characteristics of the labor search activities such as intensity and level of engagement are transformed into statements about the moral worth of the individual. Passivity, idleness of an unemployed individual within an institutional setting such as the labor exchange offices or in the other public places became indications of the moral failure.

From the moment the client enters the labor exchange s/he must be active, moving, and engaged. The labor exchange offices and halls represent "resources" and the unemployed need to be active in searching for employment. Individuals need to read all the announcements posted on the billboards, search computer listings, knock on officers' doors, inquire about availability of jobs, etc. These activities can be accomplished rather quickly. Therefore the labor exchange officers are constantly looking for the new kinds of ritualized activities to provide 'opportunities' to actively seek employment.

For example, during the fieldwork a new billboard was installed in the labor exchange where clients could post their own job advertisements. The usefulness of the billboard in terms of job searching was marginal. Employee listings with extensive descriptions of clients were available electronically via the web, or by contacting the labor exchange. Nevertheless, in training sessions officers would continuously ask their audiences if they had noticed a new billboard in the labor exchange lobby and if, perhaps, anyone had actually posted their advertisement on it. Very few did. The officers interpreted this as a silent indication that the audience itself was in part to blame for their unemployment.

After checking most of the possible sources at the labor exchange for information about employment, clients still had time that needed to be filled with some kind of activities. Just to show

up at the labor exchange and then to immediately leave meant that the individual had little interest in employment. Having little to do and being morally obligated not to leave the building, individuals would inevitably become idle and passive. This contrasted sharply with the overworked, and always busy labor exchange officials. In the Klaipėda labor exchange one full time employee had a caseload of 700.

The passivity of clients within the free, state provided and "resource" infused environment was indicative of moral deficiencies. Passivity implicitly suggested that they, the unemployed, deserve to be unemployed if they did not even have the motivation to use the resources. The phrase "free of charge" (*naudotis nemokamai* Lith.) was emphasized during all the training sessions for unemployed. The labor exchange officers viewed the resources as gifts that were provided by the taxpayers. This morally obligated the unemployed to use them. Not using the resources, the billboards, a computer, phone lines, was interpreted as a failure to keep up the reciprocal obligation; a failure to repay society. This, in turn, suggested that the unemployed should blame themselves for their lack of employment.

The second feature of the informal rituals is their highly individualistic or atomizing character. Informal rituals are intended to break up the groups and isolate individuals because any group of unemployed outside bureaucratic supervision is viewed with suspicion, as a threat to public safety and order. Very often small groups of unemployed men were observed congregating in or near the labor exchange office building. Welfare officials were compassionate and genuinely willing to help professionals, however, as soon as they saw a group of unemployed males congregating in public spaces their reactions tended to change to suspicion. Attitudes of the passers by were much more hostile with often noticeable undertones of scorn to congregating unemployed. Groups of unemployed males were seen as the "other," the "them," a potential subversion and threat to the social order. Sensing, that they are scorned and, at the same time, feared, these men flaunted "proper" behavior required in public places by sitting or even laying on the lawn in front of the labor exchange building. Thus, the divide between "us" and the marginalized was evolving.

The supervision of job search rituals occurred not only in institutional settings. Clients were also monitored by direct contact, usually over the phone. The most important feature of the surveillance is that the client is provided no information regarding when the labor exchange will seek contact. It can be the same day, the next day, a week, two weeks or even later. S/he can be called any time during the day. The labor exchange assumes that since the individual is unemployed he/she can be contacted anytime. They should be available immediately upon being called for interviews or work. This mode of communication has the character of an unannounced check-up. It was used not only to convey information to the client, but also as a mechanism of control. Failing to be on the spot when called was interpreted as a moral failure and this failure accounts for his or her inability to find a job.

The power to check clients at any time without prior arrangements indicates a highly asymmetrical relationship between the labor exchange office and its clients. All the individuals interviewed, without exception, deeply resented and resisted this type of dependency. In addition, such supervision had an atomizing effect. Being put into position of wait without knowing when the contact will be made precluded individuals from engaging in other types of social interactions thus contributing to a growing social isolation. The following is a typical story:

I was sent by the labor exchange to a seaport where they were looking for workers to clean hulls of the ships. When I arrive the next morning to the seaport, the foreman sees me and is surprised as if I fell from the sky. "Who sent you? We do not need people to clean the hulls. We need welders and painters right now." I went back to the labor exchange and asked the inspector what should I do? The inspector told me he will needs to clarify the situation and that he will call me. A whole week gone by, but no one called. I took a bus to the countryside to look for jobs on farms. When I returned back, my father said that someone from the labor exchange and from the shipping company had called me. I arrived at the shipping company and they said to me "We will not hire you. You are not a reliable person on whom we can depend." I said, "Wait a minute. I can't just sit on the phone and wait for your call. I need to feed myself. During previous week you were giving me rounds as if I was the dog and I still did not get a job. I even went to the polyclinic and

paid to get my health certificate to be eligible to work inside ships." I went back to the labor exchange. The clerk said that in order to receive unemployment payment, I need to bring the labor contract. I went back to the shipping company and asked them giving me a labor contract so I could get an unemployment payment. At the shipping company they said to me, "What kind of a labor contract do you want from us if you have not worked even for a day?" (31 years old)

In sum, institutionally supervised waiting can be considered as a mechanism of control as well as a surrogate job that unemployed should perform in order to qualify for the unemployment benefits. How long does one need to wait? According to the labor exchange report, the goal, by the end of 2002, is "to offer to all newly registered unemployed the appropriate labor market development measures within 1 year, while for young unemployed (25 years of age or younger) within 6 months" (Respublikine Darbo Birza 2002b, p.7)

Formalized Job Search Rituals

Unlike informal rituals, the final result of the formal rituals was an official evaluation or "the sentence." The evaluation assigned the individual to the category of eligible or non-eligible for assistance. Foucault (Foucault 1979) called these formal rituals 'examinations'. During examinations the rank or status was officially conferred, i.e., of continued support, discontinued support, or change in the form of support. Unlike informal rituals that were primarily personalized performances in public spaces, formal rituals tended to be a mixture of individual and group activities directly supervised by the labor exchange officers.

Group-training sessions, which were designed to hone the job search skills of the unemployed, had distinct features of a ritual. Participants expressed little interest in the content of the training sessions. Instead, participation represented a public procedure conferring upon the trainees a status of legitimately unemployed and therefore eligible for unemployment benefits.

In one group-training session an author found himself in the curious situation of being the only one in the classroom taking notes. During a 45-minute long session not even one of the sixteen individuals present wrote down any information provided by

the officer regarding resources, contacts or procedures that could potentially increase the likelihood of finding an employment. By the end of the presentation young males who were sitting in the back of the classroom started to talk to each other almost completely ignoring the presenter. The presentation was followed by brief interviews by the labor exchange officers.

After the training session the officer explained that this is a typical reaction of her clients. The majority of them were present in the training session not so much to acquire information or develop job search skills but to get official paperwork processed so that they would be eligible for welfare benefits. "You know, most of them are here for certificates anyway, therefore they are not much interested in what I have to say. They just want me to sign on in their files and to leave." (Interview June 20th, 2002).

Conclusions

In this paper we argued that we should pay closer attention to the impact that welfare reforms have on the production of social distinctions and divisions in post-socialist Lithuania. There is growing evidence that unemployment services are increasingly implicated in the creation, reproduction and legitimization of an infamous division so familiar to the Western societies, deserving and undeserving poor. We argue that an analytical distinction needs to be made between two functions that the labor exchange currently performs. First, the labor exchange is engaged in a vital and urgently needed mediation between the demands of the labor market and individuals seeking employment. It trains, facilitates, and supports job searches for tens of thousands of people and in this way contributes significantly to the country's economic development.

The second function, which we see as a very problematic, refers to the disciplining and controlling of what economists call "redundant labor." Market reforms in post-independence Lithuania led to the decline in employment and especially in the demand for low skill and minimally educated labor. Wages paid for such labor also decreased dramatically as the state withdrew significant food and housing subsidies provided during the Soviet period. As a result, in 2001 the income of about 11.6% of the full

time employees in the country was below poverty level (Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas 2002a, p.88). This, in turn, generates disincentives to work. Almost all the individuals interviewed for this project claimed they could earn much more than the minimum wage "on the street," usually by hustling. The combination of high unemployment and the low wage strategy is fostering the development of a new kind of chronically impoverished post-industrial proletariat in Lithuania.

Despite the continuous decline in employment and incentives for lower tier jobs, the labor exchange organizes its activities almost exclusively to motivate and, if needed, to induce the unemployed to continually look for non-existing jobs. Since no jobs are available, the search becomes an end in itself. It becomes a highly ritualized bureaucratic procedure that does more to supervise and discipline than to facilitate the search for employment. The status of "active" or "deserving" is constructed as a set of bureaucratic practices in which the individual continuously needs to engage in order to forestall exclusion from the mainstream society.

Not surprising, divisions into deserving and undeserving poor were highly contested. Clients actively resisted attempts by the institution to assign responsibility for unemployment to their moral failures. Furthermore, as we have shown, the categories of passive and active unemployed, as they were constructed by the labor exchange officials, had as much to do with the individual characteristics of the clients, as with the clients' attitudes and demands placed of the labor exchange. Deemed passive or undeserving usually were those who placed demands on the labor exchange to find jobs for them and questioned the legitimacy of the institution. Perhaps more important, the labor exchange was criticized as much for its ineffectiveness as for humiliating its clients.

The effectiveness of the labor exchange as a mechanism of control was limited by the constant bargaining of "passive" and "formal" clients with the state for employment and various welfare provisions. Unlike in the Soviet era, when withdrawal from a bureaucratically regulated labor force was criminalized, engagement in the labor exchange rituals in post-independence Lithuania is voluntary. There were few penalties associated with a withdrawal from the labor exchange or refusal to comply with

bureaucratic procedures except losing eligibility for unemployment benefits. Instead of coercion, in post-independence Lithuania, control over the unemployed was shifting to the creation and management of socially and culturally recognized divisions between deserving and undeserving unemployed.

Despite criticism, caution needs to be exercised in evaluating the role that the labor exchange is playing in assigning and legitimizing categories of deserving and undeserving unemployed. Besides the labor exchange, many other institutions including the system of education and housing authorities are also implicated in re/production of the new patterns of exclusion and marginalization. Furthermore, demands for stricter imposition of workfare on the poor administered through the labor exchange are reflective of the general cultural changes in post-independence Lithuania during the later 1990s. This shift is expressed in the way problems of poverty are currently treated in the country's mass media. Since the mid 1990s the issue of the long-term unemployed, which was previously viewed as temporary problem of a transitional economy, was recast into a discourse about lifestyle choices made by economically marginalized populations (Dargis 2000; Skucaite 2001).

However, legitimating the existence of "undeserving unemployed," to which the labor exchange contributes, does little to mitigate one of the most important problems that Lithuanian society is currently confronting. How is society to maintain social order given growing strata of socially and economically marginalized? How can the reproduction of this stratum be contained before a permanent underclass is formed?

Our research suggests that there is a need to increase the awareness of the social welfare practitioners in exclusionary strategies implicit in the actions and policies of helping agencies. In conditions of labor redundancy generated by the competitive markets, social integration can also be sought in reconceptualization of citizenship as well as in redefinition of a productive work. Wage-based notions of citizenship common to a neo-liberal perspective need to be criticized and made more inclusive. There is a growing movement in Europe to recognize the problem of poverty as a problem of social exclusion (Saraceno 2001).

Given this perspective, social work, unlike atomizing practices of the labor exchange might be reoriented towards community social work (Smale et. al., 1988). More specifically, policies in dealing with the redundant labor can be redesigned to emphasize that human well-being is dependent upon more than economic success. Well-being requires nurturing, supportive networks of social relations. Meaningful work may not be limited to commodity production but may also be the maintenance and recreations of well functioning neighborhood, communities and other networks of social relations. Educational and child rearing activities enrich these networks but do not produce marketable commodities. Neighborhood enhancement groups as well as self-help groups may also enrich the networks and promote inclusion. Freed from the centralization of the Soviet approach and not yet fully enveloped within the Western model, perhaps a path based on a more inclusive citizenship and alternative understandings of productive work can be forged into a uniquely Lithuanian social welfare model. The search for alternatives to the workfare model is urgently needed to reduce the impact of exclusion and marginalization on the rapidly growing strata of chronically unemployed before this group becomes locked into permanent poverty.

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Making TANF Work: Organizational Restructuring, Staff Buy-In, and Performance Monitoring in Local Implementation

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While research suggests that staff resistance to change and intentional subversion have hampered prior welfare reform efforts, this does not appear to be the case for the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). This paper draws on data from a study of East County, New York to explicate the mechanisms that have enabled the unprecedented transformation in local implementation practice in this case. Interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis of legislative and program documents identify new program creation, staff buy-in, and the environment created by stern performance measures as instrumental in bringing about the PRWORA's successful implementation of policy changes. Revealing workplace dynamics that mutually reinforce and compel attention to institutional interests, these findings suggest that further research is needed to examine how these implementation dynamics impact staff responsiveness to clients and clients' experiences.

Key words: *Welfare Reform, TANF, Implementation, Institutional Ethnography (IE), Performance Measures, Participation Rates, Implementation Success, PRWORA, Welfare-to-Work, Ideological Buy-In, New York State, Family Support Act*

Introduction

In 1992, Presidential Candidate William Jefferson Clinton pledged to "end welfare as we know it." With the passage of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA P.L. 104-193) he accomplished this goal. This legislation replaced Aid to Families with Dependent

Children (AFDC) with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), ended welfare's entitlement status, required work (or participation in work-related activities) in exchange for benefits, and placed a five-year lifetime limit on federal aid to individuals. It also mandated a devolution, or delegation, of responsibility for designing and implementing the reformed welfare system to states.

The 1996 Welfare Reform and New York State

In passing the 1997 Welfare Reform Act (Chapter 436B of the laws of 1997, McCall 1999), New York closely adhered to the model set by the PRWORA's guidelines (McKenna 1998). The state delegated implementation responsibility to counties and installed mechanisms to police the performance measures to which the PRWORA had made each state accountable. The work participation rate is the most prominent of these performance measures. This is the ratio of TANF recipients participating in approved work activities to the total number of TANF recipients (US DHHS 2002). States are required to meet a higher benchmark in each year leading up to the PRWORA's scheduled reauthorization in 2002. States that fail to meet these rates face heavy financial penalties from the federal government (Pataki 2000).

The transition to a block grant funding structure has emphasized a second performance indicator—caseload declines. Prior to the reform, states, counties and the federal government shared the costs of welfare according to a fixed formula in which the federal government paid fifty percent of all costs. Since the reform, block grants to states are in fixed amounts based roughly on the size of the caseload in 1994, regardless of current caseload size. Thus, it is in a state's best interest to facilitate a decline in local caseloads and retain the excess grant money for other programming (McCall 1999).¹

The federal five-year time limit provides a third performance-related focus to implementers in New York. Unlike other states, New York's constitutionally-determined obligation to assist the poor places heightened pressure on county welfare administrators to move individuals off welfare before they reach sixty

months and are transferred to the state- and locally-funded Safety Net program (Silver and Farrell 1998, McCall 1999).

While presenting significant obstacles to state and local administrators, New York State has met these challenges with success as defined by participation rates and caseload decline. As the Governor has reported, New York State has consistently exceeded the federally mandated participation rates (Pataki 2000). In addition, experiencing a decline of 52% in welfare caseloads since 1995—which is similar to the 53% decline nationwide (Statistical Abstracts 2000)—the state has managed to avert the potential pitfalls of overextending block grant monies and having excessive numbers of clients exceed the five-year time limit (Pataki 2000). East County² (the location of the present study) has consistently met or exceeded its participation rates and has reported an estimated caseload decline of over 42% (according to county budget caseload figures) between 1995 and 2000.

Welfare Reform and Historical Implementation Difficulties

This article uses a case study of East County in Northern New York to analyze the implementation practices and processes that have contributed to these declining caseloads and high participation rates. It is important to study such cases of implementation success because research suggests that staff resistance to change and intentional subversion have hampered prior welfare reform efforts.

Literature on the implementation of new or changed federal policies on the local level helps to explain why previous attempts at welfare reform have had limited success (King 1997, Morgan and Kickham 1999, Nathan and Gais 2000, Beckerman and Fontana 2001). For example, lessons learned from implementation of the 1988 Family Support Act (P.L. 100-485), the most recent forerunner of PRWORA, offer insight into potential pitfalls. First, the FSA instituted new work and caseload reduction requirements without significantly changing the original program. In doing so, it added new responsibilities for front-line workers without providing relief from old ones, without providing an adequate increase in funding, and without effectively transforming the

administrative culture of AFDC (Hagen and Lurie 1995, Nathan and Gais 2000, Lin 1997).

Second, efforts to cultivate change among front-line workers were inadequate. As Burton (1991) argues, organizational restructuring and task assignment are crucial factors in changing welfare staff behavior. Many of the social workers assigned to implement the FSA had weathered numerous preceding reform attempts that were largely symbolic, relatively transient, and quickly supplanted by new efforts (Seccombe 1999, Schram 1992, Lin 1997, Handler and Hasenfeld 1997). Framed in this context, and lacking significant re-organization or compelling oversight to motivate the multiple layers of actors involved in implementation, the FSA was ill-positioned to catalyze significant change in workplace behavior among welfare employees (Lurie 1996, Nathan and Gais 2000, Burton 1991).

Third, career social work staff were well aware of client resistance to welfare rearrangements and were furthermore likely to sympathize with them (Walkowitz 1999, Nathan and Gais 2000). Forcing clients to change their behavior to comply with reform activities potentially disrupts and even undermines clients' survival strategies (London, Scott, and Hunter 2002, Coffield 2000, Edin and Lein 1996, Lin 1997). Working against resistance to such changes places staff in potential conflict with clientele and furthermore forces welfare employees to make difficult decisions between their traditional concern for the poor and buying into the policy changes (Walkowitz 1999).

In addition to the barriers to implementation created by these front-line issues, staffs assigned to carry out the FSA on the street level were not beholden to rigorous accountability standards. As a result, front-line workers routinely engaged in policy subversion by making their work appear to conform on paper, though at the same time failing to comply with the policy's intents (Lin 1997). As Lin (1997:27) argues, the FSA failed at the front lines, despite the fact that it represented the culmination of ten years of reform efforts, because it placed implementation staff in a predicament:

Faced with a choice to significantly change established work routines in order to meet standards, or to reinterpret the standards so that they would be easier to meet, staff selected the latter.

While the dynamics that allow for such an implementation outcome at local sites of service delivery are well documented in social work literatures on street-level discretion (Lipsky 1980, Harris 1998, DeMontigny 1995, Handler 1973, Sandfort 1999), little has been written with respect to how and why the 1996 PRWORA has achieved significant transformation at the front lines of welfare service delivery. Addressing this accomplishment Nathan and Gais (2000) assert the importance of strong political forces, an expanded repertoire of services, and greater local discretion. Beckerman and Fontana (2001) further point to front-line staff cooperation and an organizational culture that reinforces policy aims. Though these and other sources suggest that the 1996 reform has met the challenge that faces all reform initiatives—ensuring cooperation and clarity of purpose on the front lines (Stoker 1991)—the dynamics that have enabled this accomplishment are not well-documented.

This article examines how New York has succeeded in bringing about local structures capable of successfully implementing this radical change in social policy. The data presented in this case study of East County suggest that a combination of new program creation, factors promoting staff buy-in, and the environment created by stern performance measures have all contributed to successful implementation in East County.

Methods

This paper blends analysis of ethnographic data with in-depth study of legislative and policy documents in order to elucidate the links that exist between day-to-day workplace experiences of welfare staff and larger policy structures. The data collection for this paper involved interviews and/or observations of daily work processes with over 35 administrative and front-line staff involved in welfare to work (wtw) implementation in East County, New York. In addition to more-formal taped and transcribed interviews, I collected data by means of informal interviews as described by Institutional Ethnographic researchers as a continuous “talking to people” about their work and about texts and work processes (DeVault and McCoy 2000:9). In this fashion, I was concurrently able to combine numerous intermittent

questions about the intricacies of daily work actions with participant observation.

I have intended for this research to contribute to the work done by others, such as Smith (1987, 1990), McCoy (1998), and Pence (1997) who explore how text-mediated and other social relations of knowledge serve to order various aspects of social life. I adapt this approach to fieldwork that is designed to interrogate common, mundane, or seemingly natural work processes as they relate to larger systems of rules and ways of thinking in order to outline three interrelated findings that I argue enabled the successful implementation of PRWORA-inspired reforms in East County.

Findings

Welfare Reorganizations Sets Clear Expectations

Implementing TANF required welfare administrators and front-line workers to shift focus from the old AFDC eligibility and compliance determination to stressing self-sufficiency and work. In order to avoid the inertial tendency for staff to resist organizational change (Nathan and Gais 2000, Lurie 1996), East County implemented PRWORA's requirements by creating a new agency. Providing administrators the ability to hire for mission and recruit motivated staff from pre-existing local agencies with the promise of generous benefits, East County's managerial staff surrounded itself with a small cadre of committed first hires. As the agency began to expand, it then slowly added to its ranks. As a result, this new structure allowed administrators to train and socialize for mission, and to set the tone for staff behavior and interaction with clients.

With the passage of the 1996 PRWORA and the subsequent 1997 NYS Welfare Reform act, every county in New York State was required to designate a local commissioner charged with administering the reform's welfare-to-work (wtw) requirements. In East County, the commissioner delegated this task to a new agency created by a partnership between the local community college and a social services agency. Unlike previous reforms that attached new responsibilities to old job descriptions, wtw in East County began from the ground up, recruiting staff that

were often not trained as professional social workers and were thus not likely to act on enduring sympathies developed through past work relationships with welfare clients (See Burton 1991). As a brand new agency, East County's wtw office was able to express its purpose definitively in terms of discouraging welfare "dependence" and emphasizing a "reality" in which paid work is mandatory.³ Building on this sense of shared mission and a core of initial hires, the agency drew upon the resources of the local community as it matured. One wtw staffer explains:

Many of us came from other social services departments and [we] were hired on little by little, as wtw grew. I was one of the first ones hired. Back when we started, there were only five of us.

Another acquired his job through networks:

Interviewer: How did you get the job here?

WTW Staff Member: Political connections! If you ask, I'll bet that 90% of the people here knew someone . . . This was just a job in the wanted ads for me. I saw it and called for more information and found out I knew the guy in charge. He said, 'Bring in your resume.' . . . I still went through two interviews like everyone else. I'm not sure [he admits] if knowing him helped.

While this staffer retreats from his insinuation that the strength of weak ties (Granovetter 1973) is solely responsible for his employment situation, he does convey the idea that these were desirable positions, perhaps only attainable through political connections. This sentiment was shared amongst his colleagues. As two other employees explain, being recruited by this new agency had its benefits:

WTW Staff Member: They pay us well and give us crazy [generous] vacation and days off! There aren't many weeks where we don't discuss which day one of us is taking off that week, and then there's personal days and sick days as well!

WTW Co-worker: Yeah, we get paid pretty well, much better than many others in this field in other cities or in other agencies in this city.

In creating a program from scratch, the higher level administrators could set the tone for new wtw employees and stress the

importance of organizational vision. Reflecting on the agency's early days, one of the original staff shares his awareness of this directive:

We, my co-worker and I, were two of the first hired . . . We were going to give people reality.

As another employee explains, managerial example-setting has had a lasting influence:

WTW Staff Member: Do you know Tabbatha [*the administrator in charge*]? . . . She has always instilled upon us that the people who come through here are our customers . . . I think [*staff*] who have been here can understand that mandate.

As people involved in shaping a new agency, rather than reformers of an old one, administrators took on a charismatic leadership role in addition to their bureaucratic authority. Resulting in part from these dynamics, and from widespread public and political support for the reform's goals, the wtw structure in East County has been able to rely on a considerable amount of buy-in among staff with regard to its overarching ideology and objectives.

Ideological Buy-In: Staff Commitment to Reform Goals

Capitalizing on the consensus forged in the years preceding the passage of the PRWORA in 1996 (Naples 1997, Hagen and Lurie 1995, Walkowitz 1999, Nathan and Gais 2000), local administrators could work to enhance staff buy-in by aligning the message of the reform with widely-held ideological perspectives. As a result, they averted potential staff resistance to increased demand for professional task proficiency and shifting processing priorities (Beckerman and Fontana 2001). Staff workplace norms—espousing personal values consistent with reform ideology, believing that they are helping clients, relating client experiences to their own lives, and utilizing new resources earmarked for innovative efforts—have all contributed to and reinforced the buy-in among staff that welfare reorganization and public sentiment have fostered.

In East County, wtw staffs' agreement with PRWORA ideology, overall, is clear from responses to simple questions. Clarifying one of the main aspects to the 1996 welfare reform, I asked:

Interviewer: So they do work for their benefits?

WTW Staff Member: Yeah, what they should have been doing all along.

Corresponding with such endorsement of the policy's major goals, staff have a clear idea of who the program is targeted at:

WTW Staff Member: [*With*] most clients, you're asking them to step outside of the box, go beyond where they are comfortable—and they are not used to work. We're asking them to be responsible for themselves, we're asking them to be more than responsible, we're asking them to take the jump from point A, unemployed and on welfare, to point B, employed and on welfare, to point C, employed and on reduced welfare assistance, to point D, employed and off welfare, or self sufficient.

Staff understanding and enforcement of this policy aim manifests itself in interactions with clients. Voicing frustration with certain members of wtw's client population, a wtw employee expresses disdain for those who have not acclimated to the reform's termination of welfare's entitlement status:

People still come through thinking that they're owed something . . . I'm supposed to be able to get food stamps and you're supposed to take care of my kids and you're supposed to pay my rent and you're supposed to, you're supposed to, you're supposed to! You know? And if I die and go to hell, it's your fault! And I think, if anything, I would change that whole attitude about that, and try to help people be more responsible for their own well-being than they are now.

In accord with this shared understanding that some welfare clients need to have their attitudes changed, staff routinely exercise discretion so as to re-orient such client "misunderstandings." As one staff member explains to a colleague:

That lady who came in here, she lost her job search sheets and had used up her bus pass to fill out the first one. She wanted another bus pass to do them again! . . . I said to her, 'It's our fault that you lost it? We should pay?' I mean where is the responsibility?

Far from attempting to exercise discretion in an arbitrary or cruel manner, staff readily share that the underlying rationale for their actions stems from their belief that they are ultimately

helping the clients they confront. As one staff member explains, he sees his efforts as being in accord with clients' own interests. This becomes evident in his description of how he admonishes young clients:

For those seventeen and eighteen year olds, because typically they're going to be coming back here again, I tell them, 'You ought to be in school. Why are you coming through here? We have nothing for you. And it's going to be more of nothing for you, alright.'

Here, pursuing the reform goal of discouraging clients from returning to wtw is cast as steering youth away from imprudent life choices. Another staffer similarly frames her work as being in the best interest of clients.

It can be very confrontational, very stressful. Particularly when you're really trying to help the person and they're giving you grief.

In this way, staff rationalize what they are doing as, ultimately, in the best interest of clients themselves, whether clients agree with this assessment or not.

Due to an established pattern of hiring exemplary wtw clients onto staff, wtw employee perceptions in East County are often reinforced by their own or their colleagues' personal experiences. One staff member explains:

It is tough. But, as I tell them in my orientation, 'I was sitting in your seat a few years ago. I know what it is like, and if I, a single father with three kids, can make it, so can you with one or two kids or a partner and three kids. It isn't easy. It sure isn't easy, but you can do it.'

Even if not privy to personal experience on the welfare rolls, staff do not hesitate to make connections between the public work they do as part of this agency and their private lives:

WTW Staff Member: When the federal time limit hits, the federal government gives less money to the state and so the state must make up the difference. That's our taxes.

Such rationalizations, while clearly simplifying a complex reality, nevertheless serve to align overarching policy goals with personal concerns.

This alignment of personal interests with the program of wtw is further seen in the excitement that new programming resources generate among staff. Such resources help staff to feel they are accomplishing things and being successful. In the following example, a wtw staffer expresses her enthusiasm over the arrival of supplementary grant monies to help in the achievement of agency goals:

We have new programs coming this year from the state money . . . to help with housing and childcare etcetera, for iceberg issues! You know, you solve one problem and then there is another and another, like the tip of a big iceberg. Because the hard core unemployed now have so many problems, so these new grant monies will help because we're going to sister agencies like BOCES [*Educational Training Agency*], Catholic Charities, Salvation Army . . . So it will be great if we can all work together!"

In this staff member's excitement, concern is clearly attached to the well-being of clients, but it is also consistent with overarching institutional goals of pushing the poor toward participation and self-sufficiency through work and ultimately lowering welfare caseloads and costs. Additionally, as seen in the following comment, success at these tasks translates into a sense of achievement among staff and reinvigorated pride in their workplace:

WTW Staff Member: They won't stop this program though, they're saving too much money. Instead of just paying money to those who apply, people come through here and have to do all this stuff. See all those people on the wall? They got jobs so that's less they have to get paid by the state and the county. I don't think they'll get rid of our program unless they get rid of welfare altogether.

In addition to focusing on client success and the agency's perceived usefulness, comments such as these reflect buy-in to the larger fiscally attentive performance measures that structure wtw's local goals.

Performance Measures: A Carrot and Stick for WTW Employees

Ensuring that the emphases of the PRWORA do not get lost in translation from the federal to state and local levels, as observed in previous reform implementation (Lurie 1996, Nathan and Gais 2000, Beckerman and Fontana 2001), the 1996 reform provided

clear and compelling directives in the form of rigorously monitored performance measures. Through these mechanisms, the legislation's requirements reinforced externally imposed reform priorities within local organizational culture.

In New York, wtw agencies and the counties that support them are held accountable to three main measures of performance. First, there is a requirement that all welfare recipients undergo an appraisal of their ability to work (NYS DOL 1300.6:6-2). Second, all recipients must be working by their second year of assistance (NYS DOL 1300.2:2-13). Third, and most complicated, welfare recipients who are not working full time (at least 35 hours per week) are required to participate in a certain number of weekly hours of supervised work-related activities in return for receiving their benefits.

While the first two measures are important, and are monitored via a state-wide database, it is the third of these measures, the participation rate, which most concerns local administrators and their staff. The first requirement can be completed during intake processing and the second can be addressed over a two-year horizon. The third, however, signifies a formidable escalation in workplace demands on staff as compared to previous programs, such as the JOBS program that was initiated by the 1988 FSA. In terms of the participation ratio (participating clients divided by total county welfare clients), the denominator has expanded to include almost all adult TANF recipients. PRWORA redefined the numerator as well. As a manual designed to provide technical assistance to state and local implementers indicates: "The range of allowable activities is much narrower, the number of hours a person must spend in activities each week is higher, and the percentage of the caseload that must participate is greater" (Hamilton and Scrivener 1999:15).

Federal participation benchmarks issued with the 1996 legislation were designed to gradually elevate the performance demanded of states. In 1997, 25 percent of all families in each state were required to meet the definition of "participating." In 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 this rate increased to 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50 percent, respectively. While rates of twenty five to fifty percent may appear low, national implementation research suggests

that they are in fact high standards to meet. One study, conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, reported that “only about 9 percent of those required to participate in welfare-to-work activities actually met the definition of a participant” (Hamilton and Scrivener 1999:19). Other studies underscore the challenge of achieving high participation rates (Hasenfeld and Weaver 1996), reporting county rates of client compliance as low as 27% in a given year (Sandfort 1999).

Far from undermining local implementation, the specter of this demanding participation benchmark is instrumental to the East County wtw agency’s avowed unity of purpose. Pressure imposed on East County’s wtw staff by such performance demands enhances the already present staff buy-in and commitment to their jobs by encouraging staff to bond in response to these mandated challenges. It further allows public managers to stress a bottom line. A wtw administrator explains:

Everything is now outcome based as opposed to how it used to be. In the social services we, [*aside*], me and the other administrators that work here that were in various programs and agencies before being hired at wtw, used to just apply for grants and then do what we said we would do with them but never be checked. Now everything is being outcome based and our participation rates are very important or else the government will take away the money.

Another corroborates:

WTW Administrator: We are [*very much*] focused on participation rates since that is how we are funded.

The connection between performance measures and funding that these public managers speak of is evident in the 1997 New York State Welfare Reform Act:

In the event that the federal government imposes fiscal sanctions on the state because of non-compliance with federal law, regulation, or policy relating to the temporary assistance for needy families block grant, . . . the commissioner shall reduce federal reimbursement to each social services district in an amount equal to the proportion of such fiscal sanction that the commissioner determines is attributable to such district . . . (1997 New York State Welfare Reform Act 153 2. A.:107)

In this excerpt and the lines that follow it in the legislation, several dynamics of the participation performance measure accountability system become visible. First, it is the federal government that imposes sanctions on states. Second, the state will pass any sanctions it incurs for failing to meet federal benchmarks on to the counties responsible for diminishing the state average. Third, the state, via the commissioner, provides fair warning that it will use performance data to assess fiscal penalties. An administrator shares her familiar understanding of these dynamics:

The county only gets penalized if the state does. The state then passes penalties on to counties that are pulling the state *[average]* down.

Reinforcing the need for counties to cooperate in collecting and reporting participation data, the legislation goes on to explain that, if the state is unable to identify which counties caused the state to miss its federally imposed benchmarks, the Commissioner "shall assign the reduction in federal reimbursement to all districts" (New York State Welfare Reform Act: 1997, 153 2. A. p. 107). This funding and penalty structure thus creates a layered hierarchy of worker accountability. The federal government polices the states, New York State polices its counties, and East County, in turn, polices its own staff. A wtw staff member describes how this structure translates into local practice:

Harold, *[one of the in-house data management staff]* goes through on a monthly basis. He figures out the participation rate for each team and each individual team member. The team leader then makes sure everyone pulls their weight.

While this hierarchy of oversight effectively ensures certain minimal standards of implementation, it is not until the additional legislative mechanisms for inter-district comparison are considered that the full impact of the reform performance structure becomes visible. Coinciding with and amplifying the participation rate measure of the reform is the comparative dimension to performance measures that gains visibility in the following excerpt from state law.

2. Annually, the department shall rank each district based upon the percentage of its nonexempt public assistance caseload that

leave assistance in the previous calendar year for unsubsidized employment without reapplying for public assistance within six months. (New York State Welfare Reform Act: 1997:S 153-k:110)

As this passage goes on to explain, the ten highest ranked counties receive a financial bonus that is funded by a penalty that is levied on the twenty lowest ranked counties. Adding to the pressure that is already salient to staff and administrators through participation benchmarks, these and similar legislative provisions serve to diffuse the locus of outside pressure via the incorporation of inter-district comparisons. Performance demands are thus not just exerted by federal and state government, but also by a need to compete with other districts.

Reporting mechanisms amplify such inter-county comparisons. While penalties and final evaluation between districts are assessed on an annual basis, the actual tallying of TANF participation rates and other figures, such as the number of hires, are recorded more frequently. Their high visibility in a quarterly statewide publication, complete with maps depicting county success by color shading, ensures them a high priority among local administrators. Asked if this reporting protocol makes much of a difference to her management of wtwt, an East County administrator exclaimed:

Well sure, it gets competitive!

Such an emphasis on local management and measurable success in comparison to others fosters a disposition toward striving for more than the minimal requirements among both administrators and front-line staff. Going beyond the call of duty is crucial if an administrator wishes to demonstrate her or his individual and team competence in PRWORA implementation. An administrator describes one example of this:

To give ourselves leeway we shoot for a higher level, 35 hours a week participation *[even though the legal mandates don't require such a high rate until later on]* just so when we fall short, across the board we are still above the minimum standards.

