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Mainstreaming the Underclass*

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The underclass has become a prominent issue in American social welfare, yet welfare professionals have focused on maintenance as opposed to mainstreaming strategies in working with this population. A mainstreaming strategy would emphasize individual incentives, community reconstruction, and program reorganization, focusing on the social disorganization of underclass communities. The essay details specific programs in each of these areas: transitional benefits, Community Enterprise Zones, and Integrated Service Agencies, among others. Welfare professionals must find ways to stretch existing public resources and identify new private resources if they are to pose plausible programs for the underclass. The public image of welfare professionals will be enhanced if effective programs to reduce the underclass can be implemented.

Since the mid-1980s, policy analysts and welfare professionals have expressed concern about the social circumstance of the poorest of Americans. The term, "underclass", now appears regularly to describe this population. Variously, estimated at between 2.5 million (Alter, 1988) and 9 million (Kornblum, 1984) people, the underclass is predominantly urban, poor, black, underemployed, and poorly educated. Yet, despite the social diversity of this population, prominent social observers have begun to speak of the underclass as a valid social category, as well as an unavoidable social problem.

That the economic condition of the poor has deteriorated significantly during the last decade is indisputable. During the first term of the Reagan administration alone, $57 billion was

*The author wishes to thank Harris Chaiklin of the University of Maryland School of Social Work and Community Planning for his comments on an earlier draft of this essay.
cut from social programs that benefited low- and moderate-income Americans (Greenstein, 1987). Because social insurance programs were better defended against rescissions, most budget cuts were exacted from means-tested programs. Between 1970 and 1988, the actual value of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefits declined 35% due to inflation (House Ways and Means Committee, 1988, p. 415). In other words, had AFDC benefits been adjusted for inflation, benefits in 1988 would have been $5.88 billion higher than projected allocations. By the late-1980s the income disparity between the wealthiest and poorest quintiles of the population was the widest since such data were first computed in 1947.

But the economic factor is only half of the underclass story. Accompanying the economic deterioration of the poor was a collapse of social institutions, notably the family. Between 1970 and 1984, the number of black families headed by women more than doubled (National Urban League, 1986). Incidence of unwed pregnancy skyrocketed among nonwhites, reaching 50% of all births by 1983 (Novak, 1987). The proliferation of a derivative of cocaine, “crack”, with poor communities highlighted the decline of social institutions. While drug abuse appeared to drop in the United States, use of “crack” mushroomed. Between 1976 and 1985, the number of emergency room episodes attributed to cocaine use rose by a factor of ten, approaching 10,000 (Schuster, 1987, pp. 1–2). Gang activity, related to drug trafficking, spread through major American cities and became the focus of a popular movie, Colors. Clearly, the “extraordinary levels of self-destructive behavior [and] interpersonal violence” could no longer be ignored in discussions of hard-core poverty (Moynihan, 1988, p. 291).

Conceptual Basis of The Underclass

Contemporary explanations for the underclass phenomenon drew from analyses over a century old. Karl Marx, of course, identified a lumpenproletariat, but did little with the concept since he considered it reactionary, not revolutionary. In the United States, Charles Loring Brace conducted his pioneering work in child welfare among the “dangerous classes” of New York, authoring a classic in the social welfare literature by the same
name. The increasing sophistication of social sciences during the first half of the twentieth century discredited the earlier, more simplistic stratification approaches. Even the studies of hard-core poverty during the 1960s—Elliott Liebow's *Tally's Corner* and Oscar Lewis's *The Children of Sanchez*—were ethnographic in nature.

By the late 1970s, however, several observers claimed that the social phenomenon of intransigent poverty was increasing in scale, appeared to be generating pathology in already burdened communities, and seemed immune to conventional welfare programs designed to help the poor. Douglas Glasgow attributed the underclass to "structural factors found in market dynamics and institutional practices" such as racism (1981, p. 4). Ken Auletta's *The Underclass* (1982) classified the populations comprising the underclass—high-school dropouts, drug addicts, the welfare dependent, and offenders—and described the limited success of a job-training program which was intended to boost participants out of the underclass. Significantly, Auletta observed that the underclass differed from the poor because of the degree of psychological and social disorganization that proved self-destructive or counter-productive.