Such comments reveal attention to managerial accountability. Managers cultivate appreciation of these administrative concerns

with their front-line staff as well. Emphasis on following legislative directives meticulously and on paying attention to the aspects of work that become visible extra-locally through performance reports are evident in both staff training and daily interactions. An administrator reminds staff, while explaining to me:

The money is federal, state, and local and we have to follow their standards very closely because we get audited quite often.

These concerns have a clear impact on the attitudes of front-line staff. This becomes evident in discussion with such staff:

Interviewer: How are Job Coaches evaluated? How are you promoted or fired?

WTW Staff Member: Well . . . Participation rates, that's what really matters.

I later ask:

Interviewer: Well what about being fired?

WTW Staff Member: Well that hardly happens, but if you fall below with participation rates . . . they will call you into their office and "counsel" you.

Such a clear bottom line serves to both orient wtw staff to the priorities of the agency and to send signals to staff about what aspects of their work are most valued.

Sections of state law also detail mechanisms for additional funding that are attached to optional performance measures of job placement, reduction of out of wedlock pregnancies, housing placement, child support enforcement, and increasing administrative efficiency (New York State Welfare Reform Act: 1997, 153 2. A. p. 109). Within these mechanisms, each district interested in securing additional grant monies through meeting optional performance standards negotiates performance goals individually. This arrangement spotlights managerial effectiveness and efficiency by grounding evaluation, via local cost savings,⁴ in improvement over the past and inter-district comparison with similar counties in the state. It also allows managers to take a role in goal setting, thus reinforcing their buy-in. While pursuing these grant monies is above and beyond the minimum requirement of PRWORA, and thus failure to achieve will not incur any penalty other than

a missed opportunity for extra grant money, this structure is an indication of the emphasis placed on innovative caseload management within the wtw system.

As a front-line employee attests, however, optional status with the state does not make these measures any less important within the local workspace. Commenting on the automated system enhancement that has created a considerable amount of extra work for her and her colleagues, she explains:

We are a leader in this stuff. The director sees this as something that can put our county on the map. We have tours all the time. We get e-mails saying: 'There is a tour on such and such a day, please dress up.' The director wants to keep us in the lead, so this computer upgrade is a way to do this.

Enveloped in the ambitions of such newly appointed local managers to distinguish East County, staff find themselves in a workplace where achievement is identifiable, policy goals appear legitimate to staff, the agency avoids the distraction of previously existing bureaucratic structures, and inter-county competition asserts a continuing challenge to ensure that efficiency and innovation do not fall victim to complacency. In this way, local administrators and staff become complicit with and accountable to the institutional interests of the PRWORA. Through the dynamics detailed in this article—restructuring, buy-in, and performance measures—the subversion that previous reform efforts have suffered at the hands of local staffs has been avoided.

Conclusion: A Bottom Line For Social Services?

While PRWORA's initial high participation rates and caseload decline continue to be heralded (Besharov 2003), its long-term outcomes remain to be seen. The economic boom that has accompanied and facilitated the first five years of this re-structuring is now in recession. Additionally, the often invoked "halo effect" that infuses new programs with excitement and motivated workers may not last forever.

Nevertheless, this research suggests that the combined effects of massive re-structuring, widespread ideological buy-in among staff, and the installation of demanding and competitive performance measures as defining components of daily work practice

have created a strong foundation for continued implementation integrity. As Edgar Schein (1985) suggests, organizational culture is a crucial aspect of workplace practice. Basic assumptions enmeshed in such work sites "tell group members how to perceive, think about, and feel about things . . . tend[ing] to be non-confrontable and nondebatable" (Schein 1985:437).⁵ The factors described in this research have successfully forged a workplace culture that not only reinforces agency/institutional interests, but also compellingly polices them through a demanding and competitive information-reporting infrastructure.

As we move into the twenty-first century, we would do well to consider the organizational ripples that such restructuring creates, as well as the ramifications of reducing complex public service actions to one-dimensional outcome measures. While greater local discretion (such as advertised in PRWORA' decentralization of authority) provides the space for front-line staff to address the immediate needs of their clientele, performance measures and extra-local surveillance may constrain this client-centered ideal by compelling staff to remain within the visibility and the knowledge confines established for them in the mechanisms that monitor their work. Numerous scholars have pointed to the need to investigate policy and implementation for points of interaction, re-inscription and disruption of the power dynamics that exist within larger relations of society (Haney 1996, Naples 1997, Smith 1987, 1990, 1999). Working toward these ends, it is not enough to know that a program "works," one must know the intricacies of how it works and the intended and unintended consequences for various actors involved. Future research is needed to explore these dynamics with respect to how they occur in locations other than East County, how various economic situations effect implementation and what these restructuring dynamics mean for clients.

Notes

1. A maintenance of effort requirement is also in place. This stipulation is designed to ensure that states do not funnel all of their grant money away from welfare programs.
2. East County and all personal names used in this text are pseudonyms.

3. For a critical analysis of terms such as "dependence" and "reality" with respect to welfare reform, see Fraser and Gordon (1994), who argue that the meanings of these words are set within a historical context of race and gender.
4. It should be noted that the Governmental Accounting Office and others have asserted that work support costs may actually exceed the cost of welfare (General Accounting Office 2002).
5. Sandfort (1999) similarly suggest that front-line beliefs forge norms that staff rely upon in order to justify both action and inaction.

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Legislative Casework: Where Policy and Practice Intersect

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Legislative casework is an ongoing activity in many state and federal legislative offices. Although the activity carries the implication of being a social work activity, there is little evidence from the literature, or in the field, that social workers are more than marginally employed in these positions. Reasons for the lack of professionally educated social workers in this important area of practice and politics are not clear. This paper explores the field of practice known as legislative casework, its history and purpose, and presents generalist social work examples from a Congressional district office wherein which professional social workers are employed. In conclusion the authors encourage social work presence in legislative casework and suggest increased attention to this field of practice in social work education at both the BSW and MSW levels

Key words: congress, casework, policy practice, community work, politics

Introduction

Legislative casework, also known as constituent casework, has been an integral part of constituent services in state and federal elected offices for the better part of two centuries. The service takes a page from the historic practices of social work, yet largely without professional social workers in its ranks. Davidson and Oleszek define the practice as involving the fundamental social work tasks of mediating between the larger systems and the individual (Hoefer, 1999, 78). Legislative casework is micro and macro practice, using direct interventions while at the same time employing indirect social work roles, focusing on personal troubles linked to policy and regulatory issues. As a field of service legislative casework approximates many aspects of policy practice, because of its setting—in a political environment—its access to policy and regulatory change, and the linkage of constituent troubles to much larger social issues rooted in laws and program regulations. Social workers in this area of practice are poised to fill a gap identified by Haynes and Mickelson (2000) that links practice with policy change. This paper is largely a case example designed to provide an overview of legislative casework as it is practiced in a congressional district office.

At the federal level, all congressional district offices engage in some level of legislative casework, but it varies significantly from on district to another. Some congressional offices place a high priority on direct constituent services, while others place less of a priority on it. Regardless of the priority one thing congressional offices can count on is “an endless stream of constituent casework (Shapiro, 1998, 89).” The demand for casework service in district offices has increased significantly in the past few years. A study by the Congressional Management Foundation (Shapiro, 1998) reported, “53% of House offices and 42% of Senate offices receive between 1000 and 5000 cases each year, and 32% of Senate offices report more than 7500 cases annually (89).” These numbers represent a reported increase in services delivered by a majority of House and Senate offices. The average increase in casework services to constituents in the past five years is 35%. This is particularly significant because congressional offices also have reported that their caseloads have more than doubled since the 1980s (Shapiro, 1998).

The nature of casework requests, the type of casework delivered, and the priority the service receives in the office depend on a number of variables. These variables include: the district's unique needs; demographic factors such as significant populations of immigrants, aging, and veterans; temporal and historical characteristics of the district. For example, areas prone to natural disaster or those undergoing economic shifts, and the very poor or wealthy districts tend to use casework services more than middle-income districts (Johannes, 1980; Johannes and McAdams, 1987; Johannes, 1996). Additionally other variables such as the location of the office in the district, size of staff, and priorities of the district, as well as the Member's view of his/her mission in Congress also impact on the approach and priority legislative casework has in providing constituent services.

In district offices in which casework is a high priority, the staffs usually perform under very heavy loads, often exceeding more than a 100 cases each; they are encouraged to meet all needs of constituents while viewing each case situation as a high priority by exploring all avenues and recourses. Referrals to social agencies are made when there is a need for services beyond the scope of the office's resources. Frequently the staff assumes an advocate role for constituents, as defined by the social work profession (Schneider and Lester, 2001) but within very specific guidelines of House Rules or other legislative bodies. Additionally, the staff aggressively reaches out to constituents to let them know of available services that include casework. Some outreach mechanisms used in these offices are: the opening of small satellite offices in less populated areas in the district; frequent town meetings; press conferences, newsletters, on-line forums, brochures detailing services to constituents; and meetings with targeted groups with common needs, i.e. veterans, seniors, farmers, the unemployed, etc. (Shapiro, 1998). Inevitably, these types of information activities lead to high levels of constituent self-referrals.

Social work's involvement in this field of service has been selective and limited. Most district offices do not actively seek social workers for staff positions, even though the job typically demands social work skills. Legislative caseworkers come from a variety of backgrounds including, law, political science, management, public relations, etc. Staff that work in these capacities

usually receives extensive training prior to assuming the position of caseworker and in most district offices there is extensive on the job training that continues while employed. However, legislative casework is a viable field of service for social work because in its practice caseworkers utilize knowledge of relationship building skills, problem solving models, social work roles, social welfare policy, and change strategies. Persons holding these positions are able to link practice with policy in unique ways. In offices where social workers are employed as legislative caseworkers it has been found to be a natural fit. In a speech to his colleagues, one former Republican Congressman strongly encouraged other newly elected legislators to add social workers to their staffs (B. Guhman, personal communication, March 3, 1999).

Literature Review

Pontius (1996) defines congressional casework as "assistance provided by Members of Congress and their staffs at the request, and on the behalf of, constituents in their dealings with the federal agencies . . . and typically includes a problem, grievance, question of eligibility, need or other tangible interest or benefit to these individuals (1)." Historical records indicate congressional casework dating back to the Jacksonian Era (Hamilton 1992; Pontius 1996). However it was not until 1946, with the enactment of the Legislative Reorganization Act, that Members were able to hire assistants to take on a large part of the casework burden (Pontius 1996).

Because legislative casework holds varying priority levels in elected offices, casework loads vary from one Congressional District to another. There is no standard load of cases per staff person. There are a few predictors of high levels of demand for casework (Johannes 1980 and McAdams 1987), requests in districts vary with demographic variables serving as a major predictor. For example, lower socioeconomic class constituents tend to make requests having to do with "social security concerns, jobs, and military discharges" while higher socioeconomic class constituents often make requests related to "tax matters, information and documents, appointments to military academies and to express opinions (Johannes 1980, 533)."

The majority of casework requests arrives by letter or phone (Hamilton 1992) and mostly concerns government "red tape" (Baldwin 1985). Seasoned caseworkers develop knowledge of who to call to expedite for various types of constituent requests (Baldwin 1992 and Johannes 1996). The personal and professional relationships caseworkers establish with colleagues in other federal agencies are very important in obtaining salient programmatic information, knowledge of agency procedures, and providing clarifications regarding miscommunication and misunderstandings on behalf of either the constituent or agency. It has also been found that constituent troubles may be the result of contradictory program rules or procedures. In these occurrences casework and legislative work are inextricably linked. As a result of constituents bringing problems they are having with federal agencies to their congressperson's office, many programs have been amended (Hamilton 1992).

Johannes (1984) found that congressional staffers believe the most important traits for a caseworker are "empathy and sympathy, patience and persistence, knowledge of the executive branch, and ability to listen and communicate (71-72)." There are times, of course, when the constituent does not receive the results he or she is seeking, but alternatives suggested by a perceptive and knowledgeable caseworker can still address underlying needs. The focus of casework is not solely on securing benefits; an emphasis is also on providing information and facilitating communication between constituents and bureaucracy. Congressional casework helps people feel less "alienated" from government, reduces frustration, and allows people to "blow off steam" (Hamilton 1992). Johannes (1984) found that many women had made federal casework a professional career, inferring perhaps that the general view in congressional offices mirrors the traditional view of the sexes and assumes women possess highly desirable characteristics like empathy and an ability to communicate, traits indispensable to the position. He also states women were more likely to perceive casework troubles as linked to legislation, in other words able to recognize the connection between personal troubles and public issues.

As noted earlier, social workers have not necessarily been highly visible among the professions hired into legislative

casework positions. However, Baldwin (1985) asserts that many Members are starting to hire professional social workers to attend to casework in their offices. A trend that does seem to be occurring is the placement of social work students in legislative offices. Both BSW and MSW students are beginning to have these experiences in state and federal district offices. Hoefer, (1999) reports on a MSW specialization that places students in a political setting. Students going through the program are placed in a legislator's offices where they combine constituent casework with policy development. The Legislative Internship Program is a macro placement utilizing students direct practice skills and knowledge of social policy, its impact and development. Although Hoefer reports on a specific MSW program Wolk, Pray, Weismiller, and Dempsey (1996) found in their national sample of CSWE accredited programs several who reported using legislative offices for student placements. Of those programs included in the sample, most students placed in political settings were in government relations capacities providing constituent services similar to those described in this paper. Success of these placements has been noted among some state legislators. For example one State Senator in Texas is making an effort to pass legislation that would require all state legislative offices hire a social worker to handle constituent services, (L. Moore, personal communication, October 2002).

Pagliaccio and Gummer (1988) suggest social workers who are not employed in congressional offices can offer supportive services for Members and in particular their casework staff. Social workers within the district can provide Members with information regarding problems facing client groups and community, serve as a source for referrals, access to diverse communities and key informers, input on legislative issues, training and assistance to staff on casework related issues, including mental health assessments of constituents with presenting needs. These activities are consistent with the high level of political activity social workers as a profession, typically engage (Ezell, 1993). Haynes and Mickleson state that social workers have begun to understand that they can no longer leave critical issues and decisions on social policy to nameless others (Ezell, 1993, 94).

In sum, according to the literature, legislative casework has historically been as integral a part of elected officials' duties as passing legislation. It is a means by which Members represent their constituents. Approaches to this aspect of representation vary from Member and district, depending on several different variables. There are no empirical findings to suggest whether doing more or less constituent casework helps or hinders re-election. Opinions in the literature are split concerning what effect high level of legislative casework has on constituents voting patterns in future elections. Some authors (Epstein & Frankovic 1982; Serra 1994) assert that casework has a positive impact on voting behaviors of constituents, while Johannes & McAdams 1987, suggest that casework does not have a positive effect on voting behaviors, because constituents believe casework is part of the legislator's job and expect the service whether or not they support this Member with their vote. Generally, Members' response to constituent needs is because of their commitment to those they represent, not as a political ploy. Staff members employed to do legislative casework are differentially prepared educationally; most however, receive on the job training and even though they may follow a quasi-social work model for practice are not formally educated social workers.

In the following discussion the authors present a case example of legislative casework based on a generalist social work practice model. This model is presently used in a congressional district office, wherein the elected Member holds an MSW as does the Director of Constituent Services. This approach is effective in this office, where four Legislative Assistants utilize the same practice method.

Casework Process

This congressional district lies in a southwestern state that includes a portion of a major metropolitan city, but extends south and west to the border with Mexico. Despite pockets of urban life, the district is mostly rural, poor, and Mexican American. Problems and issues associated with this population are typically addressed in any of the District's three offices, all of which provide legislative casework. The congressman for this district was first

elected in 1997 in a special election held to replace the previous incumbent who died while in office. Subsequently, he has been re-elected three times. Previously, he had represented part of the district in the state's Assembly. He holds an MSW and previously held a faculty position in a School of Social Work. Shortly after taking office the Congressman put in place a casework process that would tend to the needs of constituents in the district. Next a staff was hired to attend specifically to the needs of constituents. The Director of Constituent Services, who also holds an MSW, structured an approach to legislative casework that is based on a generalist social work model.

Constituent needs requiring casework services come to the attention of the district staff through different means. People call or walk into the office to present their needs, write, fax, or e-mail their concerns to the district office. Problems and concerns are also identified when the Member holds town hall meetings in various communities. These meetings are held on a regular basis throughout the district, and focused on specific issues regarded as important to the constituents. Sometimes certain constituent groups are targeted, i.e. elderly, veterans, immigrants, farmers, families, etc., while at other times these meetings are an opportunity for the general population to provide feedback to the Member on their needs and concerns. During the question and answer portion of the meeting specific constituent needs often emerge. As problems are identified, caseworkers and other legislative assistants traveling with the Member to these town hall meetings take the opportunity to do an immediate assessment of the trouble facing the constituent and provide follow up support and intervention as needed.

When constituents request service they are asked to complete a *Privacy Act Release Form*. The *Privacy Act of 1974*, states that information from personal records held by federal agencies may not be released to anyone including the Congressional office without express and written consent. The purpose of this statute is to ensure confidentiality, and protect constituents.

The steps followed by legislative caseworkers in this example are similar to those taught in schools of social work and basis for several texts, including, Hepworth, Rooney, and Larson (1997) include: assessment, planning and implementation, termination and closure, and involve the utilization of several social

work roles in support of these phases. Professional roles most frequently used in the casework process are: broker, mediator, and advocate. As with all professional social work, good attending and listening skills are essential and self determination is an important value to continuously communicate to constituents. Legislative caseworkers believe their primary role is to comply with the wishes of the constituent, providing guidance, but not projecting their individual biases onto them. This is especially important during the planning process, as the constituent ultimately guides the direction of their case and inquiry.

Assessment

Assessment is both a process and a product, designed to determine the needs of the person, family, or group requesting the services, and the basis for planning, implementing, and evaluating services. However, information obtained at one initial interview is not always complete. In time more information emerges, and the work in progress often changes directions accordingly. Initially, caseworkers in a legislative district office must determine whether a constituent's service request is appropriate. For example, if the presenting concern is a legal matter, in which there is litigation or a need for legal representation, a referral to an appropriate source is made. The House of Representatives, Committee on Standards, "prohibits certain off-the-record comments, known as ex-parte communications directed to executive or independent agency officials, on the merits of matters under their formal consideration (<http://www.house.gov/ethics/welcome.htm>)". This restriction complies with various rules of the House, agencies, and courts prohibiting adversarial processes from undue political influence.

Most problems that come into the district office for casework are of the "desperation" nature, meaning this is the constituent's last stop after a long, fruitless, and frustrating journey. Initially, an important question to ask is where has the person previously received service or sought assistance? Followed by related questions: what agencies and/or resources have they pursued their claims for service; who have they seen at the agencies; what has been the result? Another level of assessment is whether the constituent is able to assist in the intervention process and to what degree. Specifically, the constituent's ability to negotiate

physically, their spoken and written language skills, and their ability to read and comprehend, are important factors in gauging to what degree a constituent will be able to assist in their effort. Some constituents suffer from mental illness, which impact their ability to provide information, make decisions, and assist on their own behalf. The caseworkers ability to assess and work effectively with a wide range of mental abilities is very important. Knowledge from this level of the assessment help to determine the breadth of resources needed for working this case. Differential diagnostic skills often are useful, for at least two reasons, one as guidance for proper and appropriate communication, and two for making an appropriate referral for mental health services.

Another area legislative caseworkers must be mindful are the expectations the constituent has for the Congressional office staff or Member to solve their problems. Some people believe that because the Member is a part of the federal government, s/he can resolve all government-related problems. Determining the realistic expectations of what the legislative caseworker can actually do for the constituent and discussing this with the client is important during the assessment phase. Throughout the assessment phase, and throughout the entire relationship, the caseworker proceeds with a degree of informed, cautious optimism. Direct, sensitive, honest, discourse is of essence in the communication because people who are in crisis, desperate, or emotionally unstable often have unrealistic expectations. Unmet expectations can cause constituent dissatisfaction with the Member's efforts, therefore, clear and frequent communication of ongoing efforts and the realistic limits of the caseworker are important to periodically reinforce.

Planning and Implementation

These phases of the casework process, although conceptually different, often occur simultaneously. Choosing an intervention strategy precedes, in moments only, the implementation. Several considerations are made at this point, these are: the range of services needed, the various roles the social worker will need to assume, how to involve the constituent meaningfully in the problem solving process; who in the caseworker's or constituent's system can be drawn upon for assistance; and, a reasonable timeline for

evaluating progress and attaining the desired outcome. Time is a variable of an interesting nature in legislative casework. On one hand it is limited by a sense of urgency because the constituent presents a crisis or the problem has reached its "end of the line". Also, caseloads are heavy, in this office especially. While on the other hand, time is also out of the control of both the constituents and workers because the issue almost always involves other agencies with whom the caseworker has to interact and work within their time frame. Therefore, seldom are constituents put on a schedule of a fifty-minute appointment every week. Rather, it is not uncommon for a case to experience a flurry of activity over a day or two, followed by days or weeks of only phone contact. Setting timelines, is sometimes tricky, but nonetheless an important aspect of the planning and implementation phase.

Hepworth, Rooney, and Larsen, (1997) define three systems linkage roles that serve as the basis for practicing caseworkers during this phase of providing constituent services: broker, mediator, and advocate. As a broker, the caseworker's ability to make important and useful linkages on behalf of their constituents is essential. An important part of the job is developing and maintaining contacts with persons in other governmental and social welfare agencies who can provide a wide range of information and services for constituents. Often these relationships can result in maximizing the efficacy of a referral, by cutting through the layers of bureaucratic red tape and moving toward a solution quicker. For instance, upon receipt, most federal agencies will respond to a congressional inquiry between 30 and 45 days. Although the time line for issuing responses may vary from agency to agency, it is widely accepted that a congressional office will most likely receive responses more rapidly than a constituent acting on his/her own.

However, it often occurs that providing brokering services are not enough, making further caseworker involvement necessary. Hepworth, Rooney, and Larsen (1997) define a second role, mediator/arbitrator, which caseworkers employ to "eliminate obstacles to service delivery (28)" in a manner that creates a win-win situation for both parties. As noted earlier, the legislative district office is often the last resort for constituents seeking assistance. It is not uncommon that they have been denied services to which they

believe they may have been entitled, because of poor communication, inadequate information, and/or simply falling through the cracks. The role of mediator requires the caseworker to utilize skills to foster a relationship and rapport between constituent and other social welfare personnel to obtain any necessary services the constituent believes they are entitled.

Constituent advocacy is a third role used by legislative caseworkers. Working exclusively on behalf of the client to obtain a needed resource for an unresponsive system or agency (Hepworth, Rooney, and Larsen, 1997; Schneider and Lester, 2001) is a tricky, but necessary role legislative caseworkers consistently negotiate. Because of House Rules on ethics, legislative caseworkers are constantly aware that they cannot overstep the advocate role. They cannot for example represent constituents in any formal way at hearings, grievances, or other legal or administrative proceedings, for this would be a violation of the House ethics rules. But, as noted, advocacy on behalf of constituents in terms of exploring avenues of recourse, negotiating reviews, truncating procedures, etc. are routine activities of legislative caseworkers, and within ethical guidelines. Many caseworkers also try to use this role as a teachable moment for constituents by providing both a model and information for how to locate their own resources, information and solutions. Some individuals do not have the capacity to act on their own. In these situations the caseworker must assume a more prominent role in working with the constituent, always ensuring the constituent's right to determine the direction of the case.

The following case scenarios illustrate the incorporation of these roles in the legislative casework in this congressional office. The three vignettes illustrate two levels of legislative casework, one which is direct practice in nature and focuses on work with a constituent denied welfare compensation because of slipping through bureaucratic cracks, while the other two demonstrate how constituent experiences uncover gaps in social or program policies that can be used to lead to policy or regulatory changes.

Case Vignette: Direct Practice

Jeremy is a 49 year old, Mexican American veteran, who served in the military from July 1978 to November 1979. While

in the service he stated that he suffered constant harassment and racism. As a direct result, he stated that a previously diagnosed mental health condition (Paranoid Schizophrenia) became exacerbated and caused him to be unable to function within the parameters of the United States Military. This exacerbation led to a further inability to function in a job setting after leaving the military. Therefore, due to his time and experiences in service he believed that he should receive service-connected benefits for this impairment. He filed for these benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Code of Federal Regulations defines 'service-connected', "with respect to disability or death, that such disability was incurred or aggravated, or that death resulted from a disability incurred or aggravated, in line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service (38CFR 3.1k)." A service-connected condition may be found to impair the individual to the point his/her ability to otherwise function in everyday life is restricted. Service-connected conditions are rated in percentage of impairment terms. For example, if a person who suffered a severely broken leg while in active military service developed a limp in his/her gait as a result and can prove that the limp is a direct result of the service injury, could be eligible for a service-connected disability if it interferes with daily life. But, the degree of eligibility is dependent on how much it interferes with the person's ability to be gainfully employed and assume other socially expected civilian or familial roles. This degree of impairment can range from 0% to 100%, resulting in veterans receiving prorated monthly compensation.

Jeremy came to this congressional office because he was unable to develop any further avenues to pursue his claim on his own. The caseworker's first responsibility was to define what the constituent wanted. In Jeremy's case he wanted to be compensated for the aggravation of a mental health diagnosis.

Because of Jeremy's condition, it was necessary for the caseworker to broker links, to community resources for him to access ongoing mental health counseling. The caseworker also had to encourage Jeremy to become engaged in outside activities as a means of establishing boundaries, preventing him from becoming dependent on the caseworker. In the case of Jeremy, who enjoys

talking on the phone, referrals were made to community agencies for mental health services and to local prayer lines to volunteer his services. The caseworker also had to serve in the roles of mediator and advocate for Jeremy with the Department of Veterans Affairs. This was to ensure that Jeremy received all due consideration of his claim and that all the evidence was thoroughly reviewed, as Jeremy seemed to be unable to mediate on his own.

Jeremy's claim was resolved after 10 years and the involvement of two Members of Congress. He was awarded 100% service connection for his mental health diagnosis in the early 1990s. Today Jeremy is pursuing a claim for retroactive pay back to the date of discharge. He no longer needs the legislative caseworker or a Member of Congress, as he is acting on his own behalf as he pursues his claim knowing that the key element for working with the Veteran's Administration is time.

All three social work roles identified earlier were used in this case. For example, utilizing brokering, the caseworker set up contacts for the constituent to have mental health counseling as well as to have avenues for volunteer work. These two avenues provided him both therapeutic and activity outlets, which served him well throughout the process. She also worked as a mediator between Jeremy and the VA. It was necessary for specific information to be given to the VA, and the caseworker worked with Jeremy to provide that information. Constituents sometimes are unable to decipher what is being asked of them, and therefore the caseworker steps in to assist by interpreting confusing and requests that are sometimes worded in technical bureaucratic terms. And, as an advocate for Jeremy, the caseworker had an ethical obligation to be vigilant on his behalf, as he was awarded over \$100,000 for his service-connected disability. As a man with a mental health condition and a trusting spirit he made a good target for those with less scrupulous motives. Therefore, she worked with his family members to ensure his safety and security and developed means to protect Jeremy's interest.

In this capacity as a legislative caseworker the social worker worked through the social welfare system using her knowledge and skills to assist Jeremy, whose interests had slipped through the cracks of an unresponsive system. Her various roles included clinical assessment and referral of Jeremy for mental health services, advocating to the Veteran's Administration on his behalf,

monitoring communication between Jeremy and the Veteran's Administration, and helping to create a protective environment for him that included family, volunteer and social agencies. After safe guards were in place, the case was closed based on the constituent receiving the services to which he was entitled.

Some cases can take years to resolve, like Jeremy's did. But, this process cannot go on forever, therefore, time lines are very important to discuss with the client in both the planning and implementation phase. A balance between the needs, as well as expectations, of the constituent and the grinding gears of governmental bureaucracies is delicate one to maintain. There must be a reasonable time line given to the constituent for follow up.

Case Vignette: From Practice to Policy

Individual work with constituents can lead to identifying gaps in public services. With access to the legislative branch, the member of congress in particular, issues identified in the casework relationship can lead to efforts to change the policy or regulatory procedures. Examples of these are discussed below.

Ms. Montoya is a 65 year old recently retired constituent who is living on a small fixed income and insured by Medicare. She is a diabetic who has suffered from the disease since she was in her late 40s. Because of the advanced nature for her illness she needs to have frequent tests that she now finds are not covered by Medicare. She presents to the legislative caseworker distraught, worried about not obtaining the medical care she needs because she does not have money to pay out of pocket for the tests she needs. Meeting her most immediate needs, after assessing the situation, the legislative casework refers Ms. Montoya to an appropriate community health center who can perform the diagnostic procedures without payment. Meanwhile, the caseworker researched the Social Security Act and confirmed that these procedures are not covered. This is particularly problematic for this constituent population because of the epidemic nature of diabetes among Mexican Americans. At a subsequent discussion with the Congressman the staff member reported her findings regarding the gap in the Medicare law and the problem this created for Ms. Montoya. Further research on the issue was done by the legal staff and other caseworkers in other districts to gain a perspective of the scope of the problem. Subsequently, the Congressman asked his legislative and legal staff to further research this issue and then signed on as a co-sponsor for H.R. 2236 Access

to Diabetes Screening Services Act of 2003 that amends Title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide coverage under the Medicare Program for diabetes laboratory diagnostic tests and other services to screen for diabetes. At the time of this writing this bill is in the Subcommittee on Health of the Energy and Commerce Committee, and in the House Ways and Means Committee. The bill has 39 cosponsors.

Rufus, a constituent currently in the military contacted the District Office regarding ineligibility for educational benefits as he was contemplating retirement from active duty. He had been under the impression that he was eligible for education benefits after his career in the military. He found out though he was not eligible for benefits as he had missed an opportunity to sign up for such benefits several years ago, and money had not been deducted from his pay. Rufus had serious concerns about this for a number of reasons. The missed opportunity to sign up for educational benefits is not always clear to service personnel. Furthermore, with only a short window open for signing for these benefits a person's life situation may significantly change over the course of a military career making an earlier irrevocable decision more problematic later in life. Rufus does not believe in getting something for nothing, all he wanted was another chance to contribute to his educational fund while in active service. Although there was nothing the legislative caseworker was able to do for this constituent at the time he presented, she did research on the question and brought it to the attention of the Congressman. He subsequently asked his legislative staff to research the issue further and they determined this was indeed a problem that many military personnel face. After careful evaluation the Congressman asked his legislative staff to draft a bill that would address this situation. He subsequently introduced H.R. 2174, Educational Access for America's Soldiers Act of 2003 designed to amend Title 38, United States Code, to provide for any service member who did not enroll for the program of educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill an opportunity to enroll for that program. The bill provides an opportunity for military personnel a second chance at signing up for educational benefits by allowing the individual to make an irrevocable election for entitlement to basic educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill, if the individual meets the following requirements: 1) first became a member of the armed forces or entered active duty before, on, or after July 1, 1985; (2) has served on active duty without a break in service and continues to serve for some or all of the year before enactment of this Act; (3)

has completed requirements of a secondary school diploma or the equivalent of 12 semester hours in a program leading to a standard college degree; and (4) is discharged or released from active duty honorably. At the time of this writing the bill has four co-sponsors and has been referred to the Subcommittee on Benefits of the House Veteran's Affairs Committee, and the House Services Committee.

These scenarios demonstrate the access legislative caseworkers have to impacting policy. Because of their unique position they have the capacity to assist constituents with immediate concerns and also influence changing laws and regulations that may help to eliminate the source of many social problems and prevent similar distress for others.

Throughout this whole process, the importance of good listening skills and relationship building should never be underestimated. At every step of the casework process these social work skills are employed. Constituents present in severe hardship when they finally arrive at the district office, requiring social workers practice their clinical skills to diffuse some of the anger, frustration and hopelessness felt by the constituents when dealing with the overwhelming task of working with a federal agency. Caseworkers then take those feelings and work to channel it into positive actions the client can pursue on his/her behalf. Additionally, the caseworker frequently must use their assessment skills to make proper referrals to agencies on behalf of their constituents if there are unattended problems that persist, as in the case of Jeremy's mental health needs, and Ms. Montoya's health needs. Relationship skills are also very important to working with other systems on behalf of constituents. As demonstrated in these vignettes work on behalf of a constituent involves many other systems and good relationships are essential to make things happen for the benefit of the person in need.

Termination and Closure

Termination indicates that a problem has been resolved and that no further action is needed, or possible. This can be the result of a positive or negative decision from a federal agency. One of the most difficult aspects of the latter type of termination is accepting there is nothing more that can be done for the constituent and sharing that decision with them. There are circumstances where

a termination is necessary due to the fact that all avenues have been exhausted; for instance, appealing a case to the highest levels of a federal agency, to have it denied and nothing short of a legal action would be possible. In this case termination would have to take place despite the constituent's expectations and desires.

Closure, refers to the constituent moving on and is empowered to act on their behalf. Legislative caseworkers invest much into the relationships with constituents and constituents also share with the worker trust and hope. Closing is typically difficult, as in Jeremy's case. His caseworker helped him to achieve his goal of getting service connected disability compensation, but also formed a relationship with him of lasting quality.

At termination and closure referrals for other resources is a major consideration. Some constituents need no referrals, having tapped into appropriate systems while working with the caseworker. Others need these referrals for possible resources to meet current and future needs, such as financial assistance, food, clothing, guardianship, as in Jeremy's case, or health care assistance in Ms. Montoya's situation.

Summary and Conclusions

Legislative casework is a practice area conducted within an elected person's office designed to aid constituents with a variety of problems, most of which are related to unmet or insufficiently delivered services. The model for practice used in this discussion is based on the generalist problem solving approach taught in School's of Social Work and utilized by social workers in a variety of professional settings. Legislative casework can well be designed as a practice site for policy practice. Many aspects of policy practice discussed in the literature (Figueria-McDonough, 1993; Jansson, 1984; Jansson, 1994, and Wyer, 1991) are an integral part of legislative casework. For example, social workers engaged in legislative casework continuously combine direct practice with the full knowledge of the social policies' impact on constituents and the community, and the importance of developing social policy to be more responsive to the needs presented by constituents and community. This role fills a gap identified by Haynes and Mickelson (2000). They state . . . "[A]lly lobbyist cannot sway a legislator on a piece of legislation . . . without statistics, scenarios,

or both to back up his or her position, . . . and the practitioner on the frontline . . . often develops particular insight into social problems as well as firsthand knowledge of the target population (74)." Legislative caseworkers are among those on this frontline. A vision for this field of practice is that legislative caseworkers can bridge a gap between aggregated practitioner diagnosis and the data necessary to impact the political arena (Haynes and Mickleson, 2000, 76).

It is the belief of the authors that legislative casework is a field of practice in which more social workers need to enter and schools of social work need to prepare students for careers. Entry into this field of practice can begin with the placement of students in district offices for their practicum, (Wolk, Pray, Weismiller, and Dempsey, 1996; Hoefer, 1999; L. Moore, personal communication, October 12, 2002). These types of placements can fit into the curriculum at all levels, BSW generalist, MSW foundation and concentration. Although some have questioned whether legislative casework is indeed generalist practice, (Wolk, Pray, Weismiller, and Dempsey, 1996; Hoefer, 1999) we have demonstrated in this paper the use of the generalist model for practice in this setting. Students in this setting use a generalist problem solving model, engage in direct and indirect service with clients and systems, and utilize a myriad of social work roles. As a stronger link between education and this setting are developed, there will be an increase in the conceptualization of standardized practice principles resulting in more effective and efficient services to constituents.

With social workers becoming increasingly active in politics (Ezell, 1993), as formal and informal lobbyists, legislative assistants, and elected officials, the opportunity for social work, as a profession, to lay claim to legislative casework is ripe. As a profession wholly dependent on social policy for practice, the profession needs to continue to find ways to increase its presence in the policy arena.

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“Won’t be weighted down:”
Richard R. Wright, Jr.’s contributions
to social work and social welfare

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African-American scholars, intellectuals, and social work practitioners made significant contributions to American thought and life during the Progressive Era. Unfortunately, their work is often overlooked by history. This paper explores the contributions of Richard R. Wright, Jr., an African-American, sociologist, social worker, and minister. His voice has rarely been heard beyond the walls of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; however, his contributions to sociology, social welfare, and the church serve as a model of integration for scholars, social workers, and ministers. Wright’s example is particularly valuable as policy makers and the public look to organized religion for solutions to social problems.

Key words: *Richard R. Wright, Jr., African American scholars, Progressive Era, Religion, Faith*

The Progressive Era was a time of significant upheaval and change in the U.S. There was great industrialization, immigration, and prosperity; however, many people were struggling to survive while corporate leaders amassed vast fortunes. In midst of the turmoil, new voices emerged challenging the inequities that came with industrialization and urbanization. Many African-Americans made key social and intellectual contributions during the Progressive Era; unfortunately, their work has been lost or overlooked. This paper will attempt to recover the voice of Richard R. Wright, Jr. an African American progressive scholar, social worker, and pastor.

Wright methodically engaged the social issues of his day. His actions were deeply rooted in his theological and sociological

training. Wright provided hope to the masses through his work with the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He helped thousands of Southern migrants to Philadelphia secure employment, develop businesses, invest in their community, and own homes. His scholarly work shed much light on a variety of sociological and economic issues as a researcher and academic. He worked to systematically dismantle the myths surrounding African Americans. At the close of his life in an interview with the *Detroit Free Press*, Wright said, "There will always be differences in people, but they won't be weighted down by myths," (Anderson, 1963). Richard R. Wright, Jr. left a legacy of empowerment and systematic engagement. His life provides a valuable example for sociologists, social workers, and ministers as we seek to find ways to engage contemporary social and political issues.

Shaping Influences

Richard R. Wright, Jr. is the product of his family, his education, and his faith. His passion for excellence, his love of education, and commitment to the betterment of his people can be traced to his parents. Wright's approach to social issues and the world is heavily influenced by his education and his thirst for justice and righteousness is tied to his faith.

Family

Richard R. Wright, Jr. was born April 16, 1878 to an extraordinary family in Cuthbert, Georgia. Richard was the first child of Richard R. Wright, Sr. and Lydia Howard Wright, who both attended Atlanta University and taught in Cuthbert (Fleming, 1950; Haynes, 1952; Wright, 1965).

Little is known about the Howards, Richard's mother's family, but what we do know sheds great light on his heritage. Lydia was the fifth daughter in the Howard family. Her father had earned his freedom from slavery and owned a successful livery and blacksmith business in Columbus, Georgia (Wright, 1965; Haynes, 1952). Her mother could read and write and taught many other freedmen these skills upon emancipation. The Howards valued education, and they secured the best possible training for their children. Lydia was very successful at Atlanta University; however, she did not graduate, marrying Richard R. Wright, Sr.

after her junior year (Haynes, 1952). The success of Lydia's parents made a profound impression on her son Richard R. Wright, Jr, who noted, "both . . . could read, write and figure well, had money in the bank and owned their own home and other property. Grandpa owned several horses, drays and carriages and had a prosperous business" (Wright, 1965). The Howard's success was no small feat for African Americans in the 19th Century. It clearly served as an inspiration and model, instilling a pride and a hope for his family and his people.

Richard Wright, Sr. was born into slavery some time in the 1850's. His mother is said to be a descendant of a Mandingo princess and his father, a Cherokee Indian, was killed while trying to defend himself. After his father's death, the whole family was sold to another family for \$300. Richard was small in size, but he had a keen mind. As a slave, his size made him slightly suspect, but according to Elizabeth Ross Haynes (1952), Richard was able to master a plow, and his love for learning never died. At the close of the civil war, Richard and his family followed Sherman's Army from north Georgia to southwest Georgia and settled in Cuthbert (Haynes, 1952; Wright, 1965).

In 1866, the Wright family walked 200 miles from Cuthbert to Atlanta to enroll their children in the Storrs School, a school for freedmen established by northern missionaries. Richard excelled in school; however, he needed to work to help support his family, requiring him to withdraw. Richard left school to work for a wealthy family but maintained his passion for education and was able to reenroll and graduate, near the top of his class, from the Storrs School (Haynes, 1952; Wright, 1965).

Two stories highlight Richard Wright, Sr.'s foresight and ingenuity. The first and most famous occurred in 1866, shortly after he was enrolled in the Storrs School. General O. O. Howard, Head of the Freedman's Bureau, met with the students of the Storrs School at the close of a church service. He is said to have asked, "What message shall I take your friends up north?" After a period of silence, a young R. R. Wright answered, "Tell them we are a rising." Howard thought that was an appropriate message and should become the motto for the Freedman. John Greenleaf Whittier immortalized those words in his poem *Howard at Atlanta* (Haynes, 1952; Wright, 1965). The concept of an emerging people

with great gifts and talents was instilled in the Wright family from an early age channeling much of their energy into making this prophetic statement a reality.

The second critical experience for Richard, Sr. came also in those early days in Atlanta. One day, while he was working to help support the family, he gave his paycheck to his mother. His mother replied, "I am going to take this money and put it in the bank and live off the interest." This message stuck with Richard, Sr., so clearly, that when he was walking past the bank he told the banker, "I am going to have money in your bank" (Haynes, 1952). It is not clear if Richard, Sr. ever had money in that particular bank, but the concept of thrift was very much a part of his life; it was so influential that he eventually opened a bank with Richard, Jr. and his daughter Lillian making him one of the best known and most successful African American businessmen in the country (Davie, 1949; Haynes, 1952; Wright, 1965).

While his banking career established R. R. Wright, Sr. as a force in business, he had already played significant roles in organizing farmers into cooperatives, founding several educational institutions, including Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youth, now Savannah State College and serving as a paymaster in the Spanish-American War, appointed to the rank of major by President McKinley. He also was active in Republican politics and advised several presidents on the conditions of African Americans (Haynes, 1952; Meier, 1969).

This powerful heritage of education, self-help, and cooperative development had a great impact on Major R. R. Wright's son, Richard R. Wright, Jr. He excelled in school and worked to help others by establishing means for them to help themselves. The tradition of self-help was passed to each generation of the Wright family. Grace Wright Kyle, R.R. Jr.'s daughter, said her father and grandfather taught her to, "give your first 10% to the church, save your second 10% and live on the rest and you will never be in need." It is this mind set that Richard, Jr. also facilitated for many of the Southern migrants he would work with through the church and social service agencies during his long career.

Education

Richard R. Wright, Jr.'s education helped shape him into the person he was to become. For many years he studied under his

father and looked to his father for direction. In 1892, Richard enrolled at Georgia State College, where his father was president. The university was mainly a technical school, but it also offered a classical course of education in Greek and Latin. However, while Richard was attending, the Georgia State Education Commission decided to disband the classical curriculum at the Georgia State University on the basis that a "white man's education" would be useless to African Americans (Wright, 1965). This controversy only strengthened the resolve of the faculty and students, creating an evening school with classical training taught by the faculty in their homes. The State commission eventually relented, allowing the college to reinstitute the classical course from which Richard graduated in 1898 (Wright, 1963, 1965; Fleming & Burckel, 1950).

Upon graduation from Georgia State, Richard entered the Divinity School at the University of Chicago. This was his first venture outside the South and his first real encounter with whites. Educationally, the University of Chicago also had the most impact on Wright, exposing him to the concepts of the Historical Critical Method of Biblical Studies that led him to a commitment to the Social Gospel that characterized his work for the rest of his life. Also, while at the University of Chicago, he had the opportunity to study in Germany for a year where he met many people and his race ceased to be a barrier. Wright earned a Bachelor of Divinity Degree, the equivalent of a Masters of Divinity, and a Masters in Biblical Languages from the university. He also completed most of the course work for a Ph.D. in New Testament. However, in many ways his academic experiences were not the most valuable lessons Richard learned while at Chicago (Fleming & Burckel, 1950; Wright, 1963, 1965; Banner-Hally, 1993).

During Wright's time at Chicago, he developed several important relationships and experienced many social phenomena that would change the course of his ministry. During his early days at the university, Wright had heard about another student who had been considered a model by Richard's high school teacher. Eager to make a new friend, Wright went to introduce himself and talk about home. However, the young man denied being from Georgia or knowing his teacher or father. After checking with several sources, it was confirmed that he was in fact the boy from Georgia but he was "passing" as white. This young man was

one of the only people that ever made any kind of racial slurs to Wright while at the university. The running from one's roots made such an impression on Wright who, over 60 years later, recounted that story in his autobiography.

The university also offered many positive opportunities. It was during Wright's years at Chicago that he developed a relationship with George Edmund Haynes, the founder of the Urban League. He also came to work with Jane Addams and many of the people involved in the settlement movement. Wright's relationships with Haynes and Adams and his experience while pastoring in Chicago caused him to shift his academic focus from New Testament to Sociology.

The decision to study Sociology brought Wright to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, where he was chosen to follow up W. E. B. DuBois's ([1899] 1996) study entitled the *Philadelphia Negro* (Wright, 1965, [1912] 1969; Fleming & Burckel, 1950). While a student at Penn and in the years to follow in Philadelphia, Wright made many of his most significant contributions to the field of social work and social welfare. His study *The Negro in Pennsylvania* debunks many of the myths that surrounded African Americans for years and clearly defines the "Negro Problem" as a lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of the majority culture (Wright, 1969). Wright's experiences at Penn also allowed him to see first hand the ignorance of the race question portrayed by the well-meaning White experts (Wright, 1965). These valuable experiences established Richard Wright, Jr. as an expert on social issues and provided the foundation from which he could engage and address the nation regarding the concept of uplift and the "Negro Problem."

Faith

As crucial as family and education were in shaping Richard R. Wright, Jr., his faith and religious convictions provided his core values and the vehicles for him to work for progress and social change. Wright was raised in his mother's denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Church or AME. The AME church emerged out of the Free African Society founded in Philadelphia on April 12, 1787 by Richard Allen, Absalom Jones and several other Freedmen who were barred from prayer at St. George's

Methodist Church (Williams, 1972). From that point, the AME Church became the primary institution of self-help and leadership development in the African American community. The mission of the church demonstrates its commitment to uplift, which states, "God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, Man our Brother (Wright, 1963)." These are the values that were instilled in Richard from his childhood.

In his autobiography, *87 Years Behind the Black Curtain*, Wright (1965) recounts the story of his conversion, which was an arduous process. For years, Richard had struggled with the emotionalism of African American Christianity. His parents did not act in such a manner, but they had clear commitments in their faith. Each year during revival, young Richard would go to the "mourner's bench" and pray but never to the emotional conclusion that those around him were experiencing. The emotional response to revivals in his community were such that if a person were converted, he or she did not have to attend work the next day, and most people spent their time telling people about their experience. Since this was not consistent with his experience, Richard came to question his faith even though he believed in all the tenets of Christianity. However, during the revival of 1892, which Wright (1965) calls the "greatest revival in the history of Augusta, GA," Richard was converted. Unlike the other new converts, Richard went to school the day following the revival. The principal commended Richard on his commitment and lifted him as a true example of Christianity. Richard's father was also proud that his son's actions demonstrated his faith in a fuller manner than mere words, stressing the importance of living a life consistent with Christianity, not just talking Christian talk. This experience provided Richard with a clear example of ethical religion that he would take with him for life.

Richard's faith led him to the study of religion and a call into the ministry, where he would rise to the position of Bishop in the AME Church. He viewed the church as a vehicle to offer hope to his people and to develop leadership for future generations. Wright (1965) states, "I have devoted myself to the Christian ministry, as I was early convinced that building the spirit of people is the most important thing." In addition to traditional religious activities that built up people's spirits, Wright used his position

of pastor to organize other churches to improve their community and provide opportunities for education and uplift, including holding lecture series and exposing the community to the arts and letters (Banner-Hally, 1993).

Social Context

Family, education and faith all helped to shape R. R. Wright, Jr.; however, people are also formed by the times and the community in which they live and work. Wright was born and raised in the South and educated in the North where he remained for the majority of his life. Most of his social work took place in Philadelphia, from 1905 until 1932, when he moved to Ohio to become President of Wilberforce University¹ (Wright, 1963, 1965; Fleming & Burckel, 1950). During this time Philadelphia was considered a haven for many African-Americans. According to W. E. B. DuBois ([1899] 1996), "Philadelphia was the natural gateway between the North and the South."

Philadelphia was also considered a liberal and enlightened community because of its Quaker heritage. This meant that blacks were more freely accepted there, and economic and social opportunities were better than in many of the other northern cities. According to DuBois ([1899] 1996), this was generally true prior to the mid 1800's when the influx of Southern migrants began to overwhelm the people of the city. In fact, between 1830 and 1900, there were several instances of race riots in the city (DuBois, [1899] 1996). According to Roger Lane (1986), Philadelphia became two cities, one black, the other white. Nevertheless, by the turn of the century, Philadelphia had the largest black population of any Northern City (Franklin, 1979), totaling 40,374 (DuBois, [1899] 1996).

The Negro Problem

In the midst of this tumult, Richard R. Wright, Jr. came to Philadelphia to explore the "Negro Problem" in a follow up study of DuBois's seminal work. It is Wright's work on this issue that established him as a national authority. In many ways, Wright and DuBois differ on their approach to the problem. DuBois ([1899] 1996) tended to define the "Negro Problem" in terms of crime,

ignorance and laziness and is particularly critical of the Southern migrants; whereas Wright ([1912] 1969) seemed to see other issues such as poor living conditions and lack of access to economic opportunity and the attitude and ignorance of the White culture as the major factors of the "Negro Problem."

Wright's research addressed a number of the questions posed by DuBois. In terms of the Negro's ignorance, Wright ([1912] 1969) argued the Negro population was in fact more literate than other immigrant groups. In terms of crime, he shows that in 1908 there were nine Whites arrested for every Black arrested, and in 1905 less than 10% of the paupers in Pennsylvania were Black, the vast majority were White.

Wright also set out to show that there were structural factors involved in the plight of the African American migrants. In Philadelphia, despite its long tradition of educating Blacks, education for African Americans was poor and even if one could obtain a good education, there was no guarantee that one could secure adequate or appropriate employment. A full 60% of all black men were employed in domestic and low skilled work, the lowest paying of all fields, making it necessary for 90% of black women to work for their families to survive. This discouraged many migrants from pursuing an education as a means of uplift and increased the odds that children of working families would get into some kind of trouble due to the lack of parental supervision, possibly increasing criminal statistics (Wright, [1912] 1969).

Both Wright and DuBois acknowledged similar aspects of the "Negro Problem," but Wright focused more on the systemic issues that would produce the characteristics common to it. Both also indicate that the issues common to the "Negro Problem" such as crime, ignorance, inefficiency, etc. tended to be characteristic of the lower class rather than the race as a whole (Wright, [1912] 1969; DuBois, [1899] 1996). Thus, it was really a problem of poverty. The new arrivals from the South were poor and had little real opportunity for education and employment; however, as Wright points out, the great migration made it possible for the advancement of the already established Northern blacks by creating markets for their goods and services (Wright, [1912] 1969).

While the economic realities of the Great Migration contributed to the "Negro Problem," one cannot deny the role of

racism and paternalism on the part of Northern Whites. Wright comes across more fervently on this issue than DuBois, early acknowledging the role of racism in excluding Blacks from the main avenues of economic and social success. Wright ([1912] 1969) states, "the 'Negro problem'—that condition which is peculiar to Negroes, and common to them—is rather found in the attitude of the White race toward the Negro; an attitude of majority which seeks to shut out a minority from the enjoyment of the whole social and economic life."

Wright ([1912] 1969) felt that many Whites would use limited instances and activities to distort and judge the entire Negro race and justify their discrimination. The distorted views of the races only further exacerbated the problem, creating even deeper division. Wright seemed to believe that true mutual relationships between races would help address the problem, but he did not think that they were possible because most White/Black relationships were structured to benefit the Whites. This lack of relationships created an ignorance on the part of the community as a whole. Wright ([1912] 1969) notes, "It is not an exaggeration that the community as a whole is ignorant of the real life of Negroes." Wright dedicated the rest of his life to dispelling this ignorance and providing practical opportunities and programs to alleviate the "Negro Problem."

Self-Help

Clearly that the degree of legitimacy given to the characteristics that defined the "Negro Problem" would shape one's response to the problem itself. Even African American scholars such as H. T. Kealing (1903) and W. E. B. DuBois ([1899] 1996) gave intellectual credence to some of the stereotypes that defined the race and the "problem." While both Kealing's and DuBois' intentions were geared toward understanding and solving the "Negro Problem," their use of common assumptions may have reinforced the stereotypes and posed a threat to the psychological well being of the Southern migrants.

There is no doubt of DuBois' commitment to helping Blacks improve their stance in society through self-help; however, his belief that the characteristics of the "Negro Problem" were common

to the lower class would influence his approach to uplift. DuBois felt that the best path to improving the plight of Blacks was to develop the "Talented Tenth" (DuBois, 1903). DuBois' (1903) writes, "The Talented Tenth raises and pulls all that are worth saving up to their vantage ground." DuBois was truly committed to improving the race through the liberal and classical education of the elite.

In contrast, Booker T. Washington (1903) downplayed the importance of a classical liberal education and emphasized a grass-roots, bottom up approach to uplift and self-help. His success in providing high quality technical training to as many Blacks as possible truly had a great impact on the community. His concept of moving people from being worked to work was critical to the spirit of uplift in the people (Washington, 1903). However, when these artisans moved north they were often met by barriers to plying their trade or finding adequate work. Many of these barriers were erected by fear and prejudice on the part of the majority culture.

Much of R. R. Wright Jr.'s contributions to social work and social welfare were born while trying to tear down the barriers of race and build a level field of free and equal competition for African Americans. Wright ([1912] 1969) believed that education and free and equal economic competition were the primary means to self-help and uplift. It is an ideal that was instilled in him from an early age by his parents and grandparents.

In his 1909 work, *Self-help in Negro Education*, Wright outlines the contributions of African Americans in achieving their own uplift. He shows how the education of Blacks cost Whites little or nothing. Wright (1909) quoted George W. Cable, an ex-confederate soldier, who said, "The Negro, so far from being the educational pauper he is commonly reputed to be, comes, in these states, nearer to paying entirely for his children's schooling, such as it is, than any similarly poor man in any other part of the enlightened world." In many ways, self-help was the only real option for Blacks during this period. In fact, Wright's commitment to self-help was so strong that in his work *The Negro in Pennsylvania* he criticized Pennsylvania's colonial practice of supporting Freedmen as a means of making Blacks dependent on their former masters.

Wright was keenly aware of the dangers of dependence and the messages that Blacks were receiving from both the majority White culture and even some elements from within the African American community. Philosophically, Wright fell between Du-Bois and Washington, actively advocating and creating opportunities for employment for all African Americans as well as encouraging and creating opportunities for the educational uplift of his people. Wright (1913) states, "It has been chiefly the school which is gradually raising the Negro from unskilled to skilled labor, and making even his unskilled service more productive, by enlarging his desires for consumption, increasing his foresight and in general strengthening his character." Uplift, for Wright, could occur through manual labor and or classical liberal education, but it was primarily a product of Negro self-help. His passionate defense of self-help would prove to be both a point of great impact and a point of contention.

Contributions to Social Work and Social Welfare

Eighth Street Settlement House

One of Wright's early adventures in social work came while living and working at the Eighth Street Settlement House in Philadelphia. His work there was a part of his fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania. Some of his early duties included teaching evening classes to many of the boys who worked in a variety of jobs and did not attend school. In addition, he had some recreational duties with the boys. Wright began to investigate the conditions in the immediate area and resolved that there was a need to facilitate home ownership among African Americans in the community. Thus, Wright proposed that the Settlement House start a bank. Originally the idea was not well received by W. W. Frazier, the benefactor of the settlement. However, he suggested that Wright explore the possibilities of purchasing all the houses in the settlement neighborhood and he commissioned him to conduct a study on the feasibility of developing a homeownership program for blacks in the community (Wright, 1965).

Wright's study turned up many available houses but all at inflated prices. In his autobiography, Wright writes that this was due to the fact that he had mentioned that Mr. Frazier was interested

in purchasing the houses, offering a very valuable lesson for the young Wright. After much persistence, Wright was able to convince Mr. Frazier to help start a building and loan. Mr. Frazier remained doubtful as to its prospects, but he promised to match each dollar Wright could raise to start the institution. After much work, the early meeting yielded only \$50.00, to Wright's disappointment. Frazier, however, was so impressed that even fifty dollars was raised that he matched it and offered additional support. Four years later, the Eighth Ward Settlement Building and Loan appeared alive and well as it advertised in the 1910 Philadelphia Colored Directory (Wright, 1910, 1965). The Building and Loan allowed Wright to facilitate progressive uplift, while encouraging self-help.

Armstrong Association

Wright's work at the University of Pennsylvania and the settlement house provided some recognition and opened opportunities for networking. In 1907, Wright met with John T. Emlen, a prosperous White man and former teacher at Hampton Institute, to discuss ways of helping the recent migrants. The result was the formation of the Armstrong Association, named after General S. T. Armstrong, founder of Hampton Institute (Sabbath, 1994, p. 84). The purpose of the Armstrong Association was two fold: educational and economic (Armstrong Association, undated).

Wright was employed as the first field secretary, working directly with the recent migrants. As field secretary, Wright also wrote the constitution of the organization and secured work for many of Philadelphia's new citizens. In addition, Wright organized the Colored Mechanics Association to help the migrants obtain work that they were skilled and trained for. Wright also provided a key relational link to George Edmund Haynes, the founder of the National Urban League, whom he had known at the University of Chicago (Wright, 1965). This relationship would prove fruitful for both the Urban League and the Armstrong Association, as they became the first regional affiliate.

However, after only two years with the Armstrong Association, Wright's commitment to self-help over social service created a division with Dr. Grammer, President of the Armstrong Association. Wright writes, "As the time passed, Dr. Grammer, our

president, and I did not agree on many fundamentals. He lived in the South and apparently thought he knew all about 'Negroes.' His idea of helping them was limited to giving them charity" (Wright, 1965). This caused a rift that could not be repaired. Nevertheless, Wright was elected as Editor of the *Christian Recorder*, the primary literary organ of the AME Church.

Unfortunately Wright's name has almost disappeared from the work of the Armstrong Association. Both he and the Association lost the files of those early years (Wright, 1959; Carter, 1959). Other than an unpublished history of the Association, which credits Wright for starting the economic work of the organization, stating, "Dr. R.R. Wright, Jr., contributed the format for the expansion of economic opportunity" (Armstrong Association, undated) and Wright's own reflections, little is known or documented of the early years.

Research and Writing

From 1909 to 1928, Wright's focus shifted from a direct practice of social welfare to shaping opinions as the editor of the *Christian Recorder*. Robert Gregg (1993) points out in *Sparks From the Anvil of Oppression* that as editor of the *Christian Recorder*, Wright was one of the primary advocates of the Southern migrants. Wright's research was being published in many scholarly journals and periodicals, in addition to the *Christian Recorder*, during this time. His research provides a vivid picture of Black life during the progressive era. Wright ([1912] 1969) writes, "Only after one has obtained knowledge of the history, is he fully competent to deal with present problems, and then he is less certain than ever that any of the ordinary problems of life are particularly Negro problems." He was able to demonstrate that African Americans had made great contributions to our nation and were capable of making similar contributions if the barriers of race were removed allowing free and equal competition.

While Wright was a prolific writer, he also applied his research in practical contexts. During the time Wright served as editor of the *Christian Recorder*, he remained active in banking through his association with the Eighth Ward Building and Loan and by founding Citizen's and Southern Bank with his Father Major R. R. Wright (Wright, 1965). Citizen's and Southern became one of the

premier Black owned banks in the nation and offered true opportunities for African American self-help (Haynes, 1952; Meier, 1969). Wright's contributions to banking were truly significant. According to M. R. Davie (1949), "The Negro bank is more than a financial institution; it is a symbol of the Negro's aspirations to enter commercial life of the nation and a mark of his faith in his own ability and competence." These economic ventures were instruments of self-help and hope.

The Parish Church

In 1928, R. R. Wright, Jr. returned to the parish ministry as the pastor of Ward AME Church in Philadelphia. From his pastoral position, Wright continued to influence social work and social welfare in the city of Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin (9/1/28) notes that Wright was going to have a nurse and a social worker on staff at Ward AME. This was consistent with his belief in the Social Gospel. Wright (1965) writes, "For me there was little else for the church to do than to make practical its belief in God and brotherhood, and to help build a Christian society on earth."

This concept was consistent throughout Wright's ministry. In the *Outline of the Teachings of Jesus*, originally published in 1903, Wright writes, "The Christian ought to strive to make the state the true representative of the Kingdom of God upon earth." We can see this in his early pastorate at Chicago's Trinity AME Church and in his writing and social work (Wright, 1965). There is little surprise that the same elements would be representative of his later pastorates. In practical ways, Wright used his churches as meeting places for clergy and social activists and staging grounds for education and change in the community.

Wright (1907) saw the church as the primary influence in the African American community due to its size and organization, and as a pastor he used this to impact his people. Wright used his church to expose people to literature and the arts, holding lectures and having readings (Wright, 1965; Banner-Hally, 1993). For him, it was a place to teach children about their African culture and heritage. Many of the social and educational activities emerged out of Wright's concern for the migrants who were succumbing to the saloons and ballparks of the big city (Wright, 1907).

In 1932, Wright was elected President of Wilberforce University, signaling the end of his career in the local church. Wilberforce University was the first university in the U.S. specifically for African Americans. Founded in 1856 as a joint venture between Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church, its purpose was to educate "Colored People." In 1862, the Methodist Episcopal Church sold the university to the Cincinnati Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church for \$10,000, making it the only institution of higher education wholly owned and controlled by African Americans in the nation (Talbert, 1906). The move from the pastorate to Wilberforce greatly increased Wright's influence on the church and his people.

An Officer of the Church

As President of Wilberforce, Wright put the College on the path to accreditation and provided opportunities to develop many young African American leaders (Wright, 1965). A few years later, Wright was elected Bishop in the AME Church, a position he held until his death in 1967.

While his official Church duties would take Wright around the country and around the world, he kept a focus on creating change in the community and organizing the church for action. His position allowed him to serve as President of the National Fraternal Council of Negro Churches, whose purpose was to "foster unity and to bring about racial and economic justice; through progressive measures of non-partisan political legislation and social reform" (Walls, 1974).

In his 1948 Episcopal Address to the 33rd General Conference of the AME Church, Wright urged the denomination to form a formal social service branch so they could address social concerns ecumenically. In that same address, he proposed a men's service league that would reach out to men, render community service, and promote social service on a national, connectional basis.

Wright's legacy as bishop impacted social welfare beyond the programmatic and organizational areas. Once he was asked to speak at a church in Georgia. The church was located in the black section of town, and city services ended where the neighborhood began. After considering his options, Wright accepted the invitation under the condition that a bathroom with running water be

constructed at the parsonage. The church had been turned down by many other dignitaries, so they agreed to build the bathroom. Wright's acceptance had an agenda: he thought if they built the bathroom and ran the water lines, the entire neighborhood would have access to public water (Conversation with Grace Wright Kyle, 1996). Richard Wright was a methodical planner and visionary leader intent on creating opportunities to improve the plight of all people and tearing down the "Black Curtain."

Contributions to Social Welfare

Eugene Kinckle Jones (1928), Executive Director of the National Urban League, in his article, "Social Work Among Negroes", writes, "While the Black social worker has to do all the work of a typical social worker, they also have the responsibility of bringing the whole Negro group as a separate social entity up to a higher level of social status." Richard R. Wright, Jr. epitomized this quality. He not only was able to design programs, inform the masses and inspire hope, he was also able to develop leaders and improve not only the plight of African Americans, but all humanity.

Through his research and writing, R. R. Wright, Jr. provided insightful analysis and wise counsel for all to heed.² In his endeavors to encourage home ownership, he developed banks and building and loans that were a major factor in providing housing to the Southern migrant and make the Philadelphia housing market more equitable (Emlen, 1913). Through the Armstrong Association, he helped develop a national model of social service and economic development among Southern migrants. And through the church, he developed leaders and "kept hope in the hearts of our people," creating national networks that would work for justice. George Edmund Haynes (1928) wrote, regarding the church, "No one institution has probably contributed as much to Negro development . . . the church and especially the segregated Negro church, has been a powerful ally of Negro progress." During the Progressive Era and beyond, Wright contributed much to the development of the church in general and the segregated Negro church in particular. His work with the church provides a model for social workers, scholars, and ministers as the federal

government increasingly looks to religious organizations to take on increased responsibility for the provision of social welfare services in our communities:

First, Wright possessed a clear theological concept of the church. Wright states, "The object [of the church] seems to be to serve men, rather than to get members, and though the church proper has only 250 members its social influence has been seen in the lives of thousands of citizens who have been helped to respectability and goodness" (Wright, 1907, p.91). His theological understanding provided a purpose for his work in religious organizations. It drove him to his study of sociology, and it shaped his actions as a pastor, scholar, social worker, and administrator. Wright felt the model church would provide linkages to employment, housing, education, and economic development (Wright, 1907). Practically, he used his congregations for such purposes and his position as bishop to encourage denominational investment in social service activities (Wright, 1948).

Second, Wright understood the capacity of congregations. Developing a clear understanding of the strengths and limitations of congregations is vital, as policy is sculpted with religious organizations in mind. Wright (1965) knew the church was a place that could foster hope and identity in people. He understood religious congregations were valuable social institutions uniting people for action (Wright, 1907). However, he was aware of the challenges of mobilizing the church for social activities—particularly when people believed the church to be solely responsible for spiritual activities (Wright, 1965). The danger was the church would see its activities as a means of increasing membership rather than improving life for all people (Wright, 1907). His insight into the capacity of the church was the result of years of research and practice.

Third, Wright's actions were deeply rooted in sound social scientific scholarship. Wright was a scholar of the church and of the social conditions the church encountered. The programs he developed were significantly shaped by his theological understanding of the nature and mission of the church and supported by empirical sociological evidence uncovered in his research on the plight of Southern migrants. Wright's model points to the fact that sound social intervention through congregations and religiously related organizations must be rooted in social scientific

and theological research and scholarship. This is a valuable lesson for religious leaders, policy makers, social workers, and program planners.

"There will always be differences in people, but they won't be weighted down by myths," R. R. Wright, Jr. stated in the *Detroit Free Press*. Wright demonstrated that the characteristics of the "Negro Problem" were myths, he created structures to ensure the destruction of the myths, and he inspired hope for many weighted down and oppressed by these myths. Wright's work in the church is particularly valuable in a time when religious institutions are seen as key providers of social services. His life can serve as a valuable model as we seek to answer many complicated questions. Wright is a social welfare pioneer and his voice must be heard, not just in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, but also in the corridors of academia and the halls of power and most importantly in the hearts of people everywhere.

Notes

1. Wilberforce University was founded in 1856 with the purpose of educating "Colored people." It was the first university to be solely owned and operated by African Americans, making it an important institution in the life and history of African Americans. It is also important to note Wilberforce has always used the name "university." In the early days, there was some debate over the use of the name university, considering school, academy, or college; however, the early founders decided the name "University" was the only adequate name for the institution. Therefore it has never been considered a college (Talbert, 1906, p. 265).
2. Two critical publications of R. R. Wright, Jr.'s appear to have been lost: *Social Work in the Church: A handbook written for the Allen Christian Endeavor League, as a guide for local social work and Social Service* (1922) these publications are listed in a number of sources but I have not been able to locate either in six years of searching, including at the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection at Temple University, that houses R. R. Wright, Jr.'s remaining papers. Wright's eldest daughter, Ruth Hayre, Ph.D., told me her father burned many of his papers and letters when he found out she had discovered them. The loss of these important publications points to a great tragedy in this nation—the loss of valuable African-American historical resources.

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Digital Divide in Computer Access and Use Between Poor and Non-Poor Youth

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The main objectives of this study were to examine the “digital divide” in home computer ownership and to evaluate differences in academic and non-academic computer use between poor and non-poor youth. Data from a national sample of 1,029, 10- through 14-year-old young adolescents were analyzed. Results show that poor youth were .36 times as likely to own a home computer, but equally as likely to use their home computer for academic purposes as were non-poor youth. Poor youth did not differ from non-poor youth in how often they used any computer for academic purposes, but were less likely to use any computer for non-academic purposes. Government initiatives to close the digital divide and foster computer use among poor youth are suggested.

Key words: *digital divide; poverty; computer use; information technology*

The phrase “digital divide”—the disparity between individuals who have and do not have access to information technology (IT)—became part of our country’s vocabulary in the mid-1990s (Wilhelm, Carmen, & Reynolds, 2002). Well-documented inequalities in access to and use of IT such as the computer and Internet reflect existing patterns of social stratification in the United States (Steyaert, 2002). For example, high-income, Caucasian, married, and well-educated individuals have more access to IT compared to low-income, African American and Latino, unmarried, and less-educated individuals (National Telecommunications and Information Administration [NTIA], 2000, 2002).

Although recent increases in access to IT in public schools have narrowed the IT gap between high- and low-income and

white and minority students (NTIA, 2002), inequalities in IT access and use among children and adolescents continue, paralleling those of adults (Attewell & Battle, 1999). A recent survey (NTIA, 2002) indicates that less than 3% of adolescents living in the highest income families do not use computers, compared to approximately 15% of youth in the lowest income category. Although home computer use is almost universal among the wealthiest youth, only one-third of the lowest-income youth use a home computer. The survey found similar differences in Internet access and use between low- and high-income youth and in computer and Internet access and use between Latinos and African Americans and whites.

For more than a decade, numerous private and government initiatives have assisted poor communities and low-resource schools (where poor and minority students are more likely to reside and to attend) to gain access to computers, educational software, and the Internet (Wilhelm et al., 2002). Despite the well-documented IT gap between high- and low-income youth, and the billions of dollars that have been spent to close this gap (Roberts, 2000), few studies have examined IT access and type of IT use between poor and non-poor youth using multivariate methods. The multivariate methods used in this study enable the assessment of the independent influences of poverty on home computer ownership and on type of IT use, while controlling for other socio-demographic factors.

Implications of the Digital Divide

Diverse groups of individuals from government, education, social work, private foundations, industry, the popular press, as well as parents and youths themselves, have expressed several reasons why the nation should be concerned about the gap between the IT "haves" and "have-nots" (Brown, 2000; Hick & McNutt, 2002; NTIA, 2000; Turow & Nir, 2000). These concerns fall into four main themes: educational advantages, future employment and earnings, opportunities for social and civic involvement, and equity and civil rights issues.