As the inner cities became increasingly desolate, accounts of the underclass in larger cities appeared. Nicholas Lemann's *Atlantic Monthly* series on "The Origins of the Underclass" attributed the worsening of circumstance for Chicago's Blacks to the exodus of middle-class Blacks who had provided a stabilizing influence to the inner city (1986). On the twentieth anniversary of urban rioting in Washington, D.C., journalists noted that in the interim an underclass had emerged in the nation's capitol (Fisher and Pianin, 1988). Editors of *The New Republic* branded the underclass as "the largest single domestic policy challenge today" (New Republic, 1988, p. 9).

As the interaction of social and economic factors contributed to the downward spiral of conditions in poor communities, policy analysts from both ends of the ideological continuum offered explanations for the growing underclass. Among conservatives, such as George Gilder (1981), Charles Murray (1984), Lawrence Mead (1986), and Stuart Butler and Anna Kondratas (1987), the underclass was attributed to the dependency-inducing welfare
programs of the War on Poverty. Lured away from self-sufficiency by government social programs that expected little in exchange for benefits, the welfare poor gradually lost the capacity to live independently. The conservative solution to the underclass problem was to diminish, or make conditional, governmental assistance in order to force the poor to be more self-sufficient. Among liberals, such as Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward (1982), Robert Reich (1983), Robert Kuttner (1984), and William Julius Wilson (1987), the underclass was the consequence of continuous under-investment in community institutions and human capital on the part of all levels of government. The consequence of this lack of government investment in poor people was the economic implosion of poor communities which began to generate an enormous volume of social and psychological disorder. The liberal solution to the underclass problem, then, was to increase governmental assistance in education, health, employment, and housing for poor communities.

Unfortunately, for all the discussion the debate over the underclass has failed to generate a plan for contending with it. Conservatives have tended to overestimate the ability of the poor to become self-sufficient; liberals failed to recognize the persistent nature of poverty for many of the poor and the unwillingness of the public to finance new social programs. As a result social policy has become stalemated while the underclass grows.

For welfare professionals, the underclass is a particularly difficult issue. Beginning with the Carter administration, human service workers began to suffer reductions in funding for services to the poor, a process accelerated by the Reagan administration. In the face of such adversity, welfare proponents have been occupied defending existing programs against further reductions and had little time to consider new initiatives. Compounding this was a professional ideology defined around specialization. Welfare professionals were inclined to interpret social phenomena in the form of discreet problems, such as income, employment, housing, and mental impairment. Regrettably, the program fragmentation associated with specialization did not seem to have ameliorated problems of the most destitute; and, in fact, the failure to coordinate benefits for the most needy contributed to making things worse. Finally, there was a be-
havioral dimension to the underclass that welfare professionals were reluctant to acknowledge. Welfare professionals tended to be liberal and, therefore, sensitive to the fact that the underclass was disproportionately minority. Raising the issue of the underclass proved problematic for them when minority advocates were quick to identify the victimization—and racism—implicit in any blanket generalizations about their communities. Since the mid-1960s, liberal scholars had been urged to focus less on the pathology of minority communities, and identify their strengths instead. Unfortunately, this meant that many liberal scholars failed to see the disintegration of the black community at the very time it was occurring, out of fear that it would violate the ideological courtesies of the post-Civil Rights Era (Wilson, 1987, 1988; Jencks, 1988).

Mainstreaming the Underclass

Because of these factors, welfare professionals have been at a disadvantage in proposing strategies for dealing with the underclass. To a great extent, efforts have focused on the worthwhile objective of maintaining those who have suffered from the severe reductions in income and social supports due to cuts in federal welfare programs. For the poor who have fallen into the ranks of the underclass, emergency shelters and soup kitchens are essential in providing immediate relief. And, some of these efforts have advanced to the point of providing education, training, and job-finding services. Still, there is too little attention directed toward mainstreaming strategies which could reduce the size of the underclass in the first place. A mainstreaming approach would emphasize individual incentives, community reconstruction, and program reorganization, while focusing on the social disorganization of underclass communities. "If strong norms and sanctions against aberrant behavior, a sense of community, and positive neighborhood identification are the essential features of social organization in urban areas," wrote Wilson, "inner city neighborhoods today suffer from a severe lack of social organization" (1988, p. 58). At the same time, such an approach must recognize budgetary restraints. "Our domestic budget [has been] shredded," warned Daniel Patrick Moynihan, producing an unavoidable "protracted fiscal crisis for the next
two or three presidencies. Probably until the next century” (1988, pp. 33, 293). Accordingly, welfare professionals must find ways to stretch existing public resources and identify new private resources if they are to pose plausible programs for the underclass.