Many educators, researchers, policy advocates, and government officials maintain that computers, educational software, and

the Internet offer a number of educational advantages (Center for Media Education, 1996; Lepper & Gurtner, 1989; Ross, Smith, & Morrison, 1991). IT can provide students and teachers with a large body of easily accessible information; create opportunities to reinforce learning basic, new, and higher-order cognitive skills; and increase student interest and motivation, parent-school communication, and parent involvement. These advantages, in turn, are expected to produce positive educational outcomes such as increased student achievement and school retention (Center for Media Education, 1996; U. S. Department of Education, 1999; Wenglinsky, 1998). Research tends to support these expectations, generally finding positive relations between school, home, and community uses of IT and a variety of academic outcomes both for socioeconomically disadvantaged (e.g., Blanton, Moorman, Hayes, & Warner, 1997; Ross et al., 1991; Sutton, 1991) and other children and youth (e.g., Campbell, Hombo, & Mazzeo, 2000; Fletcher-Flinn & Gravatt, 1995; Rocheleau, 1995; Schacter, 1999; Wenglinsky, 1998). Recent polls also indicate that parents, registered voters, elected officials, and business leaders share the belief that IT provides students with educational advantages. For example, almost 90% of polled parents agreed that access to IT assists children with their school work, and 74% of parents believed that children without access to IT are at an educational disadvantage (Turow & Nir, 2000). Over two-thirds of registered voters also agreed that educational computer uses would make a great deal or a fair amount of difference in the quality of children's education (Milken Exchange on Educational Technology, 1998).

Children's and adolescent's access to and use of IT also are expected to increase future employment and earning opportunities. IT skills assist youth in researching and locating employment (NTIA, 2000). IT skills prepare youth to successfully compete in job markets in which an increasing number of occupations require such skills (U.S. Department of Education, 1999), and employers compensate workers who possess them with higher wages (Krueger, 1993). The belief among adolescents themselves that IT is important to their current and future well-being is reflected in a recent poll (Gallup Organization, 1997). Over three-fourths of the teenagers thought that owning a computer was critically

important, and more than 80% of these youths believed strong computer skills and IT knowledge were necessary for them to make a good living in the future.

IT not only has revolutionized the way individuals learn and earn a living, but has provided new avenues for communicating and participating in the nation's social and civic life (Loneragan, 2000; NTIA, 2000). Daily newspapers, research, and government and private information on a variety of important social and civic topics are available online (Brown, 2000). In addition, computer and Internet technologies provide a variety of communication methods such as electronic-mail, instant messages, listserves, and chatrooms, placing youth who lack access to or skills in using IT at a social disadvantage (NTIA, 2000).

The widespread belief in the benefits of IT to the educational, occupational, and social well-being of individuals, and the IT gap between the poor and non-poor and minorities and whites, have led some to characterize the "digital divide" as one of America's leading equity or civil rights issues (Brown, 2000; Loneragan, 2000; NTIA, 1999). Inequalities in IT access and use not only mirror existing patterns of social stratification, but can maintain and even widen current disparities between these groups in important indicators of well-being such as academic achievement and earnings (Johnson, 2000; Krueger, 1993; Sutton, 1991; U. S. Department of Education, 2002). Disparities in academic achievement might widen because low-income and minority youth are unable to take full advantage of the educational benefits of IT. Inequalities in earnings might increase as a result of poor and minority youth being less prepared to compete for higher paying jobs that require IT skills, or result from the link between academic achievement and subsequent educational attainment and future earnings (Jencks & Phillips, 1999).

Critiques of IT

Not all educators and researchers are enthusiastic about the recent trend in the widespread use of IT among children and youth. Those who criticize this trend argue that research has not convincingly demonstrated that IT is effective in enhancing academic outcomes (Oppenheimer, 1997). Moreover, youth frequently use IT for recreational purposes such as playing video-

games, which might increase social withdrawal among socially marginal youth, encourage impulsive and aggressive behaviors (Lin & Lepper, 1987), or displace traditional instruction in the school and academic activities in the home (such reading and completing homework) that enhance academic achievement (Colaric & Jonassen, 2001; Johnson, 2000; Lepper & Gurtner, 1989).

Arguments against the widespread use of IT among children and adolescents might be especially applicable to poor youth. Although most children and adolescents use the computer primarily for recreational purposes such as playing games, E-mail, and listening to music, rather than for academic learning (Becker, 2000; Giacquinta & Lane, 1990; Kafai & Sutton, 1999), a Gallup Poll (1997) found that a higher percentage of low-income youth used the computer to play video games daily, compared to their wealthier peers. Other research suggests that socioeconomically disadvantaged youth would be less likely to use IT for academically productive purposes because their parents are less able to provide educational software, computer hardware, technical assistance, and supervision, compared to wealthier parents (Attewell & Battle, 1999; Becker, 2000; Giacquinta & Lane, 1990). A similar argument has been applied to low-resource schools, to which poor and minority youth are more likely to attend. Low teacher-student ratios, outdated technology, and teachers with few IT skills, factors that are associated with low-resource schools, would likely result in low levels of supervision and unproductive educational uses of IT (Becker, 2000; Ryan, 1991; Wenglin-sky, 1998).

Despite the existing disparities in IT access and use between poor and non-poor youth and the allocation of billions of federal dollars to increase IT access and use (Lonergan, 2000; Roberts, 2000), few studies have used a multivariate approach to examine the independent impact of poverty on home computer ownership and type of IT use. Such results could provide the basis for policy development focused on addressing specific and clearly identified effects of the digital divide. Recent data from a national sample of young adolescents are used to examine four specific research questions: Controlling for the youth's race/ethnicity, age, gender, and the marital status and education of the youth's mother (1) are poor youth less likely to have access to a home

computer, (2) are poor youth less likely to use their home computer for academic purposes, (3) do poor youth use any computer less often for academic purposes, and (4) do poor youth use any computer more often for non-academic purposes, compared to non-poor youth?

Method

Data and Sample

Data were drawn from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) and the NLSY mother/child data sets. The original NLSY, initiated in 1979, included 12,686 individuals between 14 and 21 years of age, including oversamples of African American, Latino, and economically disadvantaged youth. Respondents were interviewed annually from 1979 through 1994, and biannually thereafter. Beginning in 1986 and every two years afterwards, a number of assessments were administered to the original NLSY female participants and to their biological children. By 2000, the most recent data available for this analysis, 8,323 children had been born to the 4,113 interviewed female respondents (Center for Human Resource Research, 2001).

Young adolescent children of the original NLSY female cohort who were interviewed in 2000 comprise the sample used in this analysis. These adolescents were 10 through 14 years of age, were attending public school, and answered at least one survey question related to computers and their use. The sample was limited to youth between the ages of 10 through 14 years because only children in this age range were evaluated with the self-administered survey that provided the computer variables for this analysis. To meet the assumption of statistical independence, only one young adolescent was selected randomly from families with more than one child. The remaining sample of 1,029 young adolescents included 288 Black, 166 Hispanic, and 575 non-Hispanic, White youth (hereinafter referred to as "African American," "Latino," and "white").

Measures

Independent variables. *Poverty* was measured by comparing family income reported by the female respondent during the 2000

interview (which refers to income in 1999) to 185% of the official poverty threshold for the family size measured at the interview date. If total family income for a given family size fell below 185% of the official threshold, the youth was categorized as poor, and as non-poor otherwise. Defining poverty as 185% of the poverty thresholds is consistent with federal government eligibility guidelines for a free or reduced-price lunch and with other studies examining the relation between low income and computer access and use (e.g., Cattagni & Westat, 2001; Wenglinsky, 1998).

Other independent variables included the youth's age (10, 11, 12, 13, and 14); gender; race/ethnicity, based on the mother's racial/ethnic identification (African American; Latino; and white); mothers' marital status (married, spouse present; all other types) and mothers' years of education (less than 12 years; 12 years; more than 12 years). The youth's age and the mother's marital status and educational attainment were measured at the 2000 interview date. Variables indicating location of residence (urban vs. rural and region of the country) initially were evaluated in the models presented in the Results section. Because none of the residence coefficients were statistically significant nor substantively affected the size or significance of other coefficients, the variables were removed from the final models. Respondents provided complete information on all the independent variables, with the exception of family income (approximately 15% of respondents had missing income information). For respondents with missing income data, poverty status was imputed using the matching procedures available in Interactive LISREL (du Toit & du Toit, 2001).

Dependent variables. The first dependent variable measured whether the youth had a *home computer*. Those youth who had a home computer indicated which of seven activities they used their computer for most often. Based on findings from a principal components analysis of similar items (explained in the next paragraph) an *academic home computer use* dichotomous variable was formed by grouping two items indicating academic use (school or homework; learn/practice a skill such as art, music or another language) and five items indicating non-academic use (entertainment, such as games and recreation; writing letters and

correspondence; references or looking things up; accessing the Internet or using E-mail; other uses). The other two dependent variables were the frequency of youth's academic and non-academic use of *any* computer. These variables were measured by the youth rating (0 = never to 4 = almost every day) how often they used any computer for 13 specific purposes. In order to determine whether these items could be reduced to conceptually coherent sets of variables, indicating academic and non-academic computer use, a principal components analysis was conducted (Dunteman, 1989). The analysis yielded two components. The first component indicated *academic computer use* (writing stories, reports, compositions, or papers; doing math, graphs, or computation; doing reading or spelling; doing science problems; learning, practicing, or making music; doing art work or graphics; creating or writing computer programs; and analyzing data). For the academic use component, Cronbach's alpha = .84; lowest factor loading = .50. The second component indicated *non-academic computer use* (writing letters; looking up things or using references; playing games; reading or sending E-mail; and accessing the Internet or other on-line networks or services). Alpha = .75; lowest factor loading = .52. Additive scales were created to measure the frequency of academic and non-academic computer use (scores ranged from 0 to 20 for academic use, and from 0 to 18 for non-academic use).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in two steps. First, weighted descriptive statistics for the study sample and dependent variables were computed. Second, multivariate models for the dichotomous variables (home computer ownership and home computer academic use) were estimated using logistic regression, the preferred analysis of binary dependent variables (Allison, 1999). Multivariate logistic regression allows for examining the effect that each independent variable contributes to the log odds that the respondent had a home computer (versus no home computer) and used the home computer most often for academic purposes (versus non-academic purposes), while adjusting for the effects of the other independent variables. Multivariate (Ordinary Least Squares) regression models were estimated for the frequency of academic and non-academic computer use. As recommended

by the Center for Human Resource Research (2001), the regression analyses were conducted using unweighted data. The race/ethnicity variables controlled for the oversamples of minority respondents included in the NLSY.

Results

Weighted means and standard deviations or percentages for the study sample and variables are presented in Table 1. Although more than 87% of non-poor youth had a home computer, only 55.89% of poor youth had a computer. Among the 710 youths who had access to a home computer and answered the item related to computer use, only 26 (3.32%) reported that they did not use their home computer. There were no significant differences in using versus not using their home computer between poor and non-poor youth, $\chi^2(1, N = 710) = .075, p = .784$. Table 1 also indicates large differences in computer ownership between white (84.13%) and African American (51.76%) and Latino (59.16%) youth. A relatively low percentage of youth (19.63%) reported using their home computer most for academic purposes, a percentage that is similar for poor (22.33%) and non-poor (23.16%) youth. A larger percentage of African Americans (33.02%) and Latinos (30.67%), however, reported using their home computer for academic use, compared to whites (21.51%). Youth also reported using any computer more frequently for non-academic ($M = 8.88$) versus academic uses ($M = 5.86$). Means for frequency of academic computer use are almost identical for poor and non-poor youth, but poor youth reported using any computer less often for non-academic purposes ($M = 7.83$) than did non-poor youth ($M = 9.30$). As compared to whites, African Americans and Latinos reported using any computer more often for academic purposes and less often for non-academic purposes.

Results of the multivariate logit analysis of poverty and other factors associated with home computer ownership and youth academic use of their home computer appear in Table 2. Controlling for the effects of all other variables in the model, the odds ratio for poverty indicates that poor young adolescents were .36 times as likely to have a home computer as non-poor youth. African American (odds ratio = .28) and Latino (odds ratio = .37)

Table 1
Weighted Means (Standard Deviations) or Percentages for the Study Sample and Variables (N = 1,029)^a

Variable	Dependent Variables				
	Study Sample	Home Computer Ownership	Academic Home Computer Use	Frequency Academic Computer Use	Frequency Non-Academic Computer Use
<i>Independent variables</i>					
Poverty (less than 185% of official threshold)					
Poor	29.57%	55.89%	22.33%	5.90 (5.08)	7.83 (4.79)
Non-poor	70.43	87.18	23.16	5.85 (4.94)	9.30 (4.83)
<i>Youth/Mother Characteristics</i>					
Youth age (years)					
Ten	21.15%	76.32%	18.81%	5.58 (5.16)	7.58 (4.58)
Eleven	20.51	80.84	22.28	5.66 (5.20)	8.29 (4.76)
Twelve	22.71	77.05	23.28	5.96 (4.75)	8.86 (4.99)

Digital Divide

Thirteen	22.75	77.95	24.19	5.76 (4.89)	9.96 (4.83)
Fourteen	12.88	77.36	28.15	6.60 (4.85)	9.93 (4.66)
Youth gender					
Female	47.36%	76.30%	23.07%	5.97 (4.90)	8.79 (4.98)
Male	52.64	79.37	22.90	5.76 (5.06)	8.96 (4.75)
Youth race/ ethnicity					
African American	14.21%	51.76%	33.02%	7.75 (6.30)	7.69 (4.94)
Latino	6.66	59.16	30.67	6.45 (5.46)	7.50 (4.63)
White	79.13	84.13	21.51	5.50 (4.61)	9.19 (4.82)
Mothers' marital status					
Married, spouse present	69.43%	84.73%	21.82%	5.77 (4.85)	9.25 (4.78)
All other types	30.57	62.46	26.79	6.08 (5.28)	7.98 (4.95)

(continued)

Table 1
(Continued)

Variable	Dependent Variables				
	Study Sample	Home Computer Ownership	Academic Home Computer Use	Frequency Academic Computer Use	Frequency Non-Academic Computer Use
Mothers' years of education					
Less than 12 years	13.42%	54.19%	30.70%	6.65 (5.16)	7.96 (5.01)
12 years	39.21%	70.37%	23.49%	6.00 (5.22)	8.62 (4.96)
More than 12 years	47.37	90.89	21.43	5.54 (4.70)	9.33 (4.69)
Dependent Variables					
Home computer ownership (n = 1,002)					
Yes	77.92%				
No	22.08				
Academic home computer use (n = 690)					
Yes	19.63%				
No	80.37				

Frequency academic computer use (n = 894)	5.86 (4.99)
Frequency non-academic computer use (n = 894)	8.88 (4.86)

Notes: Weights adjust for oversamples of African American and Latino youth.

^aSample size is unweighted and varies depending on the number of responses on the dependent variable.

Table 2

Multivariate Logit Analyses of the Effect of Poverty and Other Factors on Home Computer Ownership (N = 1,022) and Academic Home Computer Use (N = 690) Among Young Adolescents

Variable	Home Computer Ownership		Academic Home Computer Use	
	Logit Coefficient	Odds Ratio	Logit Coefficient	Odds Ratio
Poor (non-poor)	-1.03***	.36	-.13	.88
Youth age (14 years)				
Ten	-.34	.71	-.42	.66
Eleven	.03	1.03	-.22	.80
Twelve	-.20	.82	-.25	.78
Thirteen	-.22	.81	-.20	.82
Youth male	.15	1.16	-.20	.82
Youth race/ethnicity (white)				
African American	-1.27***	.28	.58*	1.78
Latino	-1.00***	.37	.63*	1.88
Mother married, spouse present (other types)	.34†	1.41	-.09	.91
Mothers' years of education (more than 12 years)				
12 years	-1.20***	.30	.08	1.09
Less than 12 years	-1.48***	.23	.06	1.06

Notes: Reference categories are in parenthesis.

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

youth also were less likely to have a home computer compared with white youth. Results of the second multivariate logit model indicate that poor youth were about equally as likely to report using their home computer most often for academic purposes as were non-poor youth. African Americans (odds ratio = 1.78) and Latinos (odds ratio = 1.88) also were more likely to report using their home computer most often for academic purposes compared to whites.

Table 3

Multivariate Regression Analyses of the Effect of Poverty and Other Factors on Frequency of Young Adolescent Academic and Non-Academic Computer Use (N = 894)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency Academic Computer Use b</i>	<i>Frequency Non-academic Computer Use b</i>
Poor (non-poor)	-.12	-.96*
Youth age (14 years)		
Ten	-.91	-2.26***
Eleven	-.92	-1.85***
Twelve	-.42	-.83
Thirteen	-.79	-.04
Youth male	.05	.24
Youth race/ethnicity (white)		
African American	2.24***	-1.15**
Latino	.85†	-1.23**
Mother married, spouse present (other types of marital status)	.41	.27
Mothers' years of education (more than 12 years)		
12 years	.67	-.62†
Less than 12 years	1.11*	-.77

Notes: Reference categories are in parenthesis.

† $p < .10$ * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 3 presents the results of the multivariate (OLS) regression analyses of poverty and other factors associated with the time young adolescents spent on academic and non-academic uses of any computer. Poor youth did not significantly differ in the frequency of their computer use for academic purposes compared with non-poor youth, but poor youth reported using a computer significantly less often for non-academic purposes ($b = -.96$, $p < .05$). African Americans ($b = 2.24$, $p < .001$) and Latinos ($b = .85$, $p < .10$) reported using a computer more frequently

than whites for academic purposes and less frequently for non-academic purposes ($b = -1.15, p < .01$, for African Americans; $b = -1.23, p < .01$, for Latinos).

Absence of a statistically significant difference in frequency of academic computer use between poor and non-poor youth, as well as the negative relation between poverty and frequency of non-academic use, might result from poor youth's more restricted access to computers. Since poor youth are less likely to have access to a home computer, they must use computers in schools or in other community locations where their computer use probably would be more restricted and monitored. If poor youth did have comparable access to a home computer as do non-poor youth, they might use computers for academic purposes less frequently and perhaps use computers for non-academic purposes more frequently than non-poor youth. In order to test this possibility, two additional variables were entered into the regression models. The first measured whether the youth had and used a home computer (versus did not have or did not use an available home computer). In both models, coefficients for this variable were positive and significant, indicating that youth who had and used a home computer used a computer more frequently for both academic ($b = 1.02, p < .05$) and non-academic ($b = 2.98, p < .001$) uses, compared to youth who did not have or did not use an available home computer. In addition, the coefficient for the poverty variable in the non-academic computer use model was no longer significant, suggesting that differences in the frequency of non-academic use between poor and non-poor youth were due to differences in the use of a home computer. When the home use variable was entered into the regression model, African Americans ($b = 2.58, p < .001$) and Latinos ($b = 1.12, p < .05$) were still more likely to report using any computer for academic purposes, compared to whites. The race/ethnicity coefficients were not statistically significant in the non-academic use model.

The second variable, an interaction between poverty status and the previously defined home computer variable, tested whether poor youth who used a home computer used any computer more frequently for academic or non-academic purposes than did non-poor youth. The interaction term was not statistically significant in either model, indicating that poor youth who

use a home computer do not differ from non-poor youth in the time they spend on academic or non-academic computer uses.

Conclusions and Discussion

The objectives of this study were to examine disparities in home computer ownership and in academic and non-academic uses of computers between poor and non-poor youth, using data from a national sample of young adolescents between the ages of 10 through 14 years. Study findings indicate that poor youth were .36 times as likely to have a home computer compared to non-poor youth. Indeed, there is a "digital divide" between poor and non-poor young adolescents in home computer access that is independent of any effects of the youth's age, gender, race/ethnicity, and the marital status and education of the youth's mother. However, when a home computer was present, poor youth were just as likely to use the home computer for academic purposes as were non-poor youth. A failure to find a significant interaction between poverty and use of an available home computer and type of computer use adds to the validity of this finding.

Whether home computer use or type of IT use translates into better academic outcomes for children and adolescents, however, has not been adequately studied (Lauman, 2000) and is an area for future research. On the other hand, research has produced little evidence that home computer use results in socioemotional problems for youth or displaces more academically beneficial activities such as reading or completing homework (for a review of this literature, see Subrahmanyam, Greenfield, Kraut, & Gross, 2001). This research, in conjunction with the findings of the current study, suggests that increasing poor youth's access to home computers will not cause harm, but might allow these youth to accrue a variety of social, employment, and possible academic benefits (NTIA, 2000; Lonergan, 2000).

The findings of the current study indicating that poor youth do not use any computer for academic purposes less often than do non-poor youth, regardless of whether they have a home computer, are consistent with the finding for the use of a home computer. These results suggest that increasing poor youth's access to computers in the community most likely will result in poor

youth using IT for academic purposes as often as their wealthier peers. Although poverty was associated with using any computer less frequently for non-academic use, this relation appears to be the result of poor youth being less likely to own home computers. If increasing access to home computers resulted in poor youth using the computer more often for non-academic purposes than they currently do, some research suggests that even non-academic uses of computers might have educational benefits. For example, recreational games can encourage and develop the use of complex cognitive processes, which might transfer to academic situations that require problem-solving abilities (Pillay, Brownlee, & Wilss, 1999).

Although not the main focus of this study, the racial/ethnic differences found in IT access and use are noteworthy. Differences in home computer access between whites and African Americans and Latinos have been established by past studies (NTIA, 2002; Wenglinsky, 1998), and these differences remain in this study even after controlling for poverty and other demographic factors (e.g., mother's marital status and educational level). These racial/ethnic disparities in computer ownership might be explained by variations in the depth of poverty or in attitudes toward the benefits of computer ownership between whites and African Americans and Latinos. Future research is needed to explore these results and also to explore the findings that African American and Latino youth use IT for academic purposes more than whites. Perhaps African American and Latino parents are more likely to monitor and restrict their young adolescents' home computer use. The current findings indicate that if increasing IT access and use result in better academic outcomes and job opportunities, these benefits would be particularly important for African Americans and Latinos.

This study has a number of limitations. Among the most important is the reliance on young adolescents' self-reports of computer access and use, which might not be reliable. The restricted age range of the youth limits the generalizability of the study findings. If additional information on IT access and use were available in the NLSY (e.g., presence of an Internet connection or educational software in the home), this information could have

contributed to better understanding differences in IT access and use between poor and non-poor youth.

Despite these limitations, two main policy implications can be drawn from the findings of this study. First, the federal government should continue efforts to achieve its stated "vitally important national goal" of increasing the number of Americans who use IT (NTIA, 2002) by continuing programs (e.g., the Education-rate and Community Technology Centers Program) to assist low-resource communities and schools in increasing access, use, and quality of IT applications (Roberts, 2000). Largely due to such efforts, progress has been made in decreasing, and even eliminating, disparities between poor and non-poor and minority and white youth in IT access and use in public schools (U. S. Department of Education, 2002; NTIA, 2002). Current programs should be continued and expanded to include assisting low-income families to purchase home computers (e.g., through a tax credit), and increasing research funds to understand and ameliorate factors that block access to home computer ownership among ethnic minority youth. Unfortunately, the current administration's budget proposal for 2003 (Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2002) calls for eliminating such programs. One of the most important of these is the Community Technology Centers Program, which provides grants to economically distressed areas to assist residents in gaining access to IT in community locations such as libraries and public housing facilities (Roberts, 2000).

Second, if government officials and the general public consider access to IT important to the education, future job opportunities, and social and civic participation of our nation's youth, this study indicates that establishing eligibility guidelines for obtaining relevant government assistance at even 185% of official poverty thresholds might be too low. Since poverty thresholds were established in 1965, debates have continued regarding adequate measures of economic hardship. Many researchers contend that at least one poverty measure should reflect the economic resources necessary to participate in the "activities of normal living" (Glennerster, 2002). Not only should federal policies continue to assist IT "have-nots" in obtaining access to computer

technologies, but must ensure realistic eligibility guidelines for obtaining such assistance.

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Battered and on Welfare: The Experiences of Women with the Family Violence Option

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Noting the incidence of battered women on welfare, lawmakers passed the Family Violence Option (FVO), which allows states to offer waivers from welfare program requirements. Assumptions were made that many women would seek relief under the FVO. However, reports indicate that less than 5 percent of welfare recipients are receiving waivers. This paper presents the findings from a qualitative study that sought to explore the experiences of 29 battered women with the welfare system and the FVO in New York State. Their experiences suggest that changes in FVO screening process are necessary to fully implement the program in the way legislators intended.

Key words: *Battered women, welfare, Family Violence Option, domestic violence*

Introduction

Welfare reform drastically changed how women in poverty receive cash assistance. No longer entitled to benefits, women now must meet certain program requirements including workforce participation, cooperation with child support enforcement, and agreeing to drug and alcohol assessments and treatment within a limited time frame. Predictively, these changes caused a stir among a variety of advocacy groups, including battered women advocates who questioned how women victims of domestic violence would fare under these new requirements.

Research indicates that 20 to 32 percent of welfare recipients report current intimate partner violence and between 55 and 65 percent of recipients have experienced recent or past intimate partner violence (Allard, 1997; Browne & Bassuk, 1997; Lidman,

1995; Lloyd, 1997; Raphael, 1996). Noting the incidence of battered women on welfare, lawmakers passed the Family Violence Option (FVO) as part of welfare reform in 1996. The FVO allows states the option of responding to battered women on welfare by providing waivers from program requirements. Almost all states have adopted the FVO or made specific provisions for battered women in their welfare plans (Raphael & Haennicke, 1999).

Based on the incidence of domestic violence among welfare recipients, assumptions were made that many women would come forward to seek relief under the FVO. However, early reports indicate that less than five percent of welfare recipients are receiving waivers (Raphael & Haennicke, 1999). In New York, one of many states that adopted the FVO, all applicants and recipients of welfare are screened with the Domestic Violence Screening Form (New York State, 1998). New York State tracked the number of welfare recipients who screened positive for domestic violence and received waivers. Between April 1998 and June 1999, 5,700 of the over 500,000 welfare recipients in New York State indicated during the screening process that they were in current danger of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse (New York State, 1999).

The rates of screening for domestic violence in New York State seem especially low in light of the organizational and financial relationship between the state and the shelter system. Domestic violence shelters in New York State rely on funding from the Department of Social Services (DSS), based on client eligibility for public assistance (Davis & Hagen, 1988). Thus, most, if not all, shelter clients in New York State are required to apply for welfare. In a situation in which screening is supposedly universal, the low rates at which New York State welfare recipients screen positive seem surprising. This paper presents the findings from a qualitative study that sought to explore and report the experiences of 29 battered women with the welfare system and the FVO in New York State. As will be seen, their experiences suggest that changes in FVO screening process are necessary to fully implement the program in the way legislators intended.

Review of the Literature on the Implementation of the FVO

The discrepancy between the number of battered women who are receiving welfare benefits and the number of battered women

receiving the FVO waivers raises several questions about the implementation of the FVO. First, *could the disparity between the incidence of domestic violence among welfare recipients and those receiving waivers be explained as a problem of victims not self-disclosing?* If women view front-line workers as unsupportive or even judgmental, they may be unwilling to divulge highly personal and potentially embarrassing information about their abuse experiences.

To date there are no published studies that examine the perspectives of battered women on their interactions with front-line workers. In fact, very few studies exist that record welfare recipients' experiences of their treatment by front-line workers. Kingfisher (1996) asked welfare recipients in Michigan how they characterized the front-line workers. The recipients reported that front-line workers make arbitrary decisions, do not explain policies or procedures, and punish recipients if confronted. The recipients also characterized the workers as lazy, concerned with their own statuses, inaccessible, ignorant, and naysayers. Some recipients indicated that the workers were nice and helpful; however, the positive comments seemed minimal when compared to the long list of negative characterizations (Kingfisher, 1996).

Secombe, James, and Waters (1998) conducted in-depth interviews with 47 women receiving assistance from the welfare offices in Northern Florida. The women identified the welfare office as one setting in which they heard negative comments and felt stigmatized. The women claimed the workers tried to "make you feel bad or talk to you like dirt" (Secombe, James & Waters, 1998, p. 854), and suggested that the workers were more concerned with enforcing compliance than with helping clients.

Even in a supportive welfare environment one must examine what may happen if a domestic violence victim does disclose to welfare workers. If she is able to overcome her fears—fear of her abuser finding out, fear of retribution, fear of being labeled by the system as a "problem"—she faces the possibility of being in violation of other policies or being dealt with punitively (Davies, 1996; Pollack & Davis, 1997).

Battered women face the distinct possibility that the Child Protection Services (CPS) may be notified due to her "failure to protect" the children from the abusive environment (Brandwein, 1999; Howell, 1997; Kenney & Brown, 1996). Researchers esti-

mate that 30 to 60 percent of families with reported child abuse also experience domestic violence and vice versa (Edleson, 1999). Questions are raised regarding how to protect mothers and their children when at times, these goals of protection may be in direct opposition to each other.

Second, *could the discrepancy between the incidence of domestic violence among welfare recipients and those receiving waivers be a problem with front-line workers not screening for domestic violence?* In a study conducted in New York City in 1998 (Hearn, 2000), over 110 welfare recipients interviewed outside of welfare offices were asked three questions having to do with whether they were screened for domestic violence or informed of the FVO. Fifty-six percent of those responding reported they did not receive the screening form from their eligibility worker.

Methodology

Challenged by the discrepancy between the number of battered women on welfare, the number receiving waivers, and in light of the limited scope of previous research, this study sought to explore and report the experiences of battered women with the welfare system and the FVO in New York State. The research questions included exploring the experiences of battered women with the various steps of the FVO such as the screening and the waiver process.

Sample

Two counties in upstate New York were purposively selected for this study based on the demographics of the county, the proximity of the county to the researcher, and the feasibility and accessibility to domestic violence service providers, homeless shelters, community health centers, and other social service agencies.

To be included in this study, each respondent must: 1) have applied for or received welfare (cash assistance) in the previous six months; 2) self-identify as females, 18 years or older; and 3) report being current victims of domestic violence. Recruitment flyers were posted in domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, community health centers, and local vendors where low-income women frequented. Each woman was then screened for her involvement with the welfare system and domestic violence.

Data Collection

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 29 respondents in a mutually agreed upon location such as offices within agencies or domestic violence shelters and local restaurants. The questions for the interview included open-ended exploratory questions with probes and closed-ended questions. Questions focused on the various steps involved with the FVO such as the screening, getting to the DVL, obtaining waivers, and receiving referrals.

With the respondents' permission, all interviews were tape-recorded.

Data Analysis

The data collected from this qualitative design were analyzed using the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Each interview tape was transcribed and analyzed to identify key words or phrases that became codes. These initial codes were then merged into categories and themes using the constant comparison method.

The limitations to this study are inherent to qualitative designs and include the potential biases of the participants and the researcher, the inability to generalize to a larger population, and potential bias in the collection and analysis of the data. The intent was to construct *their* reality of their experiences based on their perceptions and memories and not to construct *the* reality for all battered women on welfare. To insure the integrity of the data, triangulation methods were used and data were independently coded and placed into key categories that emerged from the analysis. Comparison of the codes resulted in a 93 percent match, indicating strong inter-rater reliability for the results of this study.

The Women Who Participated

Twenty-nine women—from various backgrounds and with different experiences—participated in the study. Sixteen women heard about the study from the local domestic violence service provider and of these, most (n=14) were currently residing in the shelter. There were 14 African American women, 11 white women, and 3 women of another racial background. Separate from racial background, 3 of the 29 women in the study identified

themselves as being of Hispanic or Latina origin. The ages of the women ranged from 21 to 49 years of age with an average age of 35.

The following sections reveal two themes—the screening process and disclosure decisions—that emerged from the data analysis. All of the names of the women have been changed to protect their confidentiality. Furthermore, the women's actual quotes have been edited but the integrity of their comments has been maintained.

The Screening Process

In New York, everyone who applies for or receives welfare must be screened using the Domestic Violence Screening form. When shown the form, over half of the women ($n=16$) in this study either said that they saw the form or they thought they saw the form. Some of the women recalled seeing one question on domestic violence as part of a checklist of problems that included substance abuse, smoking, last eviction, and so forth. Some women found the form in the midst of a large application packet while others were handed the form along with a substance abuse screening form. Many of the women did not see the Domestic Violence Screening form ($n=13$) and were not asked about domestic violence by the front-line workers. A few mentioned that they wished they had seen the form because they might have received help to escape their abusive relationships.

No, this is not in your packet. When you look at the top, it reminds you of the landlord's form. But I never seen this. No, I would remember this. My goodness. This would have been good too.

- Kathy

Yeah, they didn't ask me no questions. They didn't ask if I needed help. You could look at me and see that I have been battered. It was very obvious. A lot of times, I was just waiting for them to tell me to pack up my kids' stuff and my stuff and they'd hide me away or something but that didn't happen and I just never pursued it because I felt like they didn't care.

- Yasmine

Disclosure Decisions

The women who were screened for domestic violence were asked how they responded to the screening form, the checklist,

or to any direct inquiries about domestic violence. The women who deliberately chose not to disclose (n=9) talked about their reasons for not identifying themselves as victims. One reason was a lack of trust in the worker's ability to maintain confidentiality, leaving the women open to further problems with the abuser.

I don't think DSS has what it takes . . . to hide what they are doing. Any of the people that I know that are mean to their partner are relentless . . .
- Rachel

She just says it stays confidential and apparently the way I understood it, she keeps that stuff. But some of that stuff . . . wanting copies of this and that . . . DSS has no business with any of that.
- Caroline

The women also thought that it would not help if they were identified as victims; in fact, many thought that more problems would surface as a result of their disclosure. These problems included having less control over their lives and being required to attend counseling, parenting classes, or go into a domestic violence shelter.

I think I checked no to everything. Because how it was explained to me was that it was to put me in more counseling . . .
- Betty

I was learning the less I said yes to the easier the process. They would ask more of me and then again have another person involved in my case and it was not going to help but only hinder.
- Rachel

A few women talked about their fears of getting into more trouble and running the risk of losing their children or benefits.

I lied. I thought they would take him [my son] away . . . Just because I was abused.
- Betty

Yeah, depending on who I talk to. I run the risk of losing my kids and I also run the risk of losing Social Services because in the first place, he's not even supposed to be there. Not only that, I'm on Section 8. And that's the first thing Social Services is gonna say, and they're right. They're paying your rent. You ain't supposed to have this man there.
- Angela

And before they [DSS] send you to a battered women's shelter where you can get the help that you need, they call CPS. And they send CPS to your house and a majority of the time your kids are taken.
- Yasmine

Some of the women experienced the workers as being judgmental and skeptical of their situations; a few women compared applying for welfare with their abuse experiences and wondered if they would have been better off if they had stayed in the abusive relationship.

I honestly needed help. And I don't think that if you don't qualify for help and you're looking for help that you should be yelled at and accused of things you haven't done. I wasn't trying to trick them. I was trying to see if I needed help. If I don't qualify for them, then I deserve a polite explanation and possibly they could give me some other referral sources. [Instead], they abused me. They yelled at me and verbally abused me.

- Linda

Interviewer: Let me try and understand this. You're saying that sometimes systems can also abuse you—like DSS? "Absolutely and then you have to weigh your options and you have to compromise and you have to say which one is the lesser of the two evils."

- Liz

To tell you the truth, I was getting very, very frustrated and I was getting very angry because, I see other people going in there and they were getting whatever they wanted, when they wanted it. The women who I dealt with made me feel like I should not have left [my husband].

- Carla

Discussion

The women in this study offer an interesting view of the FVO based on their experiences of being screened and their willingness to disclose. While all of the women identified themselves as current victims of domestic violence, consistent with the study selection criteria, why were only half of them screened for domestic violence? Of those screened, why did some women choose not to disclose their abuse? Several answers are possible given the women's responses in this study.

First, the intended procedure for screening was inconsistently implemented. New York State policies require *every* person who applies for or receives welfare to be screened with the Domestic Violence Screening form. Many of the women interviewed (45%) did not see the domestic violence screening form nor were asked about domestic violence. Several of these women indicated that they wished they had known more about the FVO and the services available for battered women on welfare. Similarly, Hearn's

(2000) study indicated that 56 percent of the women surveyed did not receive the domestic violence screening form. Clearly, more research is needed to identify how many women are screened for domestic violence and how the screening form is distributed.

Second, several of the women who were screened for domestic violence refused to disclose their abuse experiences. Some did not disclose for fear of creating more problems, thinking that they might be judged unable to protect their children from harm and CPS would become involved. Others thought that DSS would have more control over their lives, forcing them to jump through more hoops, attend counseling or other classes, or be forced into a domestic violence shelter. A few women thought that DSS would be incapable of maintaining confidentiality and would thus put them at risk of further abuse from their partner. Finally, some women feared being judged or questioned by the DSS worker about the abuse.

Implications

Is the FVO helpful to battered women on welfare? It is difficult to answer this question at this point. It seems that the major barrier to implementing the FVO rests with the screening process. Either women are not disclosing, based on real fears of losing their children or further complicating their lives, or else the front-line workers are not adequately screening for domestic violence. Regardless, to encourage women to self-disclose, the system must be prepared to respond sensitively and not punitively by, for example, removing their children or creating more system complications.

The women in this study revealed a strong motive for not disclosing their abuse experiences. More research is needed that examines the interview conditions that are needed for women to feel comfortable disclosing their abuse experiences. The research should also examine what factors encouraged them to disclose and the consequences suffered for disclosing their abuse experiences.

Finally, the current philosophy of reducing the welfare rolls and promoting work activities creates obstacles that discourage front-line workers from screening for domestic violence. Absent a change in its current philosophy, the welfare system will not

be able to appropriately identify or respond to battered women on welfare. An environment in which battered women feel safe to disclose their abuse without fear of retribution or judgment from front-line workers must be developed. To that end, front-line workers must have the time to respond to clients and a work environment that encourages them to focus on the needs of their clients, not on whether they meet eligibility criteria or how quickly they can go to work. The workers must be trained in understanding the challenges of domestic violence and the appropriate ways to respond to victims in a non-blaming manner. The application and screening process must be improved to identify battered women and to offer assistance that is wanted. Additionally, front-line workers must provide better explanations of the limits of confidentiality regarding child abuse to lessen the very real fears of recipients.

In conclusion, the results of this study provide a glimpse into the struggles and triumphs battered women face when dealing with the welfare system or the FVO. Telling these women's stories is only a first step to understanding their experiences; much more work is needed to truly understand how to provide needed, appropriate, and desired services for battered women on welfare.

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Voices from the Middle: How Performance Funding Impacts Workforce Organizations, Professionals and Customers

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Under recent policy reforms, the landscape of authority relations in welfare and workforce development organizations has radically changed from one that privileged internal professional autonomy to one that privileges external authorities. Performance, rather than input funding is the medium for this change. Longitudinal ethnographic research reveals that performance requirements in workforce development both contribute to and challenge organizational structure and program design, professional practices, and job seeker outcomes. As such, when the "voices" of job-seeking customers, directly and through their affiliated workforce organizations, professionals, and employers, are added to the "voices" of funders under performance funding, polyvocality may result in more consensual authority relations: in particular, less autonomous power for professionals, less program hegemony for funders, and greater power for job seekers over their futures. These findings may also pertain to organizations and professionals funded under other performance directives, such as managed care and welfare-to-work.

Key words: *workforce development, performance funding, authority relations, professionalism, ethnography*

Background

Recent policy reforms have radically changed the landscape of authority relations in workforce development and welfare organizations from one that privileged internal professional autonomy to one that privileges external stakeholders. Performance, rather than input, funding is the medium for this change. Under the

Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), allocation of workforce development funds is increasingly based on rates of placement and retention¹ in the workplace (Danziger & Haveman, 2001; Plastrik & Taylor, 2001). WIA mandates seventeen different performance measures for the overall system (Buck, 2002). Similarly, funding for welfare-to-work programs under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is increasingly associated with placement and retention outcomes (Iversen, 2000; Murphy, Fishman & Barnow, 1999). Over this same period, the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 required federal agencies to be accountable for outcome standards in what amounts to performance-based budgeting (Williams, Webb & Phillips, 1996, p. iii). Foundations, corporations, and other funders of non-profit and proprietary organizations followed suit.

Before 1990, funding for most social service and workforce development organizations was tied to the designs and processes of their individual, generally independent programs. Such organizations were only held accountable for their "input," which essentially meant their procedures or units of service delivery (Frumkin, 2002). Under input funding, professional autonomy was paramount. Professionals, in the form of management or staff, defined and controlled client definition and recruitment. Professionals determined program and client goals and objectives. Professionals defined the scope and substance of the interventions, measurement procedures, and target outcomes. Evaluation generally consisted of an "audit function" (Williams, Webb & Phillips, 1996): namely, tallying numbers of clients served and asking professionals whether they did what they said they were going to do. As Williams, Webb and Phillips (1996) note, the public-sector preoccupation with *procedures* runs deep (p. v). A similar preoccupation has held sway in private sector organizations (Letts, Ryan & Grossman, 1999). In essence, professionals have been the authoritative "voice" in workforce service provision.

In contrast, under performance funding, administrative and staff professionals are held accountable for customer outcomes. Because workforce development organizations are increasingly dependent on outside funding sources for their existence,

professionals no longer have complete autonomy over their functions. Public and philanthropic funding sources now define the "customer," set performance targets and required outcomes, specify measurement techniques to evaluate these targets and outcomes, and have the authority to withhold funds until requirements are met. In contrast to the past, when funding and professional procedures occupied separate spheres, the funding organization now may be the authoritative voice in structuring professional workforce services.

In this paper, workforce development is viewed as "the policies, programs, and supports that can enable low-income people to succeed in navigating an increasingly complex labor market (Elliott, 2002, p. 1). Essentially, the goal of workforce development is to redistribute jobs, earnings, work experience, and dignity to the residents of low-income communities (Harrison & Weiss, 1998). Historically, workforce organizations offered education and training, but little or no support for placement, retention, and advancement in jobs (Danziger & Haveman, 2001; Gueron & Pauly, 1991). In contrast, human service organizations traditionally delivered supports, but not education or training. Not only were the professionals in each relatively autonomous, the organizations functioned in silos as well. While this examination focuses on workforce development, there may be significant parallels with social service organizations, especially those funded under the guidelines of managed care or welfare-to-work policies. An early model outlining the interaction of multiple stakeholders in human service organizations suggests such parallels (Martin, 1980).

Ultimately, how workforce organizations respond to new performance mandates has implications for their survival and for the employment success of many low-income workers and family heads. If flexibility and innovation—historic strengths of non-profit organizations—are maximized under performance funding, workforce organizations may be able to increase capacity and impact for job seeking customers (Grote, 2003). Conversely, if performance funding strains management and staff beyond capacity, organizations may reduce services or close and employment opportunities for low-income workers may be reduced. This paper

explores how multiple stakeholders in workforce development respond to performance funding mandates.

Framework and Argument

This exploration of workforce development and performance funding is lodged in sociological concepts of authority and voice. James Coleman (1990) defines authority as "the right to control another's actions" (p. 66) and posits that when actions, rather than goods, are the subject of exchange, an authority relation may develop whereby one actor gives up rights to control his/her actions to another (Coleman, 1990). While Coleman (1990) notes that authority relations need not be conflictual or coercive, and in their most benign form are oriented to mutual gain, I argue that consensual authority relations offer the possibility of reducing power differentials that commonly exist under hierarchical relations. In this paper, power is signified by "voice."

Issues of authority and voice are lodged more broadly here in the context of professionalism. Despite the lack of a definitive definition of "profession," professionals have characteristically claimed the right to a high degree of autonomy, established and sustained by privileged, if not monopolistic, practices and exclusionary regulatory mechanisms (Larson, 1977; Macdonald, 1995). The current climate of accountability gives funding sources new power in the professional sphere. Just as managed care, in the form of federal or state determination of service parameters, has deeply changed the practice landscape for professionals in social and health services, performance funding requirements, from both public and philanthropic sources, now impact workforce development professionals.

This paper explores two questions: First, whose voices are heard in workforce development under performance funding mandates? Those of the workforce organizations, represented here through the voices of administrators and staff professionals? Those of public or philanthropic funders, denoted here through performance requirements? Or the voices in the middle, those of economically disadvantaged² job-seeking customers? Second, to what end? How do new authority relations under performance

funding impact workforce organizations, professionals, and job seekers, from their perspectives?

The Context

Despite the economic boom in the 1990s, improvements in workforce development were much needed. Results from evaluations of workforce programs before TANF and WIA had been equivocal about program effectiveness (Friedlander & Burtless, 1995; Mathur, 2002; Smith et al., 2002), increased numbers of children of *working parents* remained poor (City Kids Count, 2001; National Center for Children's Poverty, 2001), and employment chances remained unequal for Blacks compared to whites and Hispanics (Holzer & Offner, 2001; Moss & Tilly, 2001). In response, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a national philanthropic organization dedicated to child well-being, mounted an 8-year, multi-city workforce demonstration program called the Jobs Initiative with the goal of improving labor market opportunity for economically disadvantaged residents of impoverished inner cities across America. The initiative's "social investor" approach (Giloith, 1995) and results-focused funding design were the foundation's effort to improve upon the limited impacts of the earlier programs, based on the success of alternative models such as STRIVE (Harrison, 1995), Project QUEST (Osterman, 2001), Center for Employment Training (Harrison & Weiss, 1998; Meléndez, 1996); New Hope (Bos et al., 1999; Huston et al., 2003), and selected others across the country (Giloith & Phillips, 2000; U.S. Department of Labor, 1994). At the same time, the tight labor market meant a window of opportunity for women leaving welfare and other economically disadvantaged unemployed or under-employed workers, as many firms desperately needed skilled and semi-skilled workers (Giloith, 1998). The demonstration program thus provides a platform for this exploration of authority and voice in workforce development under performance funding.

In this context, required performance outcomes included expanded organizational capacity, greater impact of professional services, as demonstrated by increased rates of job placement and retention, and "good jobs" for job seekers, defined as wages of

\$7 per hour or higher, in 1995 dollars, plus nonwage benefits and advancement opportunity. We note, however, that the parameters for "good jobs" were set in the mid- to late-1990s when the economy was thriving; in fact, the average wage of the nearly 6000 Jobs Initiative placements in that period was \$9.13 per hour (Fleischer, 2001). In the current environment of economic downturn, a more difficult labor market faces job seekers and workforce organizations, as some of the voices in this paper reflect. As such, 'lessons learned' from this exploration may be increasingly important to organizations, job seekers and funders alike.

Structurally, a core "development intermediary" was located or formed in five cities (Milwaukee, Philadelphia, New Orleans, St. Louis, and Seattle) that contracted with or developed provider organizations to craft community solutions to persistent inner-city unemployment. These intermediaries included a nonprofit investment vehicle comprised of labor, management, and research; a new nonprofit civic organization; a regional investment fund; a regional council of governments; and a municipal agency (Hebert et al., 2002). The provider organizations were generally either industry oriented or community-based nonprofit and for-profit facilities. All offered job readiness training, skill training, and support and retention services, in varying proportions and degrees. In addition, the organizations were required to develop new partnerships, often with employers, which was a missing component in most earlier job training programs (Osterman, 1999). The foundation directed funds to the provider organizations through the intermediaries. Funds were linked to each intermediary's quarterly outcome targets for recruitment, training, job placement and job retention, both overall and by provider affiliate (Fleischer, 2001). Often, however, foundation funds were only one source of income for provider organizations.

Under independent grants from the foundation, I directed and led an ethnographic team that studied parents' work and children's welfare in the context of these regional workforce organizations, professionals, job seekers and employers (Iversen, 2002). My team of nine researchers had regular contact with twenty-five Jobs Initiative families in the five cities from January 2000 to June 2003 and with about 1000 auxiliary sources identified as important to the families' work and home lives. Augmented

by administrative and retrospective data, the data set covers up to five years of information about families' advancement efforts and the workforce organizations with which they were associated. Ethnographic research methods were ideal for eliciting rich details (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) about *how* multiple stakeholders fared in the context of new policies and programs. A 'dialogical' approach to research (Ostrander, 1995) involved regular and formal feedback to and from all key informants through written and verbal means throughout the research period. Triangulation of researchers, respondents, and analysts afforded a wide-angle lens on performance funding and increased the reliability of the data and validity of the findings. A qualitative software program was used for data management and code-based case construction from the audiotaped and transcribed field material. Names of all persons and organizations, with the exception of the foundation, have been disguised to protect their identities. Moreover, the perspectives expressed through each "voice" emerged repeatedly during the analytic process, irrespective of the individual characteristics of city, workforce organization, professional, job seeker or firm.

Findings

The "voices" of the Jobs Initiative stakeholders suggest that performance funding both benefited and challenged workforce organizations, professionals, and job seekers. The first section addresses structural issues and program content in the workforce organizations under performance funding, primarily from the perspectives of intermediary and provider administrators and staff professionals, amplified by the parallel experiences of their job seeking customers. Employers' voices are also interspersed. The second section addresses the roles and functions of the professional service providers, whose voices are also amplified by the perspectives of job seekers. Each section is roughly organized according to "benefits" and "challenges," although overlap is also illustrated.

How Performance Funding Benefited Organizations

Increased Data Capacity. Structurally, the philanthropic funder required that all organizations establish management information systems (MIS) in order to increase their capacity to collect

and use data (Dewar, 2002; Gewirtz & Harrington, 2000). Both providers and intermediaries reported that increased use of MIS data contributed to more efficient staffing, whether 'up' or 'down:'

"We just hired a new person. What we know now about our graduates is largely anecdotal. We're working on education (and other) outcomes; our aim is to establish larger outcome domains." [Chief Operating Officer, nonprofit community-based provider]

"I was not aware of the depth of the organization's problems when I took this job . . . especially the absence of matching funds. I inherited a staff of 22; we are now 13. The ones that left could not produce results." [Chief Executive Officer, development intermediary]

To a one, job seekers stressed that effective staffing was important to their job outcomes, as the comments of this customer, a single mother of two with a history of temporary jobs, exemplify:

"I really miss [Job Coach] from the healthcare training program. She was really an inspiration to me, a young black women doing the 'do' as we Ebonically say . . . It's just that she has so much confidence, she looks good, she sounds good, and she is so successful. And she don't mind helping someone who wants to help themselves . . . At times she would come pick me up and take me to work, and come get me from work. All that helped so much . . . I needed to get my confidence back . . . to show I am one that is just going to keep at it." [Loretta Lopez, customer of healthcare training provider]

New MIS capacity also enhanced the organizations' ability to market their programs, as this exchange between an intermediary CEO and his Board member typifies:

"The monthly report is a sign of how much clearer we are." [Chief Executive Officer, development intermediary]

"The finance committee now has schedules we're comfortable getting every month. This is a great relief. It makes our sales job so much easier to have data." [Board Member, development intermediary]

In the best of circumstances, organizations used data and other performance requirements to forward their mission of serving the "hard to serve," as these intermediary and community executives communicated to provider applicants at a proposal information session:

"We are looking to find a different way to pay for milestones and recruitment *without* hurting the agencies. Our intent is not to jeopardize your cash flow. The heavy emphasis on retention has been hurting cash flow." [Director, development intermediary]

"We need to make sure agencies are not penalized by serving the hard-to-serve." [Community consultant to the development intermediary]

Increased Partnership Capacity. Structural changes in the form of required new inter-organizational partnerships also increased capacity. Because workforce organizations were responsible for specific rates of placement and retention, they found that collaborating with employers and other workforce providers helped job seekers get and keep jobs, as the comments of this administrator and staff professional illustrate:

"Potential participants come to an orientation to hear about jobs and training in manufacturing and assess the fit. We have employers, unions, technical college and PIC [Private Industry Council] people who do eligibility screening on the spot." [Director, manufacturing training provider]

"I problem-solve with co-workers and supervisors at the provider organization. I call employers too. In a recent example, we had a conference between the employer, client, PIC, and me. In another, I conferred with the employer, the client, and staff at the intermediary. The employer wants the worker to stay. We worked to problem-solve how this could occur. The group meetings facilitate feedback and help the new worker stay employed." [Professional, community-based provider]

Job seekers, such as former felon and parent of three, Kevin McDonalds, underscored that their training provider's partnerships were critical to their employment outcomes:

"I was in a plumbing course before [training provider]. If there had been more help job searching, like this program, it would have been a nice program. I didn't know what I was looking for. I didn't have my driver's license. I was a felon, and that was looked at not positively. I was into the program, the classes, and figured they'd help find me a job. I was thrown for a loop when they didn't. If people would have cut the yellow tape—sent us to meet Bob, Joe, and Lou—it

would have helped. Like this program did.” [Kevin McDonalds, job-seeking customer of printing training provider]

Employers also identified ways that new partnerships with workforce organizations benefited them, as this manufacturing firm manager outlined:

“What we were doing was we worked with a technical school in the city here, we worked with the manufacturing training provider there, and we started to get ‘outside the box.’ We had to find out what was out there if we were going to succeed. We found that as we were working with various educational and training agencies, we were introduced into the state’s work development program. I mean this stuff all of a sudden was just snowballing and we said, ‘My gosh, wake up, you might as well take advantage of this stuff here’ . . . because we wanted workers.” [Operations Manager, manufacturing firm that hired graduates of a manufacturing training provider]

Program Improvement and Innovation. In the content arena, new data collection and reporting systems informed organizations about which workforce programs or program characteristics to retain or drop (Dewar, 2002). One intermediary director described funding-driven changes in a provider’s business skills program that were typical of many others’ experiences:

“It’s changed over time and greatly improved. There’s room for a lot more improvement. I’ve worked in many projects in many different roles—I have to admit that one “plus” in the Jobs Initiative is there have been changes made when changes need to happen. The organization is responsive to change—especially small changes. But it’s difficult to make monumental change. For example—the business project is trying to structure more hard skills training into its retention activities, such as classes in web design. We know people want more computer training.” [Director, development intermediary]

Similarly, and more rapidly in the context of philanthropic than public funding requirements, as provider organizations evaluated unsatisfactory rates of retention and gained experience with the needs of their job-seeking customers, they added content to their pre-employment programs to benefit job seeking customers, as this program manager emphasized:

"We tell participants about income disregard, EITC, TANF cut-off. We do a lot of advising—one woman had 6 children and was using up her lifetime eligibility. We gave her some hints about how to save some of it." [Manager, healthcare training provider]

Although direct causality between program component and retention cannot be ascertained, the twelve-month retention rate of this healthcare provider was twice as high as that of healthcare programs overall in the initiative (Hebert, St. George & Epstein, 2003).

Innovative program changes also took place in the context of mandated new relationships between provider organizations and employers, as this provider manager and participating employer described:

"Company turnover is employers' concern. What to do to change that? We instituted the role of workplace mentor together with management and the union, for everyone [not just Jobs Initiative workers]. When I first set up the programs in manufacturing, employers expected five to seven to turn up for mentor training—30 to 60 did! The company did a cost-benefit analysis and it saved \$2000 in reduced turnover because of the mentor program. The key to retention is building the environment in the facility, whether factory, shop floor, or hotel. If you bring together varied individuals, you get better system communication and recognition by incumbent workers that you hope leads to more training, more education, and better needs assessment." [Manager, manufacturing training provider]

"[Have things changed at the plant as a result of the mentor program?] I think people are more relaxed . . . The feedback that we are getting is that it has been very beneficial to them [new workers] . . . Early indicators are that it is working . . . We have had feedback from other companies, saying, 'How can we get involved in it?' " [Operations Manager, manufacturing firm partner of a manufacturing training provider]

How Performance Funding Challenged Organizations

Strained Staff Capacity. Workforce development organizations commonly function on a financial "shoe-string," especially those serving low-income customers, and thus rely on dedicated

professional staff to work 'above and beyond' on behalf of customers' goals (Frumkin & Andre-Clark, 1999). In this study, the technical demands of the new management information systems and extensive data collection requirements, together with the requirement to develop new partnerships with employers, strained staff capacity and may have increased turnover, as this staff professional described:

"The whole process is a juggling act . . . recruitment, funding, proposals, monitoring, case management, retention . . . We've had a lot of line workers leave in the past six to eight months. That impacts the success of the program since our work is all about relationships. If a worker is only there eight months, no relationship can build. We've done two and one-half years of relationship building. Only now are some of these meaningful relationships. The policy of collaboration may be in place, but without the relationships, the communication that greases the wheels of actual working together falters." [Retention Counselor, printing training provider serving Kevin McDonalds]

Staff turnover, in turn, daunted the confidence of new workers, as this customer's sentiments typify:

"When I learned that Retention Counselor was gone, I was shocked! She was the one that really got me motivated and started. She *really* put me out there. I hated it when she left. Seeing her and talking to her kept me motivated and uplifted." [Kevin McDonalds, job-seeking customer of a printing training provider]

Had Kevin's retention counselor remained at the training provider, she might have been able to help him navigate a complicated work-family situation that resulted in his dismissal from a job he had successfully held for 18 months, as he reported:

"I'm not working at Bindery any longer. I don't like playing the race card, but in reality, that's what it was. It was my fault also. I missed the days. I had signed up for overtime months earlier, but when I checked the schedule, I didn't see my name. I'd signed up for *every* weekend for months in a row. I was there over a year and some months and I never did a no-show. Others were given a second chance. There was a guy there—he and I were 'into it.' His father had worked there before him, and when he was a kid, he worked at the company. I'd gone down south earlier to see my father; he was

sick. They didn't want me to go—put me through an ordeal. When I missed the overtime, that gave them the opportunity to get rid of me.” [Kevin McDonalds, job-seeking customer of printing training provider]

Reduced Customer Service. Provider administrators also feared that pressure to meet payment points and outcome goals would lead to staff burnout and reduced customer service. For example, four years into the demonstration, the technical capacity of some community-based organizations remained limited, thus extra ‘person power’ was needed. Typically, only one staff member could be spared for the task of reporting retention outcomes of program completers. At the same time, increasing numbers of completers needed to be tracked, followed-up, and sometimes re-served. Others echoed this manager’s report that overload led to a reduction in essential customer retention services:

[Who does retention?] “I do. Every three months I try to contact them personally. But this usually means phone calls where I often just have to leave a message, or a follow-up letter. Some placements come by to report in to me.” [Manager, construction training provider]

Job seekers also reflected this organizational challenge, as these graduate’s comments illustrate:

“They were supposed to have an after-care program to deal with the graduates. I haven’t heard from anyone there in 3 months. I told them I was on a temp job. I didn’t hear anything else from them. The after-care program needs to be more intense. Really and truly. I’d like them to . . . call us up and find out what’s going on. Find out any support we need—like childcare. Help us get what we need from employers—especially financially.” [Ayesha Muhammad, job seeker graduate of community-based provider]

Applicant Selectivity or “Creaming.” Other administrators predicted that strained organizational capacity would lead to applicant “creaming,” whereby only those perceived likely to be successful would be accepted into the program. In several instances, the need to meet payment points reduced “potentials,” who might have benefited from the workforce program’s extensive services, to “rejects,” as this manager outlined:

"I tell them [applicants] to come to the project at 7am and have them volunteer here for several days—shovel snow, stuff envelopes, etc. If they show up at 8:30, they're out. They have to demonstrate dependability before I'll try to help them. This rules out about 80%." [Manager, construction training provider]

Weak retention outcomes revealed by data collection and reporting systems led to formal restructuring of the recruitment base in other provider organizations. While higher rates of retention resulted from such changes, the authoritative voice of the funder via the intermediary—per design *or* interpretation—eclipsed the provider's voice, as this manager's comments typified:

"Our placement focus used to be 30% directly into jobs and 70% into skills training. Now with new funding directives it will be 70%/30%. Much of the direct placement will be in dietary and housekeeping jobs where there is on-the-job training. The tone now is moving away from a "career" concept because we will place less emphasis on CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) training and more emphasis on direct placement. The intermediary is concerned that CNA training is not cost-effective; it's not meeting the healthcare network needs. The emphasis on numbers compromises the training piece. But 90–95% of the entire base is welfare recipients—you can't "direct place" them. [Manager, healthcare training provider serving job seeker Loretta Lopez]

Such data- and funder-driven decisions about customer recruitment made leaner programs available to job seekers, but limited organizations' ability to satisfy the performance requirement of "good job" placements at the same time. Job seekers were diverted into alternative and less lucrative employment paths that ran counter to their career goals, as Loretta Lopez, 29-year old single mother of two pre-school aged children, illustrated in response to her provider's suggestion that she consider a dietary or housekeeping position:

"Since I had my [medical assistance] certificate [from a previous program] . . . I am focusing on getting a job in the medical field. I want a job at a medical call center, if possible." [Loretta Lopez, job seeker at healthcare training provider]

In order to attract matching funds, another performance requirement, and strengthen employers' desire for program graduates,

provider administrators occasionally rationalized that selectivity, or “creaming,” was necessary to sustain both program and organization:

“Employers told us they were more interested in quality than quantity.” “We’ve done a lot of work to strengthen our assessment process—hard-nosed testing for skills and career choice.” [Director and Retention Counselor, customer service training provider]

“What’s central to our success is placing successful individuals in jobs. Some of our success is due to the placements. I want to make sure that they [employers] want more of my people. It opens up more doors for others if they are successful. What makes it easy is to send out a good worker.” [Manager, construction training provider]

Most often, however, training providers absorbed the extra demands imposed by reporting and retention expectations without limiting customer access.

Unrealistic Definitions and Outcome Expectations. Finally, many administrators believed that performance standards did not reflect the realities of job seekers’ lives. As such, organizations tried to use customer experience to “correct” critical definitions and outcome expectations. This administrator’s opinion exemplified the views of others, echoing Frumkin and Andre-Clark’s (1999) suggestion that nonprofits should define “success” in their own, not solely business, terms:

“The system should be changed. It should be much longer term because people come and go. Performance standards are different—they assume a linear track. We should re-define ‘success.’ The performance standards give 30 days to get a new job when an individual loses a job—sometimes we can’t even find the family for 60 days. If they lose a job, it can easily take longer than 30 days to get another job.” [Director, community-based provider]

The need to redefine “success” was underscored by job seekers. Former heroin addict and 31-year old single parent, Isabell Smith, used a business training program to support and retain custody of her children. Isabell initially defined success in the simple terms of starting training—no small feat, as she was concurrently transitioning out of a sheltered recovery facility, retrieving her children from foster care, finding a therapeutic childcare program

for their residual developmental needs, locating an affordable apartment, and enrolling in a job training program:

"L was my original case manager; she was so awesome. I was trying to do everything and I was moving, getting my children back for the first time, supposed to start school at the same time, and I called her up freaking out. She was great and she told me, 'Girl, you are nervous, but don't worry about it. School will still be there; you can do the one in June.'" [Isabell Smith, job-seeking customer of community-based provider]

After this wisely-counseled delay, Isabell graduated from the provider's affiliated business program and got a job at Dot-Com Company at \$10 per hour that she retained for 19 months until the facility closed. By that time, she had been promoted twice and earned \$13 per hour.

Similarly, organizations felt that the definition of job seeking "customer" was too narrow, as this director's comments illustrate:

"We're trying to educate WIA people and funders that our clientele need as much support as if they were formally diagnosed with 'disabilities.' Ultimately, disability is *not* the disabling factor—it's their psychological condition, their family, workplace policies and practices, and their self-esteem." [Director, customer service training provider]

Indirectly, job seekers' experiences supported this need for redefinition. During their training or early employment months, fully half of the 25 family heads scored above the mean for the general population on the CES-D, a widely-used non-clinical depression scale (Radloff & Locke, 1986), meaning "possible depression," while only one-third scored above the mean after several years in the work world. Similarly, navigating dangerous work environments also showed that intervention needs persisted long after training and twelve months of retention tracking, suggesting that "customer" was a longer-term category than even the initiative's liberal 12-month definition implied. Hard Working Blessed, a former felon in his early 40s, suffered two herniated disks in his back, two bouts of pneumonia, and repeated bouts of the flu in his 19-month crane operator position at Steel Mill & Foundry before being demoted to "light duty" because of the injuries. He found a

subsequent job within two weeks, but lacked information about bridge health insurance to sustain his family's health during the three-month probation period at the new job. His wife's comments illustrated how defining the "customer" period as twelve months was inadequate, especially for children's well-being:

"Well-child preventive visits, dental care, and children's eye testing [with implications for school performance] were all postponed during this period." [Mrs. Hard Working Blessed, wife of manufacturing training provider customer]

Other voices identified the need to redefine "retention," as this administrator's comments suggest:

"Performance-based compensation is really a problem. There are so many complex situations. It comes down to quality treatment versus numbers processing. One of our biggest problems right now is white men. They don't stay at it. We put a lot of energy into them—but they don't stay. A second problem is African American men. But the problems are different. The African American men don't think they can do the job; their self-esteem is low. The white men don't think they need any help. Some of them have criminal histories and lots have substance abuse problems." [Director, community-based provider]

In response, one intermediary digressed from performance funding directives and then advocated with the funder for new procedures:

"We have sent out a Request for Proposals to community organizations for case management services that are *not* performance-based. The focus will be, 'This is a client; these are the issues.' Ongoing assessment is really necessary. Performance-based funding constrains the time [and] the quality of assessment procedures. [We] can't meet payment points because you need lots of time to do good individual assessments. The foundation thought that if we give them a job, it's a solution. I see that we give them a job, it's more problems. We need to renegotiate the complexity." [Director of retention services, development intermediary]

In fact, because a compelling case for this change was buttressed by data on job seeker characteristics and "stories" about housing, transportation, childcare, and children's school problems, the

intermediary was able to expand its retention services *and* retain funding.

As a whole, provider organizations also argued for defining a broader range of "outcomes" than specified under performance funding. This intermediary manager's statement typified the broader critique of the TANF and WIA policy emphasis on work over education and training (Connolly & Gottschalk, 2000; Benner et al., 2001):

"Teresa's class learned . . . She was placed before the last week of training. By graduation, she had a job. [Rental Car Company] hired her. There were two others who were skilled besides Teresa. One stayed in college to continue his education; he's in his 60s. He's considered a 'failure' under performance funding. Further education [only] counts as long as a person is working." [Manager, development intermediary]

Similar sentiments about how to define "outcome" were expressed by an intermediary director in reference to the paucity of public funding under the welfare and workforce reforms:

"Maybe folks are learning that 'there's no quick fix.' All the family issues are interrelated. Retention support is the hardest money to raise. There's money for training; money for placement. But not for retention, yet it takes forty cents of every dollar. The big issues are childcare [because] it disappears too quickly after the worker's wage level rises just a little; turning the clock off during education; and support for retention. I hope that reauthorization leads to more conceptualization of welfare-to-work as poverty reduction. That means longer-term investment." [Director, development intermediary]

Mission Strain. In a similar vein, administrators and professionals in provider organizations often felt that performance funding strained their mission to serve economically-disadvantaged customers—a common perception among nonprofits (Blazek, 1996) that at times masks ineptitude, but at other times results in advocacy for job seeking customers. This manager's views reflected those of many provider administrators:

"As we move into retention now in the intermediary, it's not where it should be. It's a problem of the inadequacies at the front-end determining the results at the back end. It's a kind of cumulative

domino effect. The numbers are low now in the business project; recruitment is low, the infrastructure is bad, and the program is numbers-driven. They forget the true mission and purpose of the program. Performance-based funding is a problem. The intermediary said they are doing more front-end funding now, but the skill and competence of the community organizations isn't enough. Any time there are behavioral change issues it takes a lot of preparation. The pattern is now: 'get the client in—worry later' versus 'get the preparation done on the front end, which will take care of the later.' "[Manager, development intermediary]

Multiple Funding Sources. A final organizational challenge resulted from the fact that the provider organizations all received funding from *multiple* sources, each with idiosyncratic eligibility and outcome requirements that thwarted the provider's mission and capacity to serve low-income job seekers. Such conflicts occurred regardless of funding source, as administrators reported:

"We compete with TANF agencies, and they control participation. They can choose not to send to a JTPA program [like we used to be]." [Manager, printing training provider]

"[City Workforce Organization (CWO)] is one of our funders. We assess the potential trainees and then we lose them there. They are not designated eligible for our program. We lose at least half this way. They don't pass assessments at CWO. [Why?] They have to show city residence and *proof* of such. Many don't have proof and others don't live in the city. They have to show two forms of ID. Many don't have two forms. They have to demonstrate 5th grade math and 6th grade reading. We've already given them a rigorous assessment—even after they've passed our assessment, they don't pass CWO's. We expected them to come to us from CWO already certified—it would be our feeder program. It hasn't worked out that way. Our assessment is at least 1 ½ hours. We do some behavior testing. They've sent hundreds to be assessed. And then we lose half of them." [Director, business training provider]

The challenge of multiple authorities directly impacted job seeking customers and their employment futures, as illustrated by Ayesha Muhammad, a mother of five in her early 40s who was forced to change careers because a life-threatening injury ended her certified nursing assistant career. Ayesha Muhammad's

experience also illustrates that changes in program content took time to develop, often because the requirements of public and philanthropic funders conflicted with each other:

"To be honest with you, I was not skilled. The skills that I picked up are from the learning centers that my job had. I learned about Excel. I learned Microsoft. I learned just about everything I had to do to deal with computers [on my job]. I know how to print out spreadsheets. I know how to do logs. They [provider program] didn't teach you that." [Ayesha Muhammad, job seeking customer of a community-based provider]

A skill instructor at the provider organization echoed Ayesha's assessment that the computer training was not sufficient for office jobs. He noted that even one year after Ayesha attended the program, TANF funding requirements prevented using philanthropic funds to offer more intensive skill content:

"The early computer training was too basic. We spent a lot of time on soft skills. They might only have learned how to save a file on a desktop; delete a file; and edit a document." [Can students switch to a more advanced computer course?] No. Students are referred to [provider] if they have work experience and some skills. They get 4 weeks class training, but some are changing careers [like Ayesha]. You can't pick up skills in 4 weeks . . . poorer students often don't even reach basic skill levels in 6 months." [Computer Instructor, Ayesha's community-based provider]

Ayesha Muhammad's work supervisor described the career-restraining effects of TANF funding regulations under which past work experience, rather than future career needs, determined the length of skill training:

"She didn't have any computer experience when she started working here . . . She has taken advantage of attending some of the classes we had during company time . . . We selected Ayesha to move to a position from sending bills to receiving . . . it will be a *lateral* move for her." [Supervisor of Ayesha Muhammad at Financial Insurance Company]

In a small change, however, two years after Ayesha participated, the provider's computer training was expanded from 11 to 15 hours per week, largely in response to pressure from the provider's employer partners, job seekers and professional staff.

How Performance Funding Benefited Professionals

Professionals in service and workforce organizations are particularly vulnerable to being caught between the demands of performance funding and their view of professional service (Frumkin, 2002). Even so, workforce professionals in this study acknowledged benefits as well as challenges under performance funding.

Customer-Oriented Service Changes. In the best of circumstances, self-assessment procedures required under performance funding revealed problems at both professional and program levels that led to favorable service changes, as these job seeker and professional perspectives exemplify:

"We did career assessment when Lucky Miracle [Asian immigrant job seeker] first came. When he came, the program was just starting. Sometimes there was not enough time to go into his history—how he got here. When you get a chance, you try to. So many meetings and clients. I have welfare-to-work, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation. I try to take care of a lot; I'm running around like crazy. I have a common understanding with Lucky. He is a high functioning client. Sometimes I end up focusing on those who are more in trouble." [Case Manager, community-based provider serving Lucky Miracle]

Lucky offered a different perspective from that of his case manager about the services he needed:

"He contacts me every two to three weeks. He's trying to find me a job. Before the program I saw him every few weeks. Now he just calls. He's very, very busy." [Lucky Miracle, job seeker served by the community-based provider's case manager]

When the professional learned that, in fact, Lucky's job search was floundering, he re-assessed his role:

"I rely on what clients tell me. I guess I need to question them. Take what they say and work with them." [Case Manager, community-based provider]

The customer's "voice" was heard such that the professional urged his organization to negotiate with the funding source for a smaller caseload. The negotiation was successful and the professional reached out more intensively to Lucky, and others like him, as a result.