**Individual Incentives**

Any plan to improve the standard of living of this population must address economic opportunity. Many in the underclass work, although usually in jobs that do not provide benefits. The best strategy for improving the economic circumstance of the underclass is to implement a range of transitional—or supplemental—benefits that clearly advantage those who voluntarily participate in the labor market. Transitional benefits have appeared in recently enacted welfare reform legislation, where provision is made for public assistance beneficiaries to continue to receive health and child care benefits for a one year period while they are moving into the labor market. Unfortunately, this limited interpretation of the concept applies only to those eligible for public assistance, is terminated after a brief period, and is financed totally from government funds.

A more generous interpretation would universalize transitional benefits, making such benefits available to anyone in the labor market who is not already covered by benefits from an employer. The model for this is the Massachusetts health care plan which mandates that employers provide insurance to employees much as they already do for unemployment compensation. Half of the cost of universalizing transitional benefits should be borne by employers. If employers expect to benefit from the performance of workers, they should be expected to share the cost with government. This is a reasonable expectation since many service industry employers now use workers less than full-time in order to dodge the cost of benefit packages. It is also reasonable to expect government to cover a portion of the cost of benefits for those who have become dependent on public welfare. Requiring employers to pay half of the cost of transitional benefits, would create government savings which could be used to universalize benefits to the population of the working poor.
If poor workers are to get a better shake out of working in the labor market, they should also expect to be able to use their investment in work as a basis on which to retire. Presently, most low income workers have little more to retire on than Social Security, a pension program that was intended to supplement workers' private pensions. But, because members of the underclass are part of the secondary labor force in which work is erratic, part-time, and with few benefits, they are unlikely to have contributed enough during their working history to receive more than the minimum benefit. Poor workers should be encouraged to establish individual retirement plans in order to supplement their Social Security benefits. Skeptics of the ability of the poor to be prudent need only be reminded that mutual benefit associations and fraternal orders flourished in the black community before the turn of the century (Franklin, 1980, p. 288).

One way to encourage the poor to plan for retirement is to alter tax policy so that Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) clearly advantage the poor, instead of the wealthy as they have done in the past. Under a proposed Equitable Retirement Income Credit (ERIC), workers could claim a credit for investing in their retirement security. Under a credit arrangement, contributions would result in the same tax savings regardless of the taxpayer's income bracket; but, a progressive credit schedule would tilt the advantage toward lower income workers. For example, under the proposed ERIC, the maximum annual contribution to an IRA is increased to $5,000 and incremental credits based on contributions are earned at rates beginning at 50% of the first $1,000 and declining for every additional $1,000 of contributions. Tax reductions for contributors to ERIC are depicted in the following table.

ERIC illustrates how benefits can be geared toward retirement planning. A variety of incentives to encourage the underclass to participate fully in the labor market are needed if the poorest workers are to perceive work as a constructive part of their past and the vehicle for future security.

Community Reconstruction

Measures to contend with the underclass are unlikely to be effective if they fail to reinforce institutions in poor commu-
Table 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Amount of Contribution</th>
<th>Bracket Credit</th>
<th>Amount of Credit</th>
<th>Maximum Credit</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>$0–1000</td>
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<td>50% of contribution</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1001–2000</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>$500 + (40% × excess over $1000)</td>
<td>$900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2001–3000</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>$900 + (30% × excess over $2000)</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3001–4000</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>$1200 + (20% × excess over $3000)</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4001–5000</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>$1400 + (10% × excess over $4000)</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Historically, community development has been tricky for human service professionals who have distrusted the conservatizing influences of local social institutions, particularly the somewhat autocratic institutions that have often aided the underclass, particularly religious organizations. As stereotypes go, this one too is incomplete and inaccurate. Harry Boyte and Sara Evans (1987) contend that local voluntary organizations have been a source of social transformation in the past and they offer the same promise for the future. Marc Bendick (1985) has noted that social welfare in the United States has been associated with local voluntary associations more than the governmental megastuctures of the European welfare states. Yet, welfare professionals have largely depended on governmental initiatives that have provided benefits directly to individuals, bypassing community institutions.