Increased Customer Advocacy. Performance funding also enhanced professionals' customer advocacy role. As professionals collected "stories" from job seeking customers, and learned more about their backgrounds through expanded MIS data capacity, they collected a body of evidence that increased their ability to advocate for them after they entered the workplace. Advocacy is, of course, a traditional role of nonprofit professionals (Frumkin, 2002); in this study it was practiced by for-profit provider professionals as well:

"We talk about anger management, racism, drug problems, attitude problems, value differences, choices. In the retention phase, we look at workplace situations: Do you need an advocate? You have rights. We try to empower them; give them confidence. I write a letter introducing myself and the retention services to the individual's employer, unless the customer asks me not to. I tell the employer about the Jobs Initiative 'support program' and ask them to bring any questions or issues to me." [Professional, for-profit community-based provider]

When partnered teen father of two, Ahree Raca, encountered racism in a new construction apprentice position, his mentor at the development intermediary advocated directly with his employer and guided Ahree through the formal union complaint process. Ahree had recorded these among other racial incidents:

"The supervisor called me names, like 'Dummy, homie, home slice, and Muslim.' The supervisor also said to me, 'My daddy had slaves, now I have me one.' The supervisor put his hands on me and smiled. When I asked him to stop, he said, 'Get out and head for the house. Go to the union if you want.' The supervisor asked me, 'What do you bleed, because it can't be red?' " [Ahree Raca, construction training program graduate]

Because of his mentor's direct advocacy and guidance, Ahree reported that a meeting between his boss, his supervisor, and himself resulted in immediate relief from the harassment and his decision to remain on the job:

"He didn't give the supervisor a chance to deny my allegations, because there had been past allegations by others against the supervisor. My boss told the supervisor, 'Times have changed,' and that

his behavior was not acceptable and would not be tolerated . . . It made it hard to go to the job, . . . [but] we worked together afterward without any more incidents of harassment.” [Ahree Raca, construction training program graduate]

Increased Self-Advocacy. Workforce professionals also perceived that they could turn the performance requirement of organizational self-evaluation to their benefit. The director of a development intermediary allocated a larger proportion of funding to professional salaries in response to an analysis such as the one this professional reported:

“The sector managers make \$52,000 to \$62,000 depending on experience. Three times what we’re making. They’re the guys sitting there pontificating and theorizing and making policy. [The sector managers and I]—we’re really a team. It takes a team effort to help people. In the new request for proposals between our organization and the intermediary, we’re looking at case manager salary.” [Professional, community-based provider]

On the other hand, such advocacy did not always result in success, as this manager noted, drawing his conclusions from previous employment as a training provider case manager:

“At [training provider] my boss never let me see a contract. Directors don’t want to let case managers know how much the intermediary is paying them—this would give case managers leverage to ask for raises. Thus, there’s a lot of turnover.” [Manager, development intermediary]

How Performance Funding Challenged Professionals

Role Strain/Challenge to Professional Expertise. Professionals that work in organizations have historically experienced tension between allegiance to the tenets of their profession and competing demands from the organization (Frumkin, 2002). In this study, role strain was the most pervasive challenge that professionals experienced under performance funding, exhibited most often in concerns about reduced quality of professional service. Reporting requirements conflicted with professionals’ convictions of how to best meet customers’ needs, as this case manager’s comments illustrate:

"I guess at [development intermediary] retention means from the first day in a job to one year. But what about the person who has a job for one month, loses the job, and is unemployed for the next six months? If the person works for one year after the second job, what kind of retention does he or she get? I guess if I consider the retention year according to the second job—my work load would be too heavy. And then there are the accountability figures for the intermediary—it's pretty confusing." [Professional, community-based provider serving Maya Vanderhand]

This professional, as others, rued that lack of time for in-person contact limited the level of relationship-building and individualized attention that she considered hallmarks of professional expertise. In this case, her job-seeking customer concurred and spoke for others by critiquing such impersonal professional procedures in terms of the results she sought:

"I look at it like what do you call those people—like social workers—they go out to the families and look at how the kids are doing and stuff like that. If you have a case manager and that case manager has, I don't know how many [clients], they might have so many of them that they can't really focus. I was transferred from X to Y to Z. Z has been helping me with a lot of issues—gas vouchers, the move to this apartment, shoe vouchers. Now that I've been on my job for a year, Z is transferring me to somebody else. I feel so bad. I didn't really know Z, and now I'm being transferred. The contact should have been person to person." [Maya Vanderhand, job seeker served by community-based provider]

Maya's case manager agreed with this critique and not only extended oversight of vulnerable customers, such as Maya, past the one-year mark of designated service, but facilitated changes in the organization's service practices in line with Maya's recommendation:

"I called Linda personally to let her know about Maya [the customer], and set up an in-person meeting for them to meet each other." [Professional, community-based provider serving Maya Vanderhand]

At the same time, the case manager was increasingly stretched beyond her service limits, which threatened to derail the change she implemented before the new procedure became firmly established:

"I have 68 clients now. My maximum was 75." [Professional, community-based provider serving Maya Vanderhand]

Reduced Autonomy. Reduced autonomy was a second but prevalent constraint that professionals experienced under performance funding. Autonomous professional authority was essentially replaced by shared authority between professionals and customers and between multiple professionals. This retention counselor was one of many that valued autonomous one-to-one service over the performance requirement of service by multiple providers:

"The people we work with really need relationships. They bond with someone. When they connect, they're yours. They stay." [Retention Counselor, community-based provider]

Many job seekers similarly valued sustained, autonomous relationships, associating them with improved employment outcomes:

"He [case manager] became kind of a friend. I can call him at home . . . He gives encouragement to me. The automotive course was . . . postponed two times; I was two months waiting. Case Manager steadily encouraged me. 'It's gonna happen.' He helped with gas vouchers. He told me that he has the font picked out for my shingle when I open my own repair business." [Teresa Russell, job-seeking customer of community-based provider]

Teresa's case manager underscored that this relationship, over time, was vital to Teresa's job retention:

"Teresa, for example, calls me at home now and then if she's had a bad day at work. She'll show up for work if she gets to speak her mind." [Case Manager, community-based provider serving Teresa Russell]

At the same time, Teresa's career benefited financially and educationally from *multiple* professional resources:

"I go over to school [skills training partner of Teresa's community-based provider] to work on my truck and I had my [former] instructor help me with whatever I needed . . . As long as I can do the work on it, I can take it over to the school and if [former instructor] has a day open, he is more than willing to let me bring it in and work on it, which is really a plus because it was going to cost me \$150 for a mechanic to do the work." [Teresa Russell, job-seeking customer]

of community-based provider and its automotive training provider partner]

Because professionals' partnerships with employers were weakened after the economic downturn in spring 2001, their autonomy was even further challenged, as this program director outlined:

"We have an Employer Advisory Council. Big name employers are on this council to see us succeed. Right now, *none* of these employers are hiring. There are 100 of them. None are hiring. [Why?] The economy. The downturn has hit them hard. And it's about to get worse. Two airline companies were on the Council. At our initial Council meeting, employers mobbed me afterward saying 'when can we hire your graduates?' One company wanted 40 of them. Now, especially after the terrorist activity and fallout for the airline industry, the market could be flooded with 5000 customer service people *with experience*. We're banging on their doors with a gift—six weeks of customer service training. New employers write us off as a 'temporary agency' or welfare program, which we are not. They've been burned before by welfare-to-work programs." [Director, customer service training provider]

Work Overload. Professionals also found themselves overworked and overburdened in workforce organizations that did not have sufficient funding to "staff up" to meet the performance demands, as these comments typified:

"Work day? On paper, 8-5. Actual, maybe 6:30 a.m. to coincide with first shift, or to 7 p.m. and after, to coincide with later shift. I make a lot of phone calls from home. Probably more like 60 to 70 hours per week." [Job coach, healthcare training provider]

"I have a 'caseload' of about 300—just impossible to fully track. The manufacturing program has at least 500 graduates. The program likes to stay in touch—there are a lot of Hard Working Blessed [job seeking customer] out there, but it's absolutely impossible. Technically, Hard Working Blessed is beyond required program tracking—the intermediary does not technically track after 1 year—formally. Informally, all sectors do follow-up." [Retention specialist, manufacturing training provider serving Hard Working Blessed]

Hard Working Blessed might have benefited from consultation about the physical dangers on his job noted earlier, but he hesitated to burden his retention specialist, as many customers did:

"I guess I figure that part with me is over. They helped me along in the time of need [getting a job] and now they have to go off and help someone else in their time of need." [Hard Working Blessed, job-seeking customer of manufacturing training provider]

Professionals feared that such overload contributed to lower rates of retention among program completers because their post-employment needs went unmet. Accordingly, drawing on the voices of their professional staff and job-seeking customers, provider organizations pressured funders to allocate more money for staff expansion. In some cases, such funding was allocated, as this workforce professional's response to the interviewer's question about caseload suggests:

"Caseload? [chuckle] I have 60 to 70 people per contract and we usually have two contracts at the same time. The CEO of [our provider] organization is reviewing caseloads right now. There are going to be some changes!" [Retention Counselor, community-based provider]

Discussion and Implications

This paper used ethnographic research conducted in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Jobs Initiative as a platform to explore performance funding in workforce development, finding that new authority relations were evident among organizations, professionals, job seekers, and public and philanthropic funders, for good and ill. Workforce administrators and professionals voiced organizational improvements that job seekers and employers underscored, such as in-person transfers to new support professionals; more intensive and individualized outreach services for retention; increased capacity for and use of data; and substantive changes in training content. Moreover, the immediacy of the requirements under performance funding meant that many of these changes were made over a relatively short period of time, thus countering the "change inertia" often present in busy workforce or human service organizations.

Performance funding also led workforce professionals, job-seeking customers, and employers to collaborate on strategies to retain and eventually advance new workers, improving chances of economic mobility through employment. If retention outcomes had not been a funding requirement, community-based organizations and training providers could easily have been side-tracked

by the depth and extent of the post-training and post-employment problems that customers experienced, devolving to time-worn professional practices and program procedures in response. Instead, the development intermediaries, provider administrators and professionals, employers, and job seekers often coalesced around program and service improvements, monitored them, and made mid-course corrections when necessary. Most of the time, they saw that the self- and external assessments that were mandated by performance funding resulted in higher rates of job retention and better employment outcomes for customers.

At the same time, the performance funding picture was not completely rosy. The ability of both organizations and professionals to satisfy their mission, remain true to their professional tenets, and remain relatively autonomous as service providers was limited by the external authority of funders. Professional staff, in particular, chafed under the new authorities, believing that job-seeking customers were more often hurt than helped by the service changes that resulted from performance requirements. Very occasionally, funds were withheld temporarily until provider goals were met, but this was seen as less problematic than the other performance requirements. Perhaps most worrisome, the temptation of some providers and professionals to select applicants who were "most likely to succeed," in order to meet performance demands and keep organizations intact, was antithetical to ethical professional practice, to the overall aims of funders, and to successful employment outcomes for job seekers. While it appeared that job seekers, as a whole, were more helped than challenged by the changes that accrued in workforce organizations and professional services under performance funding, workforce development stakeholders must remain vigilant about customer selection criteria and procedures if the redistributive goals of philanthropy and public policy are to be realized.

In sum, the experiences reflected in this paper suggest that *neither* professional nor funder should be the sole authority in workforce development. Workforce program design, professional practices, and customer outcomes may be improved if the "voices" of job seekers, directly and through their affiliated administrators, professionals, and employers, are added to the "voices" of funders under performance funding. Multiple voices may

assure more consensual authority relations: in particular, less autonomous, unaccounted-for power for professionals; less program hegemony for funders; and greater power for job seekers over their futures.

Clearly, characteristics other than performance funding influence workforce development outcomes, such as the state of the labor market, "fit" between job seeker and firm, job seeker background, and the like. But ultimately, performance funding may be an important component to help job seeking customers achieve better employment results rather than simply experience better "procedures" that may not be connected with results. Employer customers may benefit similarly. Experiences in this demonstration program under performance funding can be used to encourage consensuality and polyvocality in the design and implementation of workforce development efforts, and to identify, proactively, areas of expectable conflict and challenge. These experiences may also offer valuable "lessons learned" to organizations and professionals funded under other performance directives, such as managed care or welfare-to-work.

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Notes

1. "Job retention" is not yet universally defined. The original WIA legislation required states to report retention and earnings 12 months after entry into employment (Public Law 105-220, August 7, 1998). The TANF program has allocated funds for employment retention, but has not defined retention (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003). In this paper and in the Jobs Initiative (Gilothe & Gewirtz, 1999; Fleischer, 2001; Welch, 2001), job retention is defined as labor market attachment for 12 months with no more than 30 successive days of unemployment. Retention does not necessarily signify remaining in a single job, but wages must be stable or improved in job change.

2. "Economically disadvantaged" in this paper and in the Jobs Initiative is defined as family income below 200% federal poverty level.

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Private Food Assistance in the Deep South: Assessing Agency Directors' Knowledge of Charitable Choice

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In recent years, food banking has emerged as an important tool in America's fight against hunger and malnutrition. At the same time, the charitable choice provision of 1996 welfare reform law has significantly expanded the opportunity for public-private partnerships in the provision of social services. Given the new opportunities ushered in by this legislation, this study examines the knowledge that food pantry directors in Alabama and Mississippi possess about charitable choice. Our study reveals that food pantry directors are generally lacking in knowledge about key charitable choice provisions, thereby limiting the potential for this initiative to be utilized fully in this area. We conclude by discussing the implications of these findings and specifying directions for future research.

Key words: *food insecurity, food pantries, faith-based, religion, charitable choice, government policy*

Introduction

In an effort to level the playing field between faith-based and secular service providers, the “charitable choice” provision of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) forbids states from discriminating against religious organizations in the competitive bidding process. The provision was intended to introduce new funding opportunities—namely, public monies—for a host of services delivered by faith-based providers and to change the rules governing the relationship between faith-based organizations and the state. The latitude given to states under the block grant system provides a new resource pool to private social service agencies, including faith-based food pantries.

In many communities, the most visible and widespread anti-poverty effort undertaken by religious groups is the operation of a food pantry. The food pantry model of relief, originally promoted as a temporary response to the economic recession and cuts in social welfare spending of the 1980s, has become an enduring and common feature of community life (Curtis 1997; Clancy, Bowering, & Poppendieck 1991). Unlike soup kitchens that provide hot meals, pantries distribute food for clients to take away and prepare at home. Most operate under the umbrella of a central food bank that collects, warehouses, and distributes food to its member agencies. Consistent with the trend toward public-private partnership in social welfare provision, food banks are stocked primarily with privately donated foodstuffs, supplemented with commodities provided by the federal government. Privately donated foods may come from growers, manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors, or individuals.

This study takes as its primary point of departure the convergence between the decades-long evolution of food banking and the recent rise of charitable choice. Our study is the first of which we are aware to connect these issues and study them in tandem. The primary objective of this research is to determine the level of knowledge held by food pantry directors of the charitable choice policy initiative. A high level of knowledge about charitable choice among pantry directors would be a positive sign for the likelihood of success for this initiative in local communities. By

contrast, if pantry directors show little awareness of this policy, it is unlikely that they or the organizations with which they work would be poised to take advantage of it.

To investigate this issue, we collected primary survey data from food pantry directors ($n=235$) in Alabama and Mississippi. Given the extensiveness of poverty and robust levels of faith-based civic engagement in this part of the Deep South, these two states provide an excellent opportunity for exploring the intersection between food provision and faith-based service delivery. The case of Mississippi is particularly striking. Recent data (1996–1998) reveal that 14 percent of all households in Mississippi are characterized by food insecurity—compared with a national rate of 9.7 percent food-insecure households (Bickel, Carlson, & Nord 1999; Nord, Jemison, & Bickel 1999; Rowley 2000). Alabama hovers around a common regional average for the South, with 11.3 percent of its households classified as food-insecure during this period. Given the dearth of basic data about food pantry operations in this region, our study also provides information on the basic characteristics of the pantries and the people who direct them.

The Role of Food Banking

The primary goal of food banking is the coordinated provision of emergency food to those who regularly suffer from hunger and malnutrition—now commonly called “food insecurity.” The local food agencies associated with the central food bank come in a variety of forms. Some are secular nongovernmental entities that provide meal sacks periodically to disadvantaged families and individuals. Others are either directly or indirectly connected to religious organizations. Among faith-based providers, food assistance programs are typically implemented by religious congregations or parachurch relief agencies (Bartkowski & Regis 2003). Other food agencies receive indirect forms of support from local religious organizations. Such is the case when congregants volunteer to serve as staff in local food assistance programs, or when food agencies that are not explicitly religious benefit from donations collected during the food drives of religious organizations.

Some previous work has cast a critical eye toward food banking (Poppendieck 1998; Hilton 1993), citing social distance between clients and inadequacy of relief provided, among other concerns. Empirical research on pantry clients has also raised some questions about the role of food banking. Although food banking is often promoted as a response to a short-term emergency, in reality, many pantries appear to be serving longer-term needs. In a study of food pantries in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, Daponte and colleagues found that the median length of use was two years (Daponte, Lewis, Sanders, & Taylor 1998). Food pantries in upstate New York face a similar situation, with a large number of clients having used local pantries for over three years (Clancy, Bowering, & Poppendieck 1991). Further, Biggerstaff, Morris, and Nichols-Casebolt (2002), who studied food pantry clients in Virginia, reported that the majority of users interviewed had characteristics that made it likely they would not be able to meet basic family needs in the long term without additional support. A large percentage of their research subjects had less than a high school education, and many were single parents. Similar findings surfaced in a study conducted by Duffy et al. (2002) for food pantry clients in East Alabama. Molnar et al. (2001), however, concluded that food banking, although limited in its potential to alleviate long-term hunger, can provide flexible and immediate service that fits into the structure of a local community, especially in rural areas.

Because food pantries are meeting chronic needs for many clients, and because of the recent downturn in the national economy and the subsequent rise in requests for social services of all kinds, accessing sufficient resources to meet community demands may become an increasing problem for many pantries. The opportunity to access government funds could thus be of great interest to cash-strapped, locally run, faith-based relief agencies.

Charitable Choice: Faith-Based Initiatives in the Post-Welfare Era

The charitable choice provision stemmed from the discretionary latitude associated with federal block grants to states under the 1996 welfare reform law (*A Guide to Charitable Choice*

1997; Bane, Coffin, & Thiemann 2000; Bartkowski & Regis 1999, 2003; Chaves 1999; Cnaan 1999; Griener 2000; Sherman 2000; Walsh 2001; Wineburg 2001). Following the passage of the 1996 welfare reform law, government funding of faith-based initiatives was slated for expansion at the federal level through the White House's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and sponsorship of the Charitable Choice Act of 2001 (Bartkowski & Regis 2003). During his election campaign and throughout his presidency, George W. Bush made no secret of his support for faith-based solutions to a wide range of social problems, including poverty and hunger (Bush 2001). Apart from the momentum provided to charitable choice through the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, support for this policy in the Bush administration comes from other quarters. During the tenure of Wisconsin's then-governor Tommy Thompson, only Texas, led at the time by Bush, rivaled Wisconsin in implementation of faith-based welfare reform initiatives. Thompson now serves as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. As a senator from Missouri, John Ashcroft, now the Bush administration's Attorney General, was a principle architect of the charitable choice provision during welfare reform debates.

Although the Charitable Choice Act of 2001 was eventually watered down because of concerns that it might permit discriminatory hiring among publicly funded faith-based providers, the expansion of charitable choice remains at the top of the president's domestic agenda (Bartkowski & Regis 2003). Indeed, the Bush administration has recently stated that it will forge ahead, implementing key portions of its "faith-based initiative" legislative agenda, with or without the approval of Congress (Allen 2002). And, of course, with Republicans having recently become a majority in both the Senate and House of Representatives after the 2002 mid-term elections, a bill expanding federal support for faith-based initiatives is likely to be more warmly received on Capitol Hill than it was previously.

The language of "choice" in this legislation is designed to underscore the new freedoms extended to faith-based organizations in competition for public purchase-of-service contracts (Bartkowski & Regis 1999, 2003). Secular nonprofit providers have long enjoyed the opportunity to procure government funds to

underwrite the services they provide to clients. Hence, one key aim of charitable choice has been to end practices that left faith-based and faith-affiliated nonprofits at a disadvantage in terms of funding sources. Charitable choice ensures that state governments cannot censor religious expression—i.e., religious symbols or practices—among faith-based organizations selected to provide publicly funded social services. Prior to the passage of charitable choice, select faith-based groups that partnered with the government (e.g., Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services) were required to secularize their service delivery procedures before securing public funds.

Yet, choice has a second meaning in the context of this policy initiative as well. Even as it protects the religious expression of faith-based organizations, charitable choice is intended to preserve the civil and religious liberties of welfare clients. The charitable choice provision mandates that states utilizing faith-based organizations as social service providers offer welfare clients the choice of receiving assistance from faith-based or secular organizations. Thus, client preferences for religious or secular providers must be respected. Moreover, faith-based providers of state-funded social services to the needy cannot legally force their clients to participate in religious practices (e.g., attend prayer groups or worship services). They also cannot require that clients join their religious organizations to receive services. In the end, then, charitable choice policy reflects an attempt to manage the tension between several potentially competing aims: (1) the state's obligation to provide poverty relief without fostering welfare dependency; and (2) the protection of civil liberties for both religious communities and welfare clients, such that religious organizations may be awarded government monies to provide publicly funded services along with guaranteed protections for the preferences of welfare clients.

Despite the lofty aspirations of the program's architects, the implementation of charitable choice among states has been uneven since the passage of welfare reform and subsequent passage of the Charitable Choice Act of 2001. This unanticipated development is noteworthy because state governments do not have a "choice" about implementing charitable choice if they are outsourcing public services. Any state government that contracts

out its services is legally prohibited from discriminating against faith-based providers in the competitive bidding process.

Where, then, does charitable choice implementation currently stand? At the time our survey was administered (2002), policy tracking reports of charitable choice implementation revealed that only fourteen states (28 percent) had formally taken advantage of charitable choice (Sherman 2002). And only about one-third of the states that implemented charitable choice had made any effort to monitor the evolving collaborations between themselves and faith-based providers. Careful monitoring and evaluation is thought to be evidence of a long-term commitment to state government collaborations with faith-based organizations.

Notably, the only Southern states to have implemented charitable choice programs in a consistent and carefully monitored fashion are Texas (approximately \$18.3 million dispersed via 19 contracts for 2002) and Virginia (\$2.3 million dispersed via 6 contracts for 2002) (Sherman 2002). Mississippi's now defunct Faith & Families initiative was considered a prototypical charitable choice program when it was begun in 1994 (Bartkowski & Regis 2003). However, Mississippi's Faith & Families was not initiated as a charitable choice program *per se*, but rather through a waiver obtained from the federal government prior to federal welfare reform in 1996. Subsequently, the state governments of Mississippi, Alabama, and many other Southern states have lagged behind their counterparts in sending out requests for proposals to prospective nonprofits (faith-based and secular) to initiate competitive bidding for the procurement of government of services. In short, charitable choice is poised for expansion—particularly if the economy becomes more robust. Yet, there remain a great many questions about the prospect of this policy fulfilling its objectives—the most noteworthy of which is the aim of creating a “level playing field.” According to this logic, charitable choice permits organizations that have previously been excluded from government contracting to be given an opportunity to vie for such funds.

Research Methods

This study draws on primary survey data collected from food pantry directors. A list of food bank organizations within

Alabama and Mississippi was compiled. From this master list of 1160 pantries in Mississippi and Alabama, 250 food pantries were selected randomly, with replacements, from each state. Thus, the total number of food pantries selected was 500.

A survey was designed to gauge the organizational attributes of food pantries and demographic characteristics of their directors, to ascertain the social welfare attitudes of pantry directors, and to tap the directors' knowledge of charitable choice. This survey (available by request from the Principal Investigator) was mailed to all of the 500 selected pantries. Return envelopes were provided and coded in order to decrease second-mailing attempts. Overall, there were three mailings completed. Fifty surveys were undeliverable, thereby leaving a possible 450 surveys. Envelopes returned as undeliverable were checked for forwarding addresses. If no forwarding address was on the envelope, follow-up phone calls were made to the agency based on the original list. We omitted any prospective respondent who indicated that he or she was not currently a food pantry director. In the end, 235 surveys were completed and returned. After undeliverable surveys were omitted from our sampling frame, the overall return rate was just over 50 percent.

Results

Our analysis proceeds in two phases. Phase one of the analysis yields a descriptive portrait of food pantries and their directors. Phase two of the study reviews pantry directors' responses to the index of questions about charitable choice. This index gauges directors' grasp of three domains of charitable choice knowledge—namely, the overall policy purpose, specific legal provisions, and implementation status of charitable choice.

Profiles of Food Agencies and Pantry Directors

Two of the most striking findings of our survey concern the type of organizations affiliated with food banks in the Alabama-Mississippi area and the clientele groups served by these agencies. Among the 235 surveys returned from agencies in our random sample, a sizable majority (72 percent, $n = 170$) of these are run by or affiliated with faith-based organizations (typically, a local congregation). Respondents were presented with closed-ended

categories for congregational sizes ranging from less than 100 members to over 500 members. Upon inspecting this distribution, it is surprising to find that small and mid-sized congregations form the backbone of faith-based food banking in these states. Small congregations account for approximately 42 percent of faith-based food banking and mid-sized congregations shoulder 38 percent of such efforts. Taken together, congregations of less than 500 members are responsible for at least 57 percent of all food banking—religious and secular efforts combined—reported by our sample. (Twenty-three respondents did not answer this question.) Our survey results suggest that nearly a third of all food banking efforts in these two states are undertaken by congregations with less than 100 members.

A second set of key findings about Alabama-Mississippi food banking concerns the primary client base of these agencies and their sources of funding. Among the organizations surveyed, the primary area of service was more rural than urban. To wit, about 70 percent ($n=158$) of those responding to this question identified themselves as serving primarily a non-metropolitan area (rural area, small town, or city of under 49,999) while only around 30 percent of respondents ($n=68$) indicated that they generally served a metropolitan population. Over two thirds (70 percent, $n=164$) indicated that they do not currently receive government funds, while 29 percent ($n=69$) currently underwrite their services with public money. Approximately half of the agencies surveyed (54 percent, $n=117$) indicated that they would apply for government funding in the future (or would continue to do so if currently receiving public monies). Only 15 percent of pantry directors ($n=35$) would not apply for such funds. The rest were unsure ($n=64$) or did not answer this question ($n=19$).

Given these organizational characteristics, what do we learn about the directors of such food agencies from our primary surveys? More than half of all food pantry directors in our survey are female (63 percent). The majority of these directors are white (57 percent, $n=135$), with almost all of the remaining respondents self-identifying as African American (34 percent, $n=79$). Twenty respondents did not answer this question, and one director identified as Asian or Pacific Islander. Consistent with the faith-based character of agencies in our sample, a majority of food agency

directors are highly religious. Almost 85 percent ($n=199$) indicated that they attend religious services once per week or more often while only a scant 2 percent ($n=4$) indicated not doing so at all. Tenure among directors ranges widely from those who are nearly brand new at their position (i.e., one month of experience) to tenures of about 40 years. Overall, directors have served in their current position an average of 5.7 years. Directors are generally well-educated, with the vast majority (77 percent, $n=182$) reporting at least some college. The majority of these directors report annual personal incomes below \$30,000 (55 percent of those answering this question, $n=104$), while only a handful of respondents had personal incomes of more than \$75,000 per year (2 percent of those answering, $n=4$). Household incomes for directors are more evenly distributed. The majority has household incomes below 50,000 (61.3 percent, $n=119$). However, over 15 percent ($n=30$) report household incomes of over \$75,000 ($n=30$) per year.

Food Agency Directors' Knowledge of Charitable Choice

The second phase of our study gauges agency directors' knowledge of charitable choice. Directors were presented with statements on the survey that, together, gauged their personal knowledge of charitable choice (see Table 1). Their familiarity with this policy is significant because directors of local voluntary organizations—both secular and faith-based—are at the forefront of America's fight against poverty and could expand their efforts through charitable choice. The statements in our fifteen-item "quiz" tapped three domains of knowledge about charitable choice:

- general policy parameters (i.e., the overall purpose and thrust of the policy);
- specific legal provisions (i.e., the rights and obligations of faith-based and community organizations under the new law); and
- implementation status (the extent to which programs have been initiated).

Participants were asked to score these questions on a five-point Likert-type scale (definitely true, maybe true, not sure, maybe false, definitely false). Although the questions themselves had definite true-false answers, we used a scale response so that

individuals who did have some knowledge of charitable choice, but did not feel completely certain of the exact provisions, would be more likely to score their impression of the statement. Individuals were considered to have a correct answer if they selected the appropriate definitely or maybe response. For example, if individuals indicated maybe true or definitely true to the question "Charitable choice refers to a provision found in 1996 welfare reform law," then they were given credit for a correct response.

So, how did food pantry directors perform on the charitable choice quiz? Generally, the scores were not overwhelmingly positive. The scores on the charitable choice knowledge test for each respondent have a theoretical range of 0 (no correct responses) to 15 (all correct responses). The mean number of actual correct responses was 4.99. Taken as a group, directors demonstrated little knowledge of charitable choice. It is somewhat heartening that about 15% of the directors achieved overall scores situated in the 10–14 correct-response category. Nevertheless, even the distribution within this category is skewed toward the lower end. As a percentage grade in which 100 percent equals a perfect score, no single director scored higher than 90 percent on the charitable choice knowledge test. In fact, only 74 of the 235 directors in our sample had at least 50 percent of their responses graded as correct.

To extend the educational metaphor implicit in the administration of such a quiz, is it correct to assume that directors have overwhelmingly failed this test of charitable choice knowledge? We are hesitant to advance such a charge. To be sure, the scores on the test were low. And, at first blush, the data seem to indicate that pantry directors are misinformed about the policy. However, it is probably more accurate to say that directors are uninformed rather than misinformed. The drawing of such distinctions is not to split hairs. Fifty-eight of the 235 directors (24.5 percent) either did not answer any of the charitable choice knowledge statements ($n=12$) or marked all answers as unsure ($n=46$). Further, when examining responses to each statement across subjects, it quickly becomes apparent that the most frequently marked response was "unsure."

This pattern is clearly evidenced in Table 1. Respondents' lack of knowledge concerning charitable choice is further underscored by several patterns that are difficult to convey in quantitative

Table 1

Percentage Distribution of Correct, Incorrect and Unsure Answers to Statements about Charitable Choice.

<i>Knowledge Statement (correct response featured in capital letters)</i>	<i>Correct</i>	<i>Incorrect</i>	<i>Unsure/NA</i>
<i>General Policy Parameters</i>			
1. Charitable choice refers to a provision found in 1996 welfare reform law. [TRUE]	12%	3%	84%
2. Under charitable choice, public funds are to be disbursed through a competitive bidding process in which nonprofit groups submit funding proposals. [TRUE]	18%	7%	75%
3. If religious organizations receive funds from charitable choice in a local area, clients in that area must be given the option of receiving services from a secular provider as well. [TRUE]	23%	8%	69%
4. Charitable choice legislation is so named because it gives states the choice of not complying with its provisions. [FALSE]	11%	15%	74%
<i>Specific Legal Provisions</i>			
5. Charitable choice prohibits government discrimination against faith-based providers on the basis of religion. [TRUE]	46%	6%	48%
6. Faith-based organizations that receive public money under charitable choice can display religious icons and symbols in locations where they provide services to clients. [TRUE]	26%	13%	61%

<i>Knowledge Statement (correct response featured in capital letters)</i>	<i>Correct</i>	<i>Incorrect</i>	<i>Unsure/NA</i>
7. Religious organizations and other nonprofits that wish to participate in charitable choice can be legally recognized as private service providers by becoming incorporated with 501(c)(3) status. [TRUE]	32%	3%	65%
8. Charitable choice requires participating nonprofits to comply with government non-discrimination statutes in hiring staff for their programs. [TRUE]	43%	3%	53%
9. If a religiously-based agency receives funds under charitable choice, the agency is allowed to screen out and withhold services from clients who do not believe in God. [FALSE]	57%	2%	41%
10. Faith-based organizations that receive funds through charitable choice can legally require that clients attend religious events such as prayer meetings, worship, and scripture study to receive social services. [FALSE]	50%	7%	43%
11. Faith-based providers funded under charitable choice can withhold services from clients who refuse to join their religious group. [FALSE]	55%	2%	43%
12. Private nonprofits that accept public funds under charitable choice can be audited by the government. [TRUE]	51%	2%	48%
13. If an agency receives funding under charitable choice, the agency must comply with government non-discrimination statutes in providing services to clients. [TRUE]	58%	2%	40%

(continued)

Table 1

(Continued)

<i>Knowledge Statement (correct response featured in capital letters)</i>	<i>Correct</i>	<i>Incorrect</i>	<i>Unsure/NA</i>
<i>Implementation Status</i>			
14. Charitable choice is currently used in all fifty states of the U.S. [FALSE]	5%	17%	79%
15. Because of legislation currently stalled before Congress, religious organizations can no longer seek funds from state governments that contract out their social services to secular nonprofit providers. [FALSE]	7%	8%	85%

terms. Many of the returned surveys contained qualitative comments written in by respondents. Through these comments, subjects expressed questions and a lack of clarity about charitable choice. In addition, several survey respondents requested information about charitable choice from the research team when returning their survey forms through the mail.

Despite this overall state of unfamiliarity with charitable choice, do pantry directors know more about the policy's general parameters, its legal provisions, or the implementation status of charitable choice? A careful comparison of the responses within these three domains reveals that pantry directors have the most familiarity with the specific legal provisions of charitable choice (statements 5 through 13). Within this domain of charitable choice knowledge, the percentages of directors selecting correct responses ranged from 26 percent to 58 percent. While these scores are not passing grades, they exceed scores in the two other knowledge domains. The best scores in the specific legal provisions domain surface around an awareness of a funded organization's obligations (statements 8–13). The poorest scores in this particular domain concern an awareness of the rights and opportunities that charitable choice guarantees to funded organizations (statements 6–7). Thus, pantry directors seem to be somewhat aware—though

only vaguely so—of the legal responsibilities that their organizations would face if they secured public funding. They are less aware of the new freedoms and opportunities guaranteed to their organizations under charitable choice.

Turning to the other two knowledge domains concerning charitable choice, pantry directors are quite uninformed about the overall thrust of charitable choice policy. Statements 1 through 4 tap their knowledge of the policy's general parameters. These statements elicited correct responses from between 11 percent and 23 percent of directors. Startlingly high percentages of pantry directors, ranging from 69 percent to 84 percent, were unsure about the policy's general thrust.

We also sought to gauge directors' knowledge of the policy's implementation status (statements 14 and 15). By far, these items elicit the lowest number of correct responses from pantry directors. Contrary to statement 14, charitable choice had been formally implemented in only fourteen states at the time of our survey. Yet, three times more directors (17 percent) answered this item incorrectly than those who answered correctly (5 percent). Here again, a large portion (79 percent) of all respondents was unsure about the answer to this statement. The second statement concerned with implementation status inquired about the effect that a lack of congressional approval for federal-level charitable choice has on state-level charitable choice programs. In fact, charitable choice programs implemented by these two levels of government are relatively distinct. State-level charitable choice was passed as part of welfare reform law and remains in effect under the block grant system. However, the federal-level Charitable Choice Act of 2001 did not permit broad implementation of federal funding for faith-based and community groups because of congressional opposition. Here, correct and incorrect responses were both low (7 percent and 8 percent, respectively). Again, the vast majority of directors (85 percent) were unsure of the relationship between state-level programs and federal-level legislation.

In short, Alabama and Mississippi food pantry directors—a group whose organizations are supposed to benefit from the new freedoms ushered in under charitable choice—are generally uninformed about this policy. Quite consistently, pantry directors were unsure how to evaluate knowledge statements about the

general parameters of charitable choice policy, the specific legal provisions that accompany it, or the status of programs implemented under it. Relatively speaking, pantry directors in our sample are best aware of the legal obligations that would be required of them under the policy. However, with nearly half of respondents consistently uninformed about such obligations and even fewer informed of their rights, such awareness is wanting. Pantry directors are woefully uninformed about the general parameters of charitable choice policy and the status of implementation for this initiative.

Conclusion

This study has taken the intersection between food banking and charitable choice as its primary point of departure. In the early 1980s, food banks—umbrella agencies that collect food from various sources and then disseminate it to local pantries—emerged as a means of fighting hunger in the United States. Then, in 1996, charitable choice surfaced as a key provision in welfare reform law. Charitable choice dramatically expanded the opportunity for public-private service provision partnerships and forbade states from discriminating against faith-based providers in awarding government contracts. This study sought to examine the structure of food banking in Alabama and Mississippi while exploring the viability of charitable choice for underwriting food provision in this two-state region of the Deep South.

Drawing on primary survey data collected by mail from a random sample of Alabama-Mississippi food agency directors ($n=235$), we first presented profiles of these organizations and their directors. We found that a sizable majority (73 percent) of the food agencies in our survey are faith-based organizations. Given this finding, it seems safe to assume that religious organizations account for the bulk of food assistance conducted in these two states. Moreover, the vast majority (81 percent) of these faith-based food agencies are affiliated with small and moderately sized congregations. This finding is surprising because larger congregations are typically viewed as having a more robust base of human and material resources. Among all of the food agencies surveyed (secular and faith-based), services are offered predominantly to rural residents. Indeed, over two thirds of the agencies

surveyed identify rural communities as their primary area of service.

What did we learn about the directors of such agencies? Among our Alabama-Mississippi sample, agency directors are predominantly white and female. Most of them are well-educated, but report fairly modest personal incomes, thereby situating them in the middle class.

A second goal of our study entailed gauging food agency directors' receptivity toward charitable choice and assessing their awareness of this policy. About two thirds of the food agencies in our survey do not currently receive government funds, yet over half are willing to apply for public funding in the future. The knowledge quiz that we administered to food pantry directors through our survey revealed that food agency directors are largely uninformed about the general policy parameters, key legal provisions, and implementation status of charitable choice. If we were to evaluate the results of our charitable choice knowledge test by academic standards, most of our "students"—that is, pantry directors surveyed—would receive a failing grade. With most pantry directors selecting correct answers to only about one of three charitable choice knowledge statements, the "class average" on this examination would hover around 33 percent. However, there was some variation across knowledge domains. Food agency directors were most knowledgeable (but still only vaguely aware) about the specific legal provisions of charitable choice. They were least aware of the implementation status of this policy.

What conclusions can be drawn from food agency directors' performance on the charitable choice quiz? In our view, Alabama-Mississippi food directors' general failure on this "test" of their charitable choice knowledge should not be used to impugn them or to castigate food assistance provided in the trenches of the Deep South. If food directors are undereducated about charitable choice, the blame for this lack of information should not be laid at the feet of the "students" (i.e., the directors themselves). Rather, the burden of education is always that of the "teacher." In the case of charitable choice education, teachers come in many forms—government officials, policymakers, and community representatives. It is most likely the lack of a coherent pedagogy and inadequate instruction that underlay the failure to disseminate

knowledge about such important policy changes to local social service providers.

There are two clear implications, then, that emerge from our study. First, there is a stark contradiction between the overwhelmingly religious character of food assistance in the Alabama-Mississippi area and the glaring lack of initiative that both states have demonstrated toward charitable choice. Although Mississippi had implemented a church-state collaboration that was a forerunner of charitable choice (Mississippi Faith & Families) (see Bartkowski & Regis 2003), the initiative is no longer active. In fact, neither Alabama nor Mississippi has emerged on the radar of those who track the many charitable choice efforts that are being forged elsewhere after welfare reform. We are left to wonder about the motivations underlying government inaction or lack of coordination when a sizable network of religious providers is already in place to offer food assistance to food-insecure populations. Perhaps states whose congregations are already actively involved in such work do not feel a sense of urgency in forging charitable choice partnerships—at least in a way that can be clearly tracked by those monitoring implementation. Given the uneven implementation of charitable choice in the nation at large, and the apparent absence of such programs in the Deep South, a national study is needed to identify the structural factors that facilitate and hinder the forging of charitable choice partnerships.

Finally, it is plainly clear that food directors in Alabama and Mississippi have not been well-informed about charitable choice. In this regard, food assistance in the Deep South seems far removed from the beltway of American politics. And yet, we cannot be sure that food pantry directors in Alabama and Mississippi are any less informed than their counterparts in other parts of the country. Thus, there is a need for more comprehensive data that only a broader, more comparative study would provide. This line of research could be attacked in a number of different ways. On the one hand, it is possible that food directors are less informed about charitable choice than leaders in other sectors of the welfare provision network (e.g., directors of child care centers, substance abuse counselors). If some sectors of the social service delivery “industry” are more knowledgeable about charitable choice, efforts should be made to inform all parties who are supposed to benefit from this revolutionary policy about it.

On the other hand, there may be regional gaps in charitable choice knowledge—and these will likely mirror the actual implementation and opportunities for implementation of charitable choice programs. Consequently, future work is needed to determine if food agency directors in the South are actually less informed about charitable choice than their counterparts in other regions of the country. From our study alone, we cannot determine how Alabama-Mississippi pantry directors compare with food agency supervisors in other parts of the country. If a broader comparative study were undertaken, care should be exercised to account for the fact that the South is comprised of more rural communities and fewer large cities than many other regions of the country. Hence, spatial variations in charitable choice policy knowledge and opportunity may be rooted in both regional differences (e.g., South, Northeast, Midwest) and distinctions that characterize different types of community locales (e.g., rural versus urban areas). Here again, scholarship is needed that aims to identify structural differences that create knowledge and opportunity gaps for those living in communities far removed from the centers of policymaking in America (state capitols, Washington, D.C.). It is only through such scholarship and corrective efforts that the “level playing field” proposed by advocates of charitable choice can even be reasonably considered.

For the time being, our study demonstrates that there is much to be done before charitable choice can be said to have effectively lived up to its name and before food banking can fulfill its mandate. The directors of food agencies and other organizations ostensibly empowered by charitable choice must be educated about this novel policy initiative. Such a conclusion is clearly supported by our study of food banking in Alabama and Mississippi. And, given the uneven implementation of charitable choice throughout the nation at this time (Ragan, Montiel, & Wright 2003), we suspect that this conclusion would be borne out in many other parts of the country as well. It is only through proactive and diligent education efforts that the presumed beneficiaries of charitable choice will be able to make reasoned choices about the new opportunities available to them in America’s post-welfare era.

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The Sound of Silence: Social Work, the Academy, and Iraq

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Despite the imposition of economic sanctions against Iraq in 1990, the social work academy has ignored the impact of this global social policy promoted by the international community. Though evidence existed for more than 10 years that sanctions contributed to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of children and other vulnerable groups in Iraq, while also crippling the nation's health care and social infrastructure, the profession has remained silent. The implications of this case study suggest a need for greater engagement by social work researchers and the profession on global issues.

Key words: *Iraq, social work, economic sanctions, social work researchers, global issues, global social policy*

Introduction

What happens when hundreds of thousands of civilians in one country die within 10 years due largely to a policy carried out on behalf of the international community? For more than 12 years, the use of economic sanctions against Iraq, often enforced at the behest of the United States, produced a range of devastating consequences for the health and well-being of much of Iraq's civilian population. The sanctions were criticized as a violation of international human rights (Kozal, 2000); as a weapon of mass destruction that prevented Iraq "from satisfying its most basic humanitarian needs" (Gordon, 2002, p. 43); and as being responsible for "the deaths of more people in Iraq than have been slain by all so-called weapons of mass destruction throughout history" (Mueller & Mueller, 1999, p. 51). Empirical data show

that sanctions contributed significantly to the decline of Iraq's health care system, once among the most advanced in the Middle East (von Sponeck, 2002; Popal, 2000; Pilger, 2000; UNICEF, 1998). Child malnutrition, disease, and child/infant mortality increased sharply in Iraq in the 1990s under the sanctions regime, while food self-sufficiency declined (Pellett, 2000; Abergavenny, 2000; Ascherio, et al., 1992; Garfield & Leu, 2000; Wareham, 2000; Garfield, 1999a; Pape, 1997).

Despite these dramatic consequences, the issue of economic sanctions in Iraq has received only limited attention. Since the imposition of sanctions in 1990, social work scholars have largely ignored these alarming events, and the larger social science community has produced few articles on this topic. A literature review reveals that most academic research on sanctions comes from the health professions and, to a lesser extent, political science. Reports from humanitarian and non-governmental organizations also form a key body of literature on the topic of sanctions against Iraq.

The lack of attention paid to Iraq by the academy in general is troubling; the silence on sanctions by social work is especially disturbing given the profession's stated commitment to address injustice and oppression at home and abroad. In this case, silence by social work scholars is notable on two main issues confronting Iraq's civilian population: 1) internal policies, specifically Iraqi government repression and the general lack of "democracy"; and, 2) external policies, namely economic sanctions promoted by the United Nations. Both contributed to pervasive oppression and a significant decline in the health and living standards among most Iraqi citizens. This paper focuses on the latter issue: the contradiction between social work's emphasis on eliminating conditions of injustice and the reality of the profession's silence about one of the world's greatest humanitarian crises in at least the past decade.

The neglect of such issues in the social work literature, because they occur in the global arena and may be seen as outside the purview of social work educators, highlights the parochial nature of U.S. social work. Further, silence on key global problems, especially those dealing with overtly "political" issues, reinforces the false notion that politics—especially on the international stage—

has little bearing on the social work profession, education, and research. Given the numerous social problems that transcend national borders and impact human well being, and in the wake of September 11, the task of engagement with such issues is vital to creating policies worldwide that reflect the values of the profession.

Sanctions as Global Policy to Effect Political Change

Shortly after Iraq's army invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the United Nations authorized a range of military, financial, and economic sanctions against Iraq. Diplomatic relations with Iraq were severed by most nations, while the country was isolated from much of the world via the end of travel and other cultural exchanges (Kondoch, 2001; von Sponeck, 2002). Economic sanctions were originally imposed in an effort to gain Iraq's military withdrawal from Kuwait. However, despite the removal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait the UN Security Council in 1991 approved a second resolution, which mandated that Iraq had to meet several new conditions to bring about the end of sanctions (Hårleman, 2002; von Sponeck, 2002; Pellett, 2000):

- Destroy all "weapons of mass destruction" and long-range missiles;
- Pledge not to develop or acquire any such weapons in the future;
- Cooperate with the UN weapons inspection program;
- Recognize its 1963 border agreement with Kuwait;
- Compensate those who suffered as a result of the invasion of Kuwait;
- Repatriate Kuwaiti and other foreign nationals;
- Pledge not to support or engage in forms of international terrorism.

This second resolution significantly raised the obligations Iraq had to meet to end economic sanctions. The implications would prove important, as over the next 12 years the United States in particular argued for the need to modify and maintain sanctions as a means to achieve its own foreign policy goals (von Sponeck, 2002). Since 1990, U.S. policy toward Iraq increasingly focused on toppling Iraqi President Saddam Hussein (Falk, 2002; von

Sponeck, 2002; Cortright & Lopez, 2000). Sanctions thus represented a policy promoted by three different U.S. presidents (Aziz, 2000). Whatever results sanctions produced, it is likely that as long as Saddam Hussein stayed in power, the United States would work to ensure that UN sanctions continued (Byman, 2001; Tarzi, 2000). Indeed, despite mounting evidence of the impact of sanctions during the 1990s, the UN maintained the most punitive and extensive sanctions in history, while Saddam Hussein solidified his rule (Kondoch, 2001; Graham-Brown, 1999; Kozal, 2000).

The use of sanctions despite the civilian cost raised troubling issues about the political motives behind this policy. Gordon (2002) suggests U.S. manipulation of the sanctions program to suit its own global policy agenda "effectively turned a program of international governance into a legitimized act of mass slaughter" (p. 43). A former United Nations official found that UN policy in Iraq was so vague as to allow for conflicting interpretation of Iraqi compliance with disarmament demands throughout the 1990s (von Sponeck, 2002). This disagreement helped keep the debate focused on "weapons of mass destruction" and cooperation with the UN by the Iraqi government, rather than the human and social costs of sanctions.

The Impact of Sanctions on Iraq

In key respects, the use of sanctions against Iraq proved a relatively ineffective policy tool (Kozal, 2000). Rather than weaken Iraq, sanctions may have strengthened Saddam Hussein (Byman, 2001), in part by allowing him to cite external interference in Iraq as justification for political repression, religious persecution, and human rights abuses. In 1990, CIA Director William Webster predicted the measures would fail to have the desired effect on Iraq. He told Congress "there is no assurance or guarantee that economic hardships will compel Saddam to change his policies or lead to internal unrest that would threaten his regime" (cited in Pellett, 2000, p. 152). Nonetheless, sanctions were maintained throughout the decade and caused a dramatic decline in Iraq's social health and infrastructure. The civilian impacts were especially evident among children, those in poverty, and other vulnerable groups (Drèze & Gazdar, 1992; Garfield, 1999a; UNICEF, 1998). Using data from 1994–1999, British child health specialists found

an abrupt rise in maternal mortality and a doubling of death rates for children under five. The group implicated economic sanctions as the cause of malnutrition, which combined with pneumonia and diarrhea to create thousands of preventable child deaths (Abergavenny, 2000). In 1998 the UN cited malnutrition as "a potent factor for increased mortality in young children" since the imposition of sanctions (UNICEF, 1998, p. 25). They documented a dramatic rise in child mortality rates from 1989 to 1997: an estimated 40,000 "excess deaths" per year of children under five were linked to the collapse of the health care, sanitation, and food distribution systems (UNICEF, 1998). After 10 years of sanctions, Popal (2000) found that "malnutrition and under-nutrition are now chronic, and health facilities remain in a poor condition" (p. 79).

The civilian impact of sanctions was clear within months of their application. Following Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War, Hiltermann (1991) found that "the total devastation of the strategic infrastructure (power installations, telecommunications, airports, some industrial facilities) had made normal life in this country so dependent on modern technology virtually impossible" (p. 111). This destruction, combined with sanctions, prevented Iraq from mounting an adequate response to an emerging public health crisis (Hiltermann, 1991). As a result, the rate of malnutrition and water-borne diseases exploded in 1991, (Ascherio, et al., 1992).

Drèze & Gazdar's (1992) field research in 1991 found that despite an efficient public food distribution system in Iraq, "poverty and nutritional deprivation remain endemic, and for the poorest sections of the population, life grows increasingly difficult" (p. 922). While the Gulf War and an ensuing economic crisis crippled the Iraqi economy and the purchasing power of most citizens, the impact of sanctions emerged as the main barrier to the provision of basic needs and economic recovery. As Drèze and Gazdar (1992) predicted, the use of sanctions would institutionalize acute poverty throughout Iraq. In 1995, the UN found that some 20 percent of the population was living in "extreme poverty" (UNICEF, 1998).

The chronic crisis in malnutrition, and the rapid increase in child mortality and disease, led to a long-delayed agreement between Iraq and the UN in 1995 for a new humanitarian system

to address the situation. Dubbed a "temporary measure" to meet Iraq's humanitarian needs, the UN created a new oil-for-food program (United Nations, 1995; Kozal, 2000). The UN then allowed Iraq to sell a limited amount of oil every six months and use approximately two-thirds of the proceeds (one third was spent on UN administration and compensation to Kuwait) to purchase basic foods and medicine, make repairs to the nation's water and sewer systems, and help fund primary education (von Sponeck, 2002). This became the largest UN administered humanitarian program seeking to meet basic human needs in one country (UNDP, 2002a). The limit on how much oil Iraq could sell was later lifted, while the amount of revenue used for humanitarian needs was increased (Oil-for-Food Programme, 2003).

This change led to small yet vital improvements in the economy and greater access to food for much of Iraq's population (Popal, 2000). However, access to oil revenue was restricted; income was placed in a UN controlled account off-limits to Iraq's government. In addition, requests by Iraq for all imported goods were subject to approval by a UN committee. It became common for certain requested items—medical supplies and equipment, electric generators, materials to chlorinate water, and other humanitarian goods—to be rejected or subject to lengthy delay by the UN for fear that these so-called "dual use" items might be utilized for military purpose (Mueller & Mueller, 1999; Research Unit for Political Economy, 2003).

Despite limited progress in the availability of food, some medicines, and medical supplies, sanctions continued to undermine the overall social health of Iraq. Iraq's water and sanitation systems were so compromised by sanctions that many water-borne diseases became commonplace. The UN humanitarian coordinator for Iraq resigned in 1998 to protest the continued use of sanctions and their civilian impact, in particular their role in thousands of preventable child deaths each month (Kondocho, 2001). His successor quit two years later for similar reasons, as did the head of the UN's World Food Programme in Iraq (Kozal, 2000).

Following the U.S. war against Iraq in 2003, the Bush administration gained approval to gradually lift UN sanctions. Questions about the "effectiveness" of sanctions will likely be debated for some time, and a satisfactory answer is largely dependent upon

the criteria used to measure this issue. Of note, although Saddam Hussein remained in power until 2003, sanctions along with UN weapons inspections led to the dismantling of at least part, if not all, of Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction" (Weiss, 1999; Kozal, 2000; Manley, 2003; "Hans Blix," 2003).

Some caution that an accurate assessment of the impact of sanctions is unknown, due to the lack of precise data or its manipulation by the Iraqi government. However, many of these same researchers found that sanctions created widespread health and nutritional problems for most Iraqis (Baram, 2000; Alnasrawi, 2000; Kondoch, 2001; Garfield, 1999b; Byman, 2001). While methodological issues are significant, Weiss (1999) suggested that "a cluster of indicators" measuring economic, health, and socio-demographic data could help adequately assess the humanitarian cost of sanctions. Thus Garfield (1999a) found that more rigorous research methods still suggested 300,000 excess deaths of children under five occurred by 1999 from sanctions. Saddam Hussein was also charged with neglecting certain areas of Iraq in favor of others—in essence, misusing oil income while most of Iraq suffered. Initial UN research found that within the limits of the oil-for-food program, Iraq spent more than 85 percent of its allowed oil revenue on food and detergent, and on health supplies (UNICEF, 1998).

Other research has contrasted the state of health, nutrition, and well-being in Iraq under sanctions with the country's relatively affluent status in 1990. UNICEF found that prior to the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq had invested heavily in the health sector, making primary medical care available to nearly all urban residents and some 80 percent of the rural population. As a result, key indicators like infant and child mortality had been reduced significantly during the 1980s, while water and sanitation treatment services "were well developed" (UNICEF, 1998, p. 7). Support for all levels of education was significant; by 1990 more than 90 percent of Iraqi school age children attended primary school (UNICEF, 1998). Other research suggested that at least until the mid-1980s, in terms of social development Iraq was "fast approaching standards comparable to those of developed countries" (UNDP, 2002b, p. 11).

Despite documentation from respected agencies like the UN and independent researchers about the ruinous health and social

impacts caused by sanctions, both the U.S. and British governments contested the validity of these data, as did supporters of sanctions (von Sponeck, 2002; Garfield, 1999b; Kondoch, 2001; Kozal, 2000). Critics suggested that rather than being caused by sanctions, the social deterioration that occurred in Iraq was a direct result of the negligent spending priorities of Saddam Hussein. In response to the Clinton administration, the UN found that sanctions and the use of a *temporary* oil-for-food program to address a *long-term crisis* were a primary cause of the ongoing health and nutrition crisis in Iraq (Graham-Brown, 1999). A 1998 report on women and children found that malnutrition was not a public health problem in Iraq before the application of sanctions: "Its extent became apparent during 1991 and the prevalence has increased greatly since then . . . By 1997, it was estimated that about one million children under five were malnourished" (UNICEF, 1998, p. 23).

Over the next few years, health and nutrition conditions stabilized or improved slightly due to the oil-for-food program, especially in reducing chronic and acute malnutrition in children under five. However, infant mortality stayed at alarmingly high levels, more than one in five children were malnourished, and gastrointestinal diseases remained key problems among Iraqi children (UNDP, 2002a). On the eve of a second war with the United States, after 12 years of sanctions, nearly two-thirds of Iraqi's were dependent on government food rations, while the nation's poverty and jobless rates continued to inhibit economic and social progress (UN Security Council, 2002). Summarizing the impact of sanctions, the UN found that Iraq "experienced a shift from relative affluence to massive poverty" (UNDP, 2002b, p. 12).

A Social Work Perspective on Sanctions

Viewed from a social work context, the purpose and the impacts of economic sanctions against Iraq warrant analysis and critique. This is appropriate precisely because of those professional core values that call upon social workers to eliminate and transform oppressive situations and institutions (Gil, 1998). The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (1999) includes as a core "ethical principle" that social change efforts by all social workers should be "focused primarily

on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice" (p. 5). Among its "ethical standards" is the idea that as part of their ethical responsibilities to society "social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels . . ." (p. 26). Finally, the preamble of the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards endorsed by the Council on Social Work Education (2001) notes that the U.S. social work profession, in striving "to correct conditions that limit human rights and the quality of life," should work "to effect social and economic justice worldwide." (Council on Social Work Education, 2001, p. 3).

Given the immediate and long-term impacts on human and social development attributed to sanctions, the social work profession is well within its mission to address this situation via scholarship or practice interventions. Thus conditions in Iraq caused by sanctions meet the basic criteria of "injustice & oppression" advanced by Gil (1998). He suggests oppression refers not only to domination and exploitation between social groups and classes within societies, but also globally between entire societies, while injustice includes the maintenance of inequalities "and dehumanizing, development-inhibiting conditions of living . . . imposed by dominant social groups, classes, and peoples" (p. 10).

In the absence of a formal declaration of conflict by the UN or the United States against Iraq, sanctions served as a form of economic warfare for more than 12 years, one whose impacts were tangible in the lives of most Iraqi citizens (Mueller & Mueller, 1999). Compared to the potential expense of a war with Iraq, the use of sanctions allowed the United States to pursue its policy goals with little cost and relative impunity. Yet most research found that the biggest effect of sanctions was to harm the civilian population, rather than serving stated political aims.

Increasingly, sanctions have been used by the United States (often with the UN) as a foreign policy tool, despite their cost to civilians and inconsistency with UN accords guaranteeing human rights and access to goods essential to survival (Garfield, 1999b). Sanctions are thus viewed as a coercive tool used by some nations and international agencies like the UN (Center for Strategic & International Studies, 1999; Kozal, 2000; Garfield, 1999b). This highlights the influence of powerful nations on the

UN Security Council to maintain harmful policies that serve their own national interests. According to Mueller and Mueller (1999), through the use of sanctions "the dominant powers have shown that they can inflict enormous pain at remarkably little cost to themselves or the global economy. Indeed, in a matter of months or years whole economies can be devastated . . ." (p. 49). Garfield (1999a) found that sanctions against weak nations like Iraq "reverse 'development' gains, and their effects cannot be mitigated by humanitarian assistance alone" (p. 1).

These conclusions should concern a profession committed to the rights of people and communities everywhere to freely develop to their full potential. The question of the practicality rather than the morality of sanctions should make this issue even more compelling to professional social workers. Despite the claim that sanctions are a justifiable policy tool short of war to induce political change, there is little to suggest that they are an effective intervention. With few successful examples to cite, at best this remains an open question depending on the specific situation. The fact that utilizing sanctions may be detrimental to the United States has also been noted (Center for Strategic & International Studies, 1999), raising the question of why sanctions are used at all. In sum, the literature fails to demonstrate that the use of sanctions in Iraq was either effective or a humane method to achieve policy goals. Indeed, because the opposite conclusion seems clear—that sanctions ultimately represent a "form of collective punishment" targeting civilians (Garfield, 1999b, p. 53)—a social work response to their use seems warranted. As Kozal (2000) noted regarding Iraq, "when the enforcement of the sanctions worsens the humanitarian situation or violates human rights, the efficacy of the method employed must be examined" (p. 383). Given the likely use of economic sanctions in the future, such a challenge by social workers in the United States (or elsewhere) would thus bring a critical perspective to their use as a legitimate global policy.

Divergent Responses from the Social Work Academy

How did social work scholars react to the use of sanctions against Iraq? A survey of the literature revealed that fewer than 40

articles dealing with *any* aspect of Iraq were published in professional social work journals over a period dating back more than 20 years. Of these, none offered a specific (or even secondary) focus on the issue of economic sanctions, and only two of the articles dealt indirectly with U.S. policy toward Iraq following the end of the 1991 Gulf War. A literature search conducted in February 2003 in the "Social Work Abstracts" and "Social Services Abstracts" databases was performed using the keyword "Iraq." Only five results were found in the social work literature, and an additional 31 in the "Social Services Abstracts." A total of 342 citations were identified using the same keyword in the "Sociological Abstracts" database. Other social science literature was discovered using a "snowball" technique, primarily by reviewing the bibliographies of relevant articles about Iraq.

While the social science literature contained more total entries concerning Iraq (nearly 350 citations), less than 15 of these articles dealt specifically with the issue of economic sanctions. Only four articles were published within the first three years of the implementation of the sanctions (Cainkar, 1993; Drèze & Gazdar, 1992; Hiltermann, 1991; Chomsky, 1991), while two others dealt with public attitudes toward Iraq (Toth, 1992; McAlister, 2000). In comparison to the social work and social sciences literature, the health professions produced a constant stream of research starting in 1991 dealing with the impacts of sanctions in Iraq. While the actual number of citations (a total of 191) was less than in the social sciences, the number of refereed publications and other relevant articles that dealt directly with sanctions was significantly higher. Two sources were used for this search, the "Health Reference Center—Academic" database, and "PubMed," the National Library of Medicine's search service. The conclusion from this literature is clear: sanctions had a negative impact on much of Iraq's civilian population, while undermining the ability of the public health system and social infrastructure to address the crisis in health care, nutrition, and economic development.

One inference from the literature is that social work researchers were not adequately informed about the sanctions issue and thus did not pursue it as a potential line of scholarly inquiry. However, advances in communication and the ease of international travel make it likely that some common knowledge about the social

conditions that existed in Iraq was available to social work scholars. Alternatively, the lack of attention to this topic within social work scholarship may reflect a bias toward research on domestic issues. One might assert that other disciplines, in particular health/public health, have traditionally pursued a more international focus than social work; these professions are actively involved in research and practice on global (health) problems to an extent unique among academics. Thus, it may be understandable that the issue of Iraq and sanctions has not been addressed in the social work literature, as some might argue that it is beyond the purview of social work, especially as the profession is structured in the United States.

Another hypothesis is that social work researchers and academics were aware of the impact of sanctions in Iraq, and that sanctions may have been viewed "as an acceptable means of pursuing desirable goals" (Mueller & Mueller, 1999, p. 52). Regardless, the failure to address or investigate this situation in the literature suggests tacit support at least for UN and U.S. policy goals in Iraq. Both premises—ignorance of the situation in Iraq or an unwillingness to engage in research on critical international issues—should be re-examined in an effort to make the profession more relevant in an increasingly interconnected world.

The Role of Social Work in a Global Society

That sanctions caused a humanitarian crisis in Iraq supports the need for greater engagement on global issues within social work. This is essential given the profession's statements about enhancing human well-being and mandates to challenge injustice and oppression wherever they occur (Gil, 1998). The contradiction between these professional values and the attention (in the social work literature) paid to specific international issues raises a fundamental question: to what extent is the social work profession committed to critical engagement with global problems, especially those involving war, genocide, and human rights?

Despite pleas for a more "internationalized" form of practice (Hokenstad, Khinduka & Midgley, 1992), international social work is largely focused either on comparative studies of social welfare policies, or the practice of social work in different

countries. Caragata and Sanchez (2002) suggest that the formal support for international social work education reflected in North American MSW programs is not matched by scholarship or a specific commitment to take action on "political" issues in the *global arena*. This contradiction, which also belies core values embodied in the NASW Code of Ethics, highlights a key limitation of the profession. In the case of Iraq, the silence by social work academics—the failure to generate new and/or report on existing research—helped perpetuate a climate of ignorance about the effect of sanctions, as well as tacit support of U.S. policy goals. Some suggest this highlights a trend within the profession, which in effect parallels broader social apathy toward most global crises.

Johnson (2002) identified several reasons "why the American citizenry—including social workers—is largely silent with respect to world affairs and politically disinterested at home" (p. 10). He cites a pervasive cultural domination by elites over key aspects of society, in particular the control and delivery of information to the public; a process of "othering" in which different groups, populations, or countries are socially constructed by elites as problems to the national interest, or a dangerous class that must be controlled for the good of society; and a firmly entrenched social and political stability which allows most U.S. citizens to lead a middle class ("normal") life "without paying attention to the politics, the people, or the world around them" (p. 10). The influence of "othering" was also raised by Toth (1992), who argued that U.S. officials and mass media effectively demonized Saddam Hussein—depicting him as "villain and devil" (p. 26)—to justify U.S. military action against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War.

Mueller and Mueller (1999) suggest that "a lack of concern about foreign lives," especially those viewed as opponents of the United States, is a key reason the deaths of thousands of Iraqi civilians due to sanctions failed to warrant significant attention in the United States (p. 52). The effects of moral disengagement, "in which the normal inhibition of violence is deactivated through several well-defined cognitive processes," may also help explain public opinion toward Iraq (McAlister, 2000, p. 191). Trends within the profession itself may also help explain the lack of attention by social work scholars to sanctions in Iraq. Mirroring other research (Fisher & Karger, 1997; Specht & Courtney, 1994),

Johnson (2002) claims that the quest for professional status by social work has led to an obsession with private practice and self-interest. This emphasis on a distinct social work identity, they allege, has come at the expense of engagement and relevance on key social and political issues, both domestic and abroad. Caragata and Sanchez (2002) also find that the North American social work emphasis on individual treatment and clinical practice has led to minimal professional involvement in the international arena. They find this significant, since social workers around the world are confronted with universal problems like poverty, health care, and ethnic and religious conflict.

Shamai & Boehm (2001) identify a common social work viewpoint that national policy and politics is not related to typical social work practice, and assumptions that the social work profession has little influence over national political decisions. They suggest that both attitudes contribute to a climate of silence on "political" and international issues, and emphasize the danger in remaining "removed from political uncertainty anywhere in the world," since national politics can have a direct or indirect impact on the provision of social services (p. 358).

Johnson's (2002) plea for a more globally engaged professional presence—in particular on behalf of those adversely affected by governmental actions—has resonance concerning Iraq. One example of the interweaving of international and national politics is the concern that the cost of U.S. military intervention (in Iraq and elsewhere) threatens funding for social services (McAlister, 2000). This issue was raised after the first Gulf War by Stoesz (1992), and is relevant as the United States is committed to fighting and winning an expensive and vaguely defined global "war on terror," with ambiguous means of measuring "success." Thus, in response to an alleged ongoing threat to the security of the United States posed by international terrorism, military spending is expected to rise dramatically. President Bush's projected Defense Department budget plan calls for increasing military spending by more than 25 percent over the next five years, reaching \$500 billion by fiscal year 2009 (Congressional Budget Office, 2004). This increased spending will likely reduce available federal resources for social welfare programs, posing a direct, long-term challenge to the social work profession and the provision of social services. As a result, recipients of public services

and other vulnerable groups in the United States are threatened by the "war on terror," and the normalization of a "permanent war economy."

The Need for Global Engagement

More direct social work engagement on international issues offers the hope that alternatives to structural violence as policy can be pursued. What can the profession offer on issues of global conflict and oppression? Social work is founded upon a unique point of view, one that translates into a professional obligation to address human suffering, structural inequality, and the causes of these conditions. While to date this duty appears underutilized in the international arena, there is much to suggest that social workers can—and should—help resolve global conflicts. Such behavior can take many forms. Social work scholars and educators can address global socio-economic-political issues in their research, while integrating these issues into the classroom. Students and practitioners can be encouraged to take a more active interest in global problems as part of an expanded concept of social work practice. What is needed are activities distinct from engaging in comparative research on social policies, examining the commonalities and differences of international social work, or taking a course on "international social welfare," all worthy endeavors in themselves (Hokenstad, Khinduka & Midgley, 1992). Rather, North American social work scholars and practitioners should commit themselves to address international problems of conflict and violence, especially those in which the United States plays a defining role. An example of such involvement was the letter written by NASW President Terry Mizrahi to George Bush in the fall of 2002, opposing unilateral, preemptive military action by the United States against Iraq, and urging a non-violent resolution of all international conflicts. The association also asked its members to write public officials with a similar message. Of note, NASW never took a formal policy position in regard to the need for nor the consequences of sanctions against Iraq.

The new conventional wisdom holds that in the wake of September 11, there is an urgent need to understand and address international events, as the United States has become inextricably linked to every corner of the world. This task is especially rele-

vant for social work scholars and educators, in order to promote our ethical standards and practice methods in addressing global problems. Inspired by our values, social workers must oppose apathy on issues of war and peace, structural violence, and human rights, and instead emphasize our collective responsibility as social workers in a global society. Attitudes of "moral disengagement," if unchallenged by social workers, clearly pose significant risks. For example, there is growing recognition that the economic, political, and social conditions in many "Third World" countries have created fertile ground for resentment and violence toward the United States, which is often seen as tolerating inequality in those states in pursuit of larger policy goals. Also, economic sanctions against weak nations like Iraq undermine international support for the United States given the inevitable suffering this causes among civilian populations. Thus all social workers should be concerned with U.S. policies—even if they occur in the global arena—that have clear, negative impacts upon vulnerable groups. Addressing these issues with greater dedication will advance the social work profession, and through collaborative efforts help ensure that people worldwide benefit from our insight and experience.

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Book Reviews

Carolyn Ambler Walter, *The Loss of a Life Partner: Narratives of the Bereaved*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003. \$52.50 hardcover, \$26.50 papercover.

Carolyn Walters is a professor at Widener University's Center for Social Work Education. She was widowed at a relatively young age and found that her experiences of grief and loss were not reflected in what she had been taught about these life processes. Specifically, she felt that it was important, not to "let go" of a deceased loved one, but to find a way to hold onto—and relocate—the memories while moving on with life. This insight permeates the volume and (perhaps not surprisingly) is reflected in the narratives. It is also reflected in Walters' experience. She reports having successfully transformed the relationship with her deceased spouse and being newly re-married.

The idea for this book took root when Walters realized, while giving a workshop on loss of a young spouse, that there were no support groups for domestic partners. This led to an exploration of disenfranchised loss that focused on the work of Ken Doka. Many of the narratives reported here confirm Doka's observation that acceptance of the relationship by friends and family can facilitate the grief process and reduce the experience of disenfranchisement.