During the 1980s, a series of economic development initiatives demonstrated that poor communities could become more economically viable. The Enterprise Foundation, founded by James Rouse in 1981, has pumped millions of dollars into poor communities, primarily for the construction of badly needed housing (O’Connell, 1987, p. 218). By 1983, the Ford Foundationsponsored Local Initiatives Support Corporation had supported 197 community development projects which provided a variety
of tangible benefits to poor communities (Local Initiatives, 1980, 1981). Unfortunately, the Reagan administration was unable to capitalize on these experiments and failed to enact its economic development policy—Urban Enterprise Zones—to aid poor communities. This failure, coupled with continued cuts in community development programs, has left a vacuum in urban policy.

Social and economic institutions in poor communities could be strengthened through a Community Enterprise Zone (CEZ) program that would provide technical assistance and time-limited grants for the purpose of providing basic commodities, such as jobs and housing. The geographic basis of a CEZ would be an economic catchment area of from 4,000 to 50,000 population to accommodate rural and urban environments. The CEZ boundary would respect geopolitical lines, such as political wards, county lines, and school districts. Eligibility for community development benefits would depend on the social and economic conditions of the catchment area. A variety of indicators are available for this purpose—incidence of poverty, unemployment, and business closings. Catchment areas in which the rates for two of these three variables exceeded one standard deviation above the national average would be eligible for benefits.

Two types of aid would be provided to communities. For communities in which the infrastructure is particularly weak, CEZ benefits would consist of technical assistance and development grants. Rather than provide the assistance directly, government would contract services from those organizations, such as the Enterprise Foundation and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, which have a successful track record in economic development. For communities experiencing acute dislocation, a system of incentives, including tax credits, would be instituted to retain and promote entrepreneurial activity.

Funding for the CEZ program could be derived from a “Community Enterprise Zone Insurance Fund” created by taxing private and public construction. In 1986, for example, a 2% tax on construction in the United States would have netted $77.7 billion, 1 more than the amount identified by Jesse Jackson as necessary for domestic economic development and neighborhood revitalization in his 1988 presidential campaign (Shaughnessy, 1988, p. 1). In effect, CEZ funding would insure communities
against economic dislocation by providing a mechanism whereby all communities could be eligible for benefits. Since benefits would be drawn from an insurance fund, they would not be as vulnerable to budget constraints imposed on programs that are dependent on general revenues.

The CEZ concept can complement other social programs that are important to the underclass. Regarding workfare, for example, welfare beneficiaries could be allowed a choice of community development entity to which their benefits could be assigned. In order to collect benefits, those on workfare would have to engage in job-like tasks identified by the community development agency. Within a CEZ, community development entities would have to meet standards of the welfare department relating to personnel and benefit management, but would otherwise be free to define community development projects and assign beneficiaries to them. Beneficiaries would have a choice among community development agencies in which to enroll; once enrolled, beneficiaries could transfer to another community development agency—or to other employment—much like employees change jobs in the labor market. Such an arrangement would assure a measure of social responsibility on the part of welfare beneficiaries and do so in a way that directly benefits the communities in which they live. Coupling workfare and community development also solves one of the more insidious problems of welfare. “You cannot get good at welfare,” observed William Raspberry, “It does no good for a welfare mother to impress her case worker with her quick grasp or her sense of responsibility to take on an extra task. There is no way for a welfare client to distinguish himself, in any economically useful way, from any other welfare client. There are no promotions on welfare” (1988).

Program Reorganization

In many respects, the behavioral problems attributed to the underclass are the most perplexing to contend with. The amount of social and psychological disorganization evident in the underclass is an enormous burden for those who could participate more fully in the mainstream. This problem has been exacerbated by reductions in funding for health and welfare services
which have forced authorities to target resources for the most seriously disturbed. At the same time, health and welfare benefits available to the unstable poor are often wasted because those eligible fail to press claims for benefits or benefits do not conform to the circumstances of underclass life. In some instances, people are actually "disentitled" from benefits by bureaucrats who use convoluted eligibility procedures to deny benefits as a way to reduce program costs (Lipsky, 1984). The misuse of resources is graphically depicted by a cost accounting of benefits used by a chronically mentally ill Californian who ran up charges for county health, mental health, welfare, and housing services totaling $28,000 in one year (an amount excluding costs for legal services and incarceration) (Task Force, 1987, p. 14).

Services for the seriously emotionally disturbed can be optimized through the Integrated Service Agency (ISA) concept, pioneered in Wisconsin and proposed for California. An ISA is a public or private organization providing a range of services to emotionally disturbed adults on a capitation basis. As conceived, the California ISA model requires that each agency employ a staff of approximately ten professional and nonprofessional staff to serve approximately 150 members. Member services include 24-hour crisis intervention, supported independent living, socialization and recreation, employment, psychotherapy, legal assistance, money management, and advocacy, among others. Operating funds for each ISA are derived from existing categorical programs—such as Food Stamps, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, Title XX, Vocational Rehabilitation—which are pooled, then assigned to each ISA on a capitation basis. The pooling of categorical benefits in this manner resulted in an estimated budget for each California ISA of $3 million (Task Force, 1987; Task Force, 1988).

The advantages of reorganizing services through the ISA concept are multiple. Existing benefits which are fragmented and not used well by many of the destitute are ear-marked for this population. Agencies are reimbursed according to the members they serve, so that the loss of a member means a reduction in funding to the ISA. Significantly, ISAs are free to use any surplus—the difference between the capitation payment and
actual cost of service delivery—to generate innovative programming. Assuming a capitation payment of $20,000/member, the possibility of generating such a surplus is very real. Since funding is derived from existing categorical programs, funding for the ISA concept is limited to relatively modest appropriations for program start-up. Finally, the ISA concept appears applicable for those suffering from social disorganization, such as the homeless, who could benefit from a service delivery strategy that focuses a variety of poorly-used benefits toward this population.

Conclusion

A mainstreaming strategy for dealing with the underclass addresses one long-standing problem associated with those welfare programs that emphasize client maintenance—stigmatization. Currently, most services and benefits to the poor are offered in a manner which segregates them from the mainstream. The result is too often the obstruction to social and economic integration by substandard services which are intended to help the poor. Compounding the problems of the poor, governmental social services have suffered from ambivalence on the part of the public toward federal control of social programs, reflected in a reluctance to endure the tax burden that these programs impose. The combination of these problems has led to a situation that is all but intractable. Segregated services are so stigmatized that prospective clients fail to use them, even when they are eligible, leaving policy makers and administrators at an impasse.

A mainstreaming strategy for dealing with the underclass is one way to break this impasse. Significantly, an approach that emphasizes such initiatives as transitional benefits, Community Enterprise Zones, and Integrated Service Agencies could attract support from both ends of the political continuum. The Left will endorse programs that promise to revitalize communities that are economically bereft. The Right will support initiatives that reinforce self-sufficiency. Common to both camps is an assertion that the poor can participate in the mainstream if given an adequate opportunity.

As importantly, the creation of an effective strategy for reversing the growth of the underclass could restore a measure of public credibility for social welfare professionals who have been
much maligned during the last decade. On the defensive politically, advocates for social justice have struggled to protect categorical programs for the poor from further budget cuts. Unfortunately, this client maintenance strategy has left welfare professionals vulnerable to accusations of fostering welfare dependency. Human service professionals must begin to take the offensive in social welfare; in this respect the underclass represents an opportunity for welfare professionals to demonstrate to the public that it can solve very difficult problems, indeed. The necessity for creative thinking about questions of social welfare has been stated eloquently by Daniel Patrick Moynihan. "We need a rebirth of social policy as both a moral and an empirical exercise," he wrote, "free of the mindless millennialism of the past and the equally thoughtless meanness of the present" (1988, p. 265). Social welfare professionals, in other words, have much to gain by accepting the challenge posed by the underclass.

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Notes

Low-Income Parents' Attitudes toward Parent Involvement in Education*

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Using data from 978 parents who indicated their family income level on a descriptive survey about attitudes toward parent involvement in education, this article reports on comparisons among low-income, middle-income, and high-income parents. Despite some differences among the groups, the results clearly dispute any idea that low-income parents lack interest in their children's education. The authors provide recommendations of key strategies that social workers can use to facilitate effective involvement of low-income parents in their children's education.

Recent research has made an overwhelming case for parent involvement in children's education. The evidence that parent involvement improves student achievement is now incontestable; numerous studies point to parent involvement as a key determinant of children's success in school (Bloom, 1985; Clark, 1983; Dombusch and Ritter, 1988; Henderson, 1987; Kagan, 1984).

In fact, in an overview of 29 controlled studies, Walbert (1984) found "the 'alterable curriculum of the home' is twice as predictive of academic learning as is family socioeconomic status." Although the average effect was twice as predictive as socioeconomic status, some parent involvement programs had effects 10 times as large.

Organized efforts to involve low-income parents in their

*This study was supported by grant NIE-400-83-0007 from the National Institute of Education (NIE), Department of Education. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the NIE, and no official endorsement by the Institute should be inferred.
children's education are not very old. The earliest efforts date back to the 1960s and the passage of the Elementary Secondary Education Act. Typically, parent involvement programs and strategies are designed by schools for middle- and upper-income parents. Middle- and upper-income parents usually have had easy access to teachers through informal networks and through formal organizations such as parent-teacher associations. Low-income parents have been either unwilling or unable to participate in these traditional parent involvement modes (McLaughlin and Shields, 1987).

The major question this article seeks to answer is: What are the attitudes of low-income parents toward parent involvement in education? This question focuses on an issue that is critical to our nation's future. Social workers are acutely aware that lack of education coupled with poverty has brought tragedy to individuals, but it is imperative to realize that the personal tragedy of individuals is now becoming a collective tragedy that will have dire consequences for the country unless action is taken. If we can not educate our children effectively, eventually we will create a poorly educated nation that can not be competitive with other countries, and the standard of living will decline for the nation.

This article is based on part of a larger six-year study (1980-86) funded by the former National Institute of Education. The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) surveyed more than 3,000 parents and 4,000 educators at the elementary-school level in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. This article reports on the written survey results from 978 parents who provided information on their family income. The focus of the article is the report from low-income parents about their attitudes toward parent involvement in education.

Research Method

The questionnaire used is called the Parent Involvement Questionnaire (PIQ) and is a variation of instruments previously used with educators in the larger study. The PIQ is a self-report instrument consisting of 100 closed-response items with a sixth-grade readability level. The PIQ is divided into seven parts:
Parents' Attitudes

(a) general ideas about parent involvement; (b) interest in school decisions; (c) interest in parent involvement roles; (d) parent participation in involvement activities; (e) suggestions for improving parent involvement; (f) reasons for less parent involvement at the high school level; and (g) demographic information.

The survey was distributed at large open-house meetings sponsored by Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) across the six-state region. Translators were available for non-English speaking parents. The survey identified the following: 348 (35.6%) parents with family income less than $15,000; 259 (26.5%) parents with family income between $15,000 and $25,000; and 371 (37.9%) parents with family income above $25,000. The major focus of this article is the 348 parents with family income less than $15,000. For this study, the term low-income parents is used to designate those parents who reported their family incomes to be less than $15,000. Middle-income parents is used for parents who reported their family incomes between $15,000 and $25,000, and high-income parents is used for parents who reported their family incomes above $25,000.

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequencies, adjusted frequencies, rank orders, means, and standard deviations were obtained. To help interpret the comparisons among income groups, the eta-squared statistic (with a significance level of $p < .001$) was used as an estimate of the amount of variance that could be accounted for by the difference in income.

General Ideas About Parent Involvement

The low-income parents in this study were strongly supportive of the idea of parent involvement in education. More than 97% of the parents agreed with these statements: "I want to spend time helping my children get the best education"; "Teachers should give me ideas about helping my children with homework"; "I want teachers to send more information home about classroom learning activities"; "I should make sure that my children do their homework"; and "I cooperate with my children's teachers."

When compared to parents in the other two income groups, low-income parents differed on several statements. For the state-
ment "I have little to do with my children's success in school," 44.7% of the low-income parents agreed, while only 11.7% of the parents in the middle-income range and only 4.4% of the parents in the high-income range agreed. The eta-squared statistic was .151, or 15.1% of the difference can be explained by income. Many low-income parents seemed to be expressing a fear or concern that they were not in control of their child's success in school.

For the statement, "Working parents do not have time to be involved in school activities," 50.6% of the low-income parents agreed, while only 26.1% of the middle-income parents and only 11.9% of the high-income parents agreed. The eta-squared statistic was .127, or 12.7% of the difference can be explained by income. The nature of employment for low-income parents may give them less flexibility to work with schools.

For the statement, "I do not have enough training to help make school decisions," 52.4% of the low-income parents agreed, while only 29.2% of the middle-income parents and 17.3% of the high-income parents agreed. The eta-squared statistic was .114, or 11.4% of the difference can be explained by income. Low-income parents did not report as much confidence in their ability to make school decisions without further training as did the higher-income parents.

Parent Involvement Decisions

Low-income parents in this survey were most interested in "evaluating my child's progress," "amount of homework assigned," and "choosing classroom discipline methods." They were least interested in "firing principal and teachers," "hiring principal and teachers," and "helping the school decide what to teach and how."

Low-income parents were as interested in being involved in school decisions as parents from the higher income categories. On each of the 14 decisions, the percentage of low-income parents who indicated they were interested in the decision was higher than or as high as the percentage of interest expressed by middle-income and higher-income parents.

In general, the pattern of interest was similar for all three income groups. The only decision where low-income parents'
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responses differed from middle and high-income parents' responses was “having more multicultural/bilingual education in the school.” More than 77% of the low-income parents were interested in this decision, while only 61% of the middle-income and 55% of the high-income parents expressed interest. This finding might be explained by the over-representation of minority cultures and languages in the low-income parent group.

Parent Involvement Roles

Low-income parents were interested in all seven parent involvement roles. The four roles with the most interest were: home tutor, defined as helping your children at home with school work, 92% interested; audience, defined as supporting your child by going to performances, 90% interested; colearner, defined as going to classes or workshops with teachers and principals where everyone learns more about children and education, 89% interested; and school-program supporter, defined as coming to school to assist in events such as field trips or fundraisers, 88% interested.

The three remaining roles were: advocate, defined as meeting with school board or other officials to ask for changes in school rules or practices, 78% interested; paid school staff, defined as working in the school as an aide or assistant, 77% interested; and decision maker, defined as being on an advisory board or school committee, 75% interested.

Three of the first four roles are usually considered traditional parent involvement roles. Home tutor, audience, and school program supporter are typical parent involvement roles. The role of colearner is considered to be a nontraditional role, and it is significant that so many low-income parents were interested in learning more about education. Middle-income and high-income parents ranked colearner fourth, and expressed less interest in this role than low-income parents did. Only 78% of the high-income parents were interested in the role of colearner, and only 81% of the middle-income parents were interested in the role of colearner.

High-income parents were also more interested in the role of audience than low-income or middle-income parents. More than 98% of the high-income parents expressed interest in the
role of audience, while only 93% of the middle-income parents and 90% of the low-income parents expressed interest.

Parent Involvement Activities

The top five-ranked parent involvement activities that low-income parents report are: "going to 'openhouse' or special programs at school"; "going to parent-teacher conferences about your child's progress"; "helping children with homework"; "visiting the school to see what is happening"; and "helping children learn with materials at home."

The activities that low-income parents report participating in least often are: "helping to hire or fire teachers and principals"; "giving ideas to the school board"; "planning the school budget"; "working as part-time staff;" and "helping in the school, for example, the library or reading center."

The top-ranked activities are similar among the income groups. These are the traditional parent involvement activities that most schools offer. Interestingly, low-income parents did participate more in some of the less traditional activities such as "going to school board meetings," "helping decide how well school programs work," "helping to hire or fire teachers and principals," "helping to decide how well teachers and principals do their jobs," "working as part-time paid staff," and "helping to plan what will be taught in school." This higher percentage of participation in these nontraditional activities might be attributable to some very active Chapter 1/Title 1 Programs that were based in some of the schools surveyed.

Suggestions to Improve Parent Involvement

Ten suggestions for improving parent involvement were listed in the survey. More than 90% of the low-income parents agreed with all ten suggestions. The highest ranked suggestions were: "giving parents more information about children's success in school"; "helping students understand that having their parents involved is important"; "helping parents to better understand the subjects being taught"; "making parents feel more welcome in the school"; and "having informal meetings or activities where parents and school staff can get to know each other better."

The rankings of low-income parents' agreement with the suggestions were very similar to the rankings of middle-income
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and high-income parents. Slight differences were noted in the rank order of “having informal meetings or activities where parents and school staff can get to know each other better.” Low-income parents ranked this suggestion fifth and high-income parents ranked it ninth. Perhaps high-income parents already had informal opportunities to meet with teachers.

Reasons Why Parents Become Less Involved at High School

Low-income parents ranked the reason “Parents may not understand some of the courses taken in high school” as their first reason for less participation at the high school level. More than 88% of the low-income parents agreed with this reason. Middle-income and high-income parents also ranked this reason as number one.

Other highly ranked reasons reported by low-income parents were: “Parents can’t leave smaller children alone at home”; “There are not as many PTA activities for high school parents”; “There are not as many parent/teacher conferences”; and “Teachers don’t ask parents to be involved in school as much.”

The differences between low-income parents and the parents in the higher income groups emerge on two of the reasons listed: “There are too many teachers with whom to talk” and “Parents do not have time to be involved in school activities and work at the same time.” More than 53% of the low-income parents agreed there were too many teachers with whom to talk, while only 27% of the middle-income parents and 28% of the high-income parents concurred. The eta-squared statistic was .070 or 7% of the difference among the groups can be explained by income for this item on the survey.

For the item on parental time to be involved, 63% of the low-income parents said they didn’t have time to be involved and work at the same time, while only 42% of the middle-income parents and 33% of the high-income parents agreed. The eta-squared statistic for this item was .055, or 5.55% of the difference can be explained by income.

Discussion

There is strong evidence from this survey that low-income parents are interested in the idea of parent involvement in education. Low-income parents want to be involved in a variety
of school decisions, and they want to play active roles in their children's education. They were interested in both the traditional parent involvement roles of home tutor, audience, and school supporter, and the nontraditional roles of colearner, advocate, and decision-maker. The results clearly dispute any idea that low-income parents lack interest in their children's education.

There were, of course, some differences between the low-income and the higher-income parents. These differences were first apparent in the section on general ideas about parent involvement. Many more low-income parents than higher income parents felt a sense of helplessness about their ability to influence their children's success in school. Low-income parents also had more concerns than higher-income parents about time to be involved because of their work schedules. In addition, low-income parents expressed more need for training in how to make school decisions than higher-income parents did.

In the section on activities, low-income parents participated most often in the same types of activities as higher-income parents did. This finding, however, may have more to do with what schools offer than it does with the interests of the parents. When school did offer active parent advocacy and training groups such as those found in the Chapter 1/Title 1 programs, low-income parents did report participation. More information is needed in this area.

The rankings of high-income, middle-income and low-income parents were similar for suggestions to improve parent involvement. Only slight differences were noted in the rank order. In particular, low-income parents were more interested in informal meetings with teachers than the higher-income groups were, perhaps because low-income parents do not see teachers informally as often as higher-income parents do in their regular community life.

Low-income parents differed with higher-income parents on only a few of the reasons they gave for less participation at the high school level. Most important is the item on "time to be involved." More low-income parents than higher-income parents reported that they did not have the time to be involved and work at the same time.

In sum, the results have made it clear that low-income parents care about their children's education and that they want to
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be involved. In order to be involved in their children's education, low-income parents must have some of their concerns met. These concerns often involve work schedules and training on how to be involved. In addition, there need to be support systems that not only allow low-income parents to meet with teachers and school officials but also provide low-income parents with the skills and the confidence to make a difference in their children's success at school.

Recommendations

There are several key strategies that social workers can use to effectively involve low-income parents in their children's education. These recommendations are based on both the research evidence that low-income parents do care about their children's education and the practical experience of parent involvement leaders across the nation.

(a) Social workers must help educators envision ways of working with parents that go beyond those of the traditional order. Educators must be aware that low-income parents are interested in many forms and levels of parent involvement (see e.g. Arizona Department of Education, 1987; Chavkin & Garza-Lubeck, 1987; National School Volunteer Program, 1980).

(b) Parent involvement in education is a developmental process for both parents and educators. Social workers need to help educators understand that many low-income parents will start with the more traditional kinds of parent involvement and grow into increasingly more sophisticated types of involvement. On the other hand, these parents may elect to remain at this level of involvement because they are more comfortable here, given their skills, experiences, and attitudes. School personnel first must be comfortable with traditional forms