The Loss of a Life Partner is a pleasant and interesting read, and as Walters predicts, " . . . the narratives provide riveting examples of the loss of a partner" (p. xvii). The book's organization is satisfying, beginning with a review of classic and postmodern paradigms for understanding grief (Chapter 1) and a summary of research literature on loss of a partner (Chapter 2). These introductory chapters are followed by four chapters: Loss of Spouse (Chapter 3), Loss of an Opposite-Sex Partner (Chapter 4), Loss of a Gay Partner (Chapter 5) and Loss of a Lesbian Partner (Chapter 6). The book closes with a discussion of Similar and Diverse Themes (Chapter 7), examination of grief interventions (Chapter 8) and an exploration of clinical implications (Chapter 9).

The twenty four respondents whose narratives make up the body of this work were recruited through announcements in

newsletters of organizations such as the Association for Death Education and Counseling and from hospice organizations, augmented by a snowball technique. As a result, the majority are therapists and counselors, all are white-collar professionals, most are middle-aged, and it seems the vast majority are white. These respondents are articulate and insightful. Many of them sought therapy to cope with their losses. Those who mentioned hospice organizations were glowing in their praise. All of this is not surprising given the recruiting strategy. While one might wish for greater diversity of class and race, Walters is not attempting a comprehensive examination of grief and loss. Her intent is to build on insights that have stemmed from her personal and professional experiences and provide practical clinical insights for practitioners who work with this population; and in this regard the book is an unqualified success.

Disenfranchised grief is a central theme of this work. Walters suggests that lesbians in particular benefit from telling trusted others the nature of their relationships. And, for opposite-sex and for gay and lesbian partners, she suggests that the presence of knowledgeable, supportive friends and family members reduces the extent to which the bereaved experience disenfranchisement. Walters notes the presence of homophobia in the lives of her gay and lesbian respondents, but seems to neglect the role of the broader community in disenfranchising non-traditional relationships. Indeed, disenfranchisement is treated here more as an interpersonal process, than as the result of social norms and public policies. This view is common in the grief literature, probably because of its focus on reducing the immediate suffering of the bereaved. Yet those who view disenfranchisement as depriving a person of privileges or legal rights may find it disconcerting.

Walters offered two especially touching examples of disenfranchisement in relation to legal rights. In these cases, lesbian women had medical power of attorney, but their views were ignored by medical authorities. Treatment decisions that were carefully crafted by a dying woman and her partner were overruled, despite the legal authority of the power of attorney. Walter notes that this did not happen to gay men in her sample, but does not draw the natural conclusion that this may be yet another example of the subjugation of women by the medical establishment.

Another poignant theme in the book is the transformative aspect of grief. Time and again respondents reported that the loss of their loved one had made them different—better—people. As one respondent put it, “What doesn’t kill you makes you strong.” In a truly post-modern interpretation, Walters describes this as the process of “making meaning from the experience.” Thus she deftly sidesteps the question of whether profound loss “really” does make us stronger, more patient, more in tune with life’s priorities, more spiritually aware . . . or whether we just need to believe this to justify our massive suffering.

The reader will not find this book an outstanding example of in-depth qualitative research. The sample is small and homogenous along dimensions of race and class. Results tend to confirm the author’s expectations, and causal assumptions are not subjected to careful critical analysis. This does not detract from the clinical and practical significance of Walter’s contribution. The book offers a strong, clear theoretical framework, thoughtful integration of the relevant literature, and unusually perceptive insights into the clinical implications of the cases considered. *The Loss of a Life Partner* will be a valuation addition to professional libraries and a useful tool for instruction.

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Andrea Cornwall and Alice Welbourn (Eds.), *Realizing Rights: Transforming Approaches to Sexual & Reproductive Well-being*. New York: Zed Books, 2003. \$49.95 hardcover, \$16.95 paper-cover.

Each morning I have a cup of coffee as I expect many of you do. What I noticed recently was that my morning coffee had been grown and harvested in Zimbabwe. Until reading Cornwall and Welbourn’s book I took my coffee for granted, never really thinking about the people who grew and harvested the beans and the hardships they endure. *Realizing Rights* is an exploration by 37 authors from across the globe that presents evaluative data related to a variety of programs targeted at HIV-AIDS, environmental issues affecting breast cancer, sexual, reproductive health, teenage

pregnancy, and others. More than one of the chapters is related to these issues as faced by those in Zimbabwe.

Divided into four parts, this 322-page book deals with *human rights* as opposed to *legal rights* and explores a number of programs in each section. The first, 'Voices and Choices', presents six programs (in areas that include the United Kingdom, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and Zambia) designed to provide strategies for traditionally disenfranchised minorities (children and youth, sex workers, cancer patients, those with HIV-AIDS) to recognize their human rights and to then become a participant in decisions that affect them—in other words, to find their voices and thereby make informed choices. Part two explores programs related to changing norms and moving beyond individual changes in behavior. The five chapters in this section are all related to the AIDS pandemic as experienced primarily in Africa and programs designed to deal with the issue. Part three, 'Informing Choices, Transforming Messages', includes various ways people can use their unique cultural settings to create materials and policies that are meaningful to them. By using individual cultures, each with its own way of defining the issues, people give voice to that which they think important and do so in a *language* that has meaning for them. For example, one project describes how the hip-hop culture and radio was used in South Africa to inform those listening about HIV-AIDS. The six projects that are discussed in this section provide an interesting array and come from Brazil, Estonia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. The final section, 'Building Responsiveness', explore various entry points for those providing direct services. These last six chapters focus primarily on women's issues—pregnancy in India, reproductive health in Nepal, sexual and child health in the Andes, teenage pregnancy in the United Kingdom, motherhood in Myanmar, and women's health in Egypt.

Realizing Rights made me expand my thinking beyond my comfort zone—Louisville, Kentucky and the United States. It made me aware of 23 programs in the world that are making a difference in the lives of those they touch and it provided me with new ways of thinking about things I often take for granted (like my coffee). As an educator, I immediately tried to think of where this book (or parts of it) could be used in the social work curriculum. This is where I ran into a bit of a stumbling

block for, although pieces of the book would seem to have great utility in human behavior, social welfare policies and services, diversity, and even research classes, I was not able to see how the entire book would fit into any single course. Rather than include programs in the United States, *Realizing Rights* offers a look at programs most of us in this country would tend to ignore. Its global perspective and international authorship are its strengths. While I had somewhat of a difficult time with the numerous acronyms used in each chapter, learning what WEN, PLA, LNGO, SHEASS and IWAG stood for was part of the journey through the book. As this is an edited book, the writing styles from chapter to chapter fluctuate from excellent to mediocre and I would have found it helpful had the editors included transitional text between each of the four major parts. In sum, this is an interesting book that has utility in a variety of social work classes (both at the BSW and MSW levels) but users will need to screen it before using it.

Carol Tully

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Elyn R. Saks, *Refusing Care: Forced Treatment and the Rights of the Mentally Ill*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. \$35.00 hardcover, \$24.50 papercover.

Legal scholar and trained psychoanalyst, Elyn Saks acknowledges several times throughout her book that treatment refusal, the topic of this most recent treatise, is *not* the most pressing issue in mental health today, rather societal *neglect* and our *lack of will* to provide adequate community treatment to those who need and want it *is*. Nevertheless, she persuasively purports that a detailed exploration of the "overinterventionalist pole" in the pendulum swing of mental health care is important as well. I am completely convinced. As I read, I began to see this contribution as a provocative demonstration of the centrality of choice in mental health service delivery. Indeed, one of the most refreshing aspects of the book is her implicit argument that the humanity and dignity of clients should be at the center of the mental health system, and should dictate our structures of decision-making about care and treatment. Saks helps us imagine what that would look like. And what could be more important than that.

There are a number of good paraphrases for the guiding question of the book: When should we treat those who don't want treatment, and when are their choices, as Saks puts it, "worthy of respect," or, on what basis should people with mental illness be treated differently than the non-mentally ill, or, how do we go about deciding who gets to decide about treatment? Saks argues that taking extremes of positions on these topics is both irrational and unrealistic; instead she suggests solutions will lie in a balance between patient autonomy and paternalism. Her assumption is that the treatment of people with mental illness should be logical and consistent. She really goes beyond that, however: Early on Saks' clearly defines herself as someone who most strongly values autonomy, and finds the lingering prejudice toward people with mental illness to be a totally unacceptable basis for practice or policy.

While avoiding caricatures, Saks' opening chapter compares and contrasts the socialization and subsequent values of physicians versus lawyers. The importance of understanding the differing "fears and fantasies, empirical suppositions and predictions" of the *healer* versus the *advocate* cannot be underestimated. Indeed, it could be said that the tension between these two professional meta-perspectives is the backdrop for current conflicts and contradictions in rules and regulations about treatment refusal today. A less effective Chapter 2 visits the topic of the so-called myth of mental illness—is mental illness a real phenomena, and if so what it is? Admittedly, the author may need to make her position on this tired question known, and she does: "I am persuaded that a concept of mental illness is useful and necessary" (p. 42). Before she gets to that conclusion, she exhaustively critiques every possible criterion for defining mental illness and notes the numerous definitional problems of "under- and over-exclusively." The exhaustive nature of the analysis there is a foreshadowing of what is to come.

The heart of the book, then, is the systematic consideration of three special cases of forced care-involuntary commitment, forced medication, and the use of seclusion and restraints. Regarding commitment, Saks argues why the standard should require serious impairment, the patient's "transformation into a different person," serious danger or grave disability, and in many cases, a

likelihood of treatment benefit. Likewise, she provides exquisite detail in favor of a "robust" right to refuse medication. In both cases, however, she also argues for what she calls the "one-shot-rule," that gives doctors much more leeway to intervene during the first psychotic break. After that the patient should develop a set of advanced directives that dictate what should occur in the future, should she or he become incompetent again. She notes about medication in particular, "what the refusing patient needs most is talk, not force (p. 104). She argues for a focus on gaining and maintaining consent. She even offers lengthy psychoanalytic interpretations of medication refusal from the client's perspective, which includes topics like transference, secondary gain and even something about sexual imagery. Here more than anywhere, Saks' pro-medication bias is evident. There is no acknowledgement of a more sociopolitical perspective on medication use and refusal, or that not everyone, especially the anti-psychiatrists, is as gung-ho and optimistic about the effectiveness of psychiatric medication. Her strongest language is saved for her discussion of restraints: "barbaric," "degrading," "humiliating," "drastic," and "brutal." She states unequivocally that "tying a patient to a bed spread-eagled should simply be abolished in a civilized country" (p. 159). Even seclusion, while defensible in a small set of circumstances according to Saks, is empirically unjustified and likely counter therapeutic.

I found the book to be immensely stimulating and readable. Saks brings satisfying clarity to very complex philosophical and historical issues. She seems to leave almost no angle unexplored as she skillfully probes potential nuances of her positions, which are rarely tedious or confusing. Only once or twice when following the permutations of her logic did I wish for a good-old flow chart or decision-tree as a visual aid. Saks clearly enjoys intellectual banter, even with herself. She comprehensively justifies one position, and then jumps over the fence and articulates points from the other side, even if she doesn't think they really hold up. And when not jumping fences, Saks at least peeks over them and tells you what she sees. I suspect she is both a wonderful dinner companion and a popular teacher, as even in a book, her love of dialogue and discourse shines through. She asks the reader to consider intriguing "thought experiments," "what if" scenarios,

and intentionally ambiguous case exemplars throughout. She delights in analyzing the complex implications of conceptual definitions. Indeed, many of her arguments rest on precise meanings of such things as "emergency," "incompetence," "impairment," "capacity," "health," and "normalcy."

I applaud the work, and want her to know I make a great seafood risotto, should she want to talk more about "self-binding," or which clients should be permitted to actually choose *between* forced medication and seclusion, or what it could all look like if we really honored the dignity of our clients.

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Zili Sloboda and William J. Bukoski (Eds.), *Handbook of Drug Abuse Prevention: Theory, Science, and Practice*. New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003. \$150.00 hardcover.

In the early days of substance abuse prevention, most prevention practices and policies were designed and implemented in terms of the "best thinking" of individuals and communities. Programs and strategies aimed at addressing the problem were developed using ordinary and common sense approaches. Prevention efforts, such as the now infamous 'Just Say No' campaign of the mid-1980s, were neither effective nor instrumental in affecting individual or public health.

Much of the ineffectiveness of early substance abuse prevention efforts has been attributed to a lack of methodologically-sound and theoretically-based prevention research. Without empirical evidence to base and support the decision-making processes of substance abuse prevention designers, implementers, and evaluators, the field has left itself open to criticism and skepticism from practitioners and policymakers alike. Fortunately, there now appears to be increasing recognition of the value and necessity of theory- and evidence-based prevention practices. The text under review is a product of the recent progress made in the field of substance abuse prevention toward establishing a practical foundation supported by research and science. It represents a concerted effort to summarize the latest information in the field of substance abuse prevention.

In their *Handbook of Drug Abuse Prevention*, Sloboda and Bukoski have ambitiously attempted to construct a comprehensive text on substance abuse prevention. The final work is quite large, containing eight major areas of focus, thirty-three chapters, and nearly seven hundred pages of information. The book is designed to cover a broad range of topics, but its focus is predominantly substance abuse prevention *research*. The book is also heavily weighted toward adolescents as a population. The contributors are impressive and represent some of the most prominent scholars and researchers in the field of substance abuse prevention today (for example., Botvin, Brook, Catalano, Dishion, Kumpfer, and Pentz). The eight areas of focus in the book include, (an) Historical Overview; Social Contexts of Prevention; Prevention as Social Control; Theoretical and Empirical Foundations; Special Populations; Interactions between Biology and Social Context—Risks for Multiple Behavioral and Mental Disorders; Research Design, Measurement, and Data Analytic Issues; and Drug Abuse Prevention: A Look into the Future.

There is a diversity of knowledge and perspective within Sloboda and Bukoski's book. Chapter topics range from the expected areas of substance abuse prevention—family, peers, school, and community—to areas less frequently referenced, such as the workplace and the media. Four chapters are dedicated to substance abuse prevention with various ethnic groups. There is also a very innovative chapter on substance abuse prevention through the use of computer technology. A number of chapters in the text have been dedicated to methodological issues in prevention research. These chapters relate to such issues as research design, measurement, and data analysis. The chapters on research methodology are among some of the finest in the text, however, most readers will find them very challenging. The editors' goal of constructing a text that will appeal to practitioners, policymakers, students, and lay persons, as well as researchers, is seriously challenged by the complexity and sophistication of the material presented in these chapters. Hopefully, this will not limit the book's audience.

For the most part, the text is well structured and very well written. Some noteworthy exceptions would include an ill-conceived section on Prevention as Social Control; and a chapter on

'Gender Issues in Substance Abuse Prevention' that is also rather poorly done. The section on social control contains only two chapters, neither of which *explicitly* addresses the issue of substance abuse prevention as an agent of social control. The chapter on gender issues is short, underdeveloped, and contains seemingly contradictory material. On the other hand, the strengths of the text can be found in its very impressive demonstration of the use of theory in driving and framing prevention research. However, as with the literature on research methodology, this information may not be appreciated by a wider audience. Another strength of the text lies in its utility as a reference for previous research and literature in the field of substance abuse and, in particular, adolescent substance abuse prevention. Many chapters provide fairly extensive literature and prevention program reviews, although not all are the most up to date. Some chapters feel dated, citing DSM-III-R criteria, and having less-than-current reference sections.

Perhaps, one of the most distressing qualities of the text is the overwhelming feeling of self-service one gets while reading some of the chapters. Readers may begin to wonder whether many of the contributors intended to utilize this text solely as a forum to present their own research rather than a vehicle for informing readers on a particular substance abuse prevention topic. Some first authors reference themselves as many as twenty-five and thirty times, citing works with apparently very similar, if not identical, content. This may leave the reader questioning the objectivity and credibility of some of the information presented.

Despite these limitations, the *Handbook for Drug Abuse Prevention* is a good book. Researchers and academics will probably appreciate it more than most practitioners and policymakers. Although I would not recommend this work as a textbook for a course in substance abuse prevention, as a reference book, it does have very good value.

Sean R Hogan
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John O'Manique. *The Origins of Justice: The Evolution of Morality, Human Rights and Law*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003. \$36.50 hardcover, \$26.00 paperback.

If social workers are to take seriously the professional mandate to promote social justice, we need to be rigorous in our thinking about what social justice means and how to go about achieving it. Many of us have experienced the phenomenon of finger-pointing among our peers, with some people claiming to be *for* social justice while accusing others of *not* being for social justice, based on a misperception among social workers that we all mean the same thing when we use the term. Yet there is no one perspective of social justice that is the agreed-upon organizing value of social work. Further, there are different conceptualizations about justice—distributive, legal, and commutative—that are based on the social contract tradition that has prevailed among political philosophers from Hobbes, Locke, Kant and Rousseau to John Rawls and Robert Nozick. Contemporary distributive justice theories, particularly those of Rawls and Nozick, serve as a useful tool for social work in that they present an *ideal* social contract that explains how a just society *would* be formed rationally, ruled by a moral government and regulated by a defensible moral code.

In *The Origins of Justice*, O'Manique develops hypotheses about the origins of human rights and justice that challenge the writings of modern theorists such as Rawls and Nozick. The view of human nature and the origins of social justice that he presents are radically different from that of the prevailing Western paradigm altogether. Instead of seeing humans in a negative light as fundamentally aggressive and solitary, O'Manique shifts the emphasis to a more positive characterization of human origins within social communities, in which mutual care and empathy are just as natural and effective as selfish, competitive behavior. His hypotheses, based on neo-Darwinian theory and contemporary research on evolution, are compelling and convincing. Instead of seeing justice as a rational solution to the natural condition of fear and conflict, O'Manique presents evidence to support the hypothesis that human rights, law, and justice arise within caring communities, from the reflections of our early ancestors on genetically based inclinations required for biological development. He shows that humans—once they developed self-consciousness—constructed systems of justice within the context of their communities and cultures that transcended the biological base from which they emerged.

In order to explain justice and its essential elements—morality, human rights and obligations, and law—O'Manique is looking for the origins of justice and seeking to explain justice. Thus, his theory differs from those of Rawls and Nozick in that their theories are normative and present a model of what they would like justice to be. In stark contrast, O'Manique's theory is an empirically based search for actual evolutionary origins of justice rather than a moral argument about what justice should be.

While Rawls and Nozick are perceived to be in opposition—with Rawls representing a liberal view and Nozick representing a neoconservative view—O'Manique argues that their theories begin with virtually the same assumptions about human nature. Those assumptions are consistent with the dominant paradigm of the nature of *man*¹ as a rational planner, or maximizer, and basically selfish, and a Hobbesian view of life as nasty and solitary. In his exploration, O'Manique shows evidence that human development is distinguished primarily by self-consciousness and its various cognitive manifestations, including understanding, self-conscious feeling, intuition, and reasoning/rationality. While reasoning is indispensable, it is neither primary nor central. Throughout the book, O'Manique explores through the use of scenarios but, unlike the fictional "states of nature" from Hobbes to Rawls and Nozick, the scenarios are drawn from the natural sciences. While they are not confirmed and thus remain hypotheses in the scientific sense, O'Manique's scenarios attempt to get at actual human origins and, thereby, the real origins of justice.

As O'Manique points out at the end of his book, the least understood of the hypotheses necessary for his argument is that our early ancestors lived in communities that were relatively peaceful and benevolent and that they were led by women. While there is much evidence for this, there are also several interpretations of it. While it is not questioned that today's world is patriarchal, the issue of transition is important and the evidence does not provide a clear picture of how that happened. Although contemporary societies are quite Hobbesian, O'Manique is convinced that this is neither the natural state nor the original position.

¹ As O'Manique points out, the dominant Western view virtually ignores women and he thus calls attention to this bias by using italics.

What might this say about our future? O'Manique's concluding comments are far too brief on this but nonetheless, they leave the reader with a sense of hope. Human origins were convincingly characterized in the book as being both selfish and caring. We may be encouraged by the fact that there is growing movement in civil society, outside traditional patriarchal political systems, that counters in various ways the current dysfunctional political, economic, environmental, and social trends that lean heavily on the selfish side of our natures. In the last paragraph of his book, O'Manique declares: "Even more encouraging is the fact that there are more than three billion women on the planet, that they have power wherever they are, and that more of them are moving into positions of traditional political and corporate power. This in itself should shift the central tendency from power-over toward power-wish and move us closer to a natural and developmental balance."

Dorothy Van Soest
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Richard Wortley, *Situational Prison Control: Crime Prevention in Correctional Institutions*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. \$65.00 hardcover, \$23.00 papercover.

In this book, psychologist Richard Wortley takes a community based strategy for crime prevention and applies it to crime prevention efforts in correctional institutions. While other corrections experts have tried to address the challenge of prison management, some suggesting a strict control method and others a participatory management strategy, Wortley's pragmatic approach makes this a particularly interesting book. His application of the situational crime prevention strategy to concrete, everyday, real prison management dilemmas makes this a different approach in its own right. Wortley deftly moves from theory to application, all within the framework of "opportunity reduction".

This text is divided into two sections. Part One presents the big picture: the theoretical foundations and methods of situational prison control. Social workers will be interested in the attention paid to the environmental catalysts, those found in both the human and physical environments, of prison violence. Wortley

pays attention to the interplay between, and accurately portrays the complexity of the conceptual, physical, procedural and personal events which occur within these institutions. Chapters 1–3 provide the substantive backdrop for a thorough exposition of the components of situational prison control. Here, Wortley lays out relevant aspects of prison science, including various approaches to prison design, management and control. The author also addresses human science, succinctly presenting the relevant psychological theories which undergird his application of situational crime control to the institutional setting. The situational prison control model, a two-stage approach, is then set out in Chapter 4. The model itself marries two interdependent and complex interventions: controlling the precipitators of criminal behavior and controlling the regulators of criminal behavior.

Part two of this text, "Specific Behaviours", begins with Chapter 5. For readers confused or bleary-eyed after reading the conceptual framework for situational prison control, Chapters 5 through 11 offer refuge. These are the sexy chapters of this text and they are likely to satisfy the prurient interests of many who recognize prison institutions as the complex, intriguing and mysterious entities that they are. In these six chapters, Wortley applies situational crime prevention strategies to six specific behaviours including prisoner-on-prisoner and prisoner-on-staff violence, sexual assaults, suicide behaviors, drug use, escapes and riots. For each topic, the author expertly crafts a succinct review of the current literature, debunks the common myths which often misguide the decisions of prison managers and social workers and finally, presents a theory-infused approach to managing inmate behaviors. Whether talking about physical violence or drug use, Wortley walks through the application of the various precipitation control and regulation control strategies to the social and physical environmental features germane to each problem area. In the final chapter, Wortley compares his approach with other prison control models and offers suggestions for advancing the science of controlling crime within prison institutions. Throughout the book and again here, Wortley emphasizes the sad state of correctional research. We know too little; we need to know what seems like too much.

It is difficult in this review to do justice to Wortley's elucidation of the situational prison control model. The complexity

of the subject stems from the dynamic nature of the model itself combined with the dynamic nature of prison management. Whether one agrees with the model or not, there is much to be gained from reading this text. In short, Wortley gives the reader the treat of being able to learn about the institutional problems which plague prisons and which present control challenges *and* a pragmatic method of meeting those challenges. In the process, he deftly identifies and dispels the myths of prison management that have lead many astray in their attempts to effect control in the institution.

This text reads tediously at times, particularly in Part One. To some extent, this is unavoidable. In order to understand situational prison control one must understand its conceptual underpinnings. For the social worker, approaching this section of the book as a lesson in the ecology of prisons is illuminating. Wortley moves from a discussion of the problem to a discussion of the model and in between, he presents the multi-disciplinary theoretical knowledge essential to understanding the true person-in-environment nature of prisons and prisoners.

Hard as it might be to believe, since internal prison matters are not at the center of most minds, there is something for everyone in this book. Wortley's interesting synopsis of the history of prisons includes the transformations that have occurred in penal philosophies, institutional and inmate management, architecture and ambient design and theories and methods of control. For those whose research and practice interests include prison and jail institutions, this text delivers even more than information about a situational control, opportunity reduction model. Indeed, through its tightly woven approach using a problem-theory-intervention-evaluation paradigm, Wortley teaches even the most unknowledgeable reader about the complexity of prison science. And, because we live in a country where prisons and jails are situated not far from our own backyards, we should all be assured that the advancement of scientific knowledge in this substantive area of practice is being pursued.

Margaret Severson
University of Kansas

Book Notes

Craig Winston Lecroy, *The Call to Social Work: Life Stories*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003. \$ 19.95 papercover.

In his book, "The Call to Social Work" Lecroy attempts to capture the essence of "real life" social work practice through the narratives of seasoned professionals. As the title indicates, the reader is given a sense of the life experiences that drew these individuals to the field of social work, and the values that keep them committed to the profession after years of practice. There is an abundance of first-hand accounts of the need to serve clients in various practice settings and the interventions used to help them. For those undergraduate students unfamiliar with the diversity of settings where social workers can be found, this text will serve as a good introduction to this heterogeneous profession. It will also help new students clarify their motivation to work in the field.

The "Call to Social Work" is a valuable contribution to the literature because it provides a descriptive and qualitative context to a variety of practice issues which is typically missing in most introductory textbooks. Each of the social worker's narratives contained in the book are three to four pages long and grouped into eight sections according to themes, such as "A Passion for Justice"; "A Healing Journey"; In Pursuit of Compassion. Those profiled in the book range from community organizers to protective service workers to psychiatric social workers. They explain the personal factors that led them to the field and describe particular episodes with clients that held special meaning or were particularly challenging. Of course, these were often one and the same. Most of all, the reader will be impressed by the realism of the accounts. Many, if not all, of the narratives could be used as starting points for student discussion groups about the dilemmas and difficulties that commonly arise for social workers, including what they do to avoid burnout and how function effectively in the face of the formidable challenges that characterize most practice settings.

Despite its obvious merits, *The Call to Social Work* in some respects falls short of its goal "to build a stronger bridge between the sterile academic discourse about social work and the day-to-day

practice of social work." The author chose to omit personal details of the individuals, so as "to let the story represent their own self-descriptions." This was a mistake since many of the workers failed to provide details about themselves and their practice, which would have given more depth to their stories. Often too much is left to reader's imagination. An author's introduction and summary for each profile would have been a nice addition, as would photos of the social workers and their practice settings. Despite these shortcomings, "The Call to Social Work" gives the reader a better understanding of the personal factors that propel individuals toward the vocation and keep them dedicated to a life of service, where, as one of the social workers summarized it: "We touch the triumph of the human spirit."

Richard M. Merelman, *Pluralism at Yale: The Culture of Political Science in America*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003. \$ 26.95 papercover.

In the 1950 and 1960s, the Department of Political Science at Yale University was staffed by intellectual luminaries including Robert Dahl, Charles Lindblom, Harold Lasswell and Karl Deutch to name but a few, and not surprisingly it was regarded as one of the best in the nation. Although its leading academics wrote on diverse topics such as political theory, opinion polling and administrative science, they were all identified with the theory of pluralism which had evolved at Yale to offer a benign and optimistic view of the American political process. The theory of pluralism fostered a conceptual image of the government of the United States as little more than an arbiter of democracy which encouraged a great variety of interest groups to compete for advantage on a level playing field of political opportunity. Pluralism suggested that the state did not champion sectional interests and certainly had no motives of its own other than to promote democratic participation. The theory of pluralism appeared to be compatible with the consensus politics which ostensibly characterized American political life in the post Mc Carthy years and downplayed the role of conflict and struggle in the political process.

Merelman's fascinating book is based not only on his own experience as a graduate student at Yale during this time, but on interviews with no less than 129 faculty members and former

students of the Department. His respondents offered insights into their experiences and gave their professional opinions about many aspects of pluralism. In addition, Merelman provides a useful theoretical perspective to frame his account. Indeed, despite the important insights the book offers into the work of Yale's leading scholars of pluralism, Merelman's account is all the more significant for exploring the question of how those who exercise power are able to secure legitimation for their actions. Drawing on the writings of Marx and Engels, Gramsci, Mannheim and others who have addressed this question, Merelman shows that academics often provide the intellectual arguments on which legitimation is based. It is not that they merely serve as lackeys to the powerful but rather that their normative theories are viewed as congenial and are often adopted to legitimate political decisions. Pluralism, Merelman argues, offered a legitimating discourse which was highly suited to its time. It accompanied other legitimating discourses which were then in use. These included Keynesian economics, functionalist sociology and systems theory in administrative science.

Although Merelman's insights may not at first appear to have much relevance to social welfare, his analysis of the role pluralism played in offering a legitimating discourse for the wider political process has relevance to the way pluralism is today used to legitimate the retrenchment of state responsibility for social welfare. Those who oppose government involvement in social welfare frequently point to the way a multiplicity of welfare providers ranging from the churches and charities to commercial insurance firms and for-profit social agencies now contribute positively to a supposedly happy equilibrium which has emerged in the wake of state retrenchment. As in politics, pluralism in welfare has become a legitimating discourse which should be understood by scholars and students of social policy. This readable and insightful book will help promote this goal.

M. Byrna Sanger, *The Welfare Marketplace: Privatization and Welfare Reform*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003. \$ 16.95 papercover.

In the decades following the New Deal, it was widely accepted that government would be the primary funder, administrator and provider of a range of social services designed to meet the social

needs of citizens. The institutionalization of this idea resulted in the equation of term 'social welfare' with the public social services. Although the contribution of non-profit organizations, religious charities and commercial providers to social welfare was recognized, their role was not given much prominence and in some quarters it was even believed that they would eventually wither away as government services expanded and encompassed even greater responsibility for people's well-being.

As Sanger argues, the dominance of the state in social welfare provision has been dramatically modified over the last twenty years. Although the state remains a primary funder of social services, a new and much more fluid pluralism has emerged in which non-profits and commercial providers compete in a new welfare market place to secure funds for social service programs. Contracting is not only widespread but it has changed the way public agencies operate. It has also a major impact on the non-profit sector changing what Sanger describes as the very soul of voluntarism. Of course, the engagement of for-profit firms in social service provision has also altered the way the welfare sector was previously viewed. While commercial providers such as private health and life insurance firms worked directly with consumers and, apart from tax subsidies, were limited in the advantages they secured from government, they now derive substantial funds and profits through their role as social service contractors. The involvement of large commercial firms such as Lockheed Martin in social service contracting suggests that the welfare market is a lucrative one for providers motivated primarily by profit.

Sanger's book is concerned with the way contracting out is affecting traditional public welfare programs, non-profits and commercial providers in the new welfare market place. The book is based on studies of contracting out in four urban areas namely, Houston, Milwaukee, New York and San Diego. Interviews were conducted with public officials and the managers of commercial and non-profit contractors in each area and public documents relating to social service contracting were scrutinized. The study focused on the TANF programs administered in each area. It sought to determine first, how significant contracting out has become; second, what do public agencies seek to achieve through contracting; third, how have non-profit and for-profit providers

responded and fourth, what are the risks and challenges involved. However, the study did not assess the performance of contractors with regard to client outcomes.

In seeking to answer these questions, Sanger provides a great deal of useful information about the growth of social service contracting and the way federal, state and local governments have promoted the growth of the welfare market. She demonstrates that contracting has grown enormously and that it has radically altered traditional modes of public and voluntary provision. Contracting has changed the character of government and non-profit agencies as well and created a complex and fluid situation which is not always conducive to effective service delivery. Despite some advantages, the widespread use of contracting has also had a negative effect on continuity, staffing and accountability. Although Sanger's study does not reach definitive conclusions about the impact of contracting out on the welfare of clients, its cautionary findings should be heeded by those who believe that social needs can best be met through competitive social service provision in the welfare market.

Terry Tirrito, *Aging in the New Millennium: A Global View*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003. \$ 18.95 papercover.

Global aging is all-encompassing and will affect every man, woman and child anywhere in the world. It will affect everything from individual life plans to international security. The steady increase in the number of older people will have a direct bearing on family relationships and solidarity, generational equity and lifestyles. It will generate important opportunities while at the same time it will create unprecedented challenges. Increases in old age in many countries can be attributed to advances in science, medicine, and technology that have led to reductions in infant and maternal mortality, infectious disease, and occupational hazards, as well as improvements in nutrition and education. Decreases in fertility combined with increases in aging may shrink the numbers of workers and consumers, creating unprecedented challenges to national and global economies. At the same time, with the advances in health and medicine, current populations will live longer and remain healthier than previous generations.

As a result, traditional concepts of retirement and the contributions of older adults will need to be reconsidered.

In her book *Aging in the New Millennium: A Global View*, Terry Tirrito weaves together the complicated tapestry of aging around the world, covering topics such as life expectancy, and the varying social and economic impacts of aging throughout the world. Chapter topics range from demographic trends, theories and perspectives on aging to the experiences of older adults, programs and services for older adults, and attitudes about aging. Founded on statistics and research, Tirrito provides detailed accounts of developed and developing countries, and includes differences based on gender, sexuality and ethnicity. She presents the theoretical perspectives on aging in three chapters that respectively consider biophychosocial theories, sociological theories and aging theories. She also discusses the physical, mental health, and psychosocial factors that impact the aging process. The book's final chapters provide an overview of public support programs and services for older adults as well as impacts of an aging population on political, social and economic systems. Tirrito concludes the book with a discussion of emerging and unresolved issues in aging.

Aging in the New Millennium does a superb job of providing a comprehensive overview of the varied trajectories and effects of population aging in culturally diverse societies that are on different stages of economic and social development. Tirrito's analysis brings into sharp focus conditions and situations that are both similar and unique between and across nations. She also emphasizes how cultural attitudes complicate our understanding of the aging process. Readers would, however, benefit from further discussion on how the improvements in technology, supportive devices and changes in lifestyle preferences interact with the options and costs of remaining independent. Nevertheless, Tirrito has written a wonderfully comprehensive handbook on the implications of population aging worldwide that will appeal to anyone interested in aging: professionals, scholars, and students alike.

Rod Michalko, *The Difference that Disability Makes*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002, \$ 19.95 paperback.

This book is an important contribution to the fields of disability studies, psychology and sociology. Several authors have

addressed the social construction of disability but Michalko brings new contributions to the discussion. The author makes no attempt to define disability; instead, we enter his experiences and critique to come to our own conclusions about the collective identity of disability. Using an auto-ethnographic approach, he examines his own experiences with blindness and analyzes societal notions of identity as they affect disabled people. He argues that disabled people "live disabilities" based on social and cultural representations of disability.

Michalko places disability and the concept of suffering at the center of his analysis. He rejects first-person language—"a person with a disability"—and argues for placing disability at the center of one's identity—in other words, "a disabled person". The first phrase strips away important aspects of identity that characterize an individual. It dilutes one's identity and diminishes the fact that disabled persons are often excluded from social and public life. This is a collective, not an individual, issue that includes disabled and non-disabled people. He examines disability as a collective, political identity, arguing that it can only be understood by situating how disabled people—and disability/ability themselves—are framed in society. This includes recent attempts to 'include' disabled people in public life: often, he points out, efforts to include disabled people actually reinforce stereotypes about disability, are defined through the lens of ability, and end up being exclusionary in nature. His analysis of suffering, in which he critiques the ways in which suffering is viewed as individual rather than as culturally constructed, is also a unique contribution to the literature. In the end, he challenges the reader to rethink these notions as they shape our understandings of ability and disability. Michalko successfully demonstrates his point. Disabled people do not necessarily 'suffer' from their physical or psychological differences; they suffer, as non-disabled people do, from the cultural representations that are placed upon them. This book is a must read for academics interested in the field of disability studies.

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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.

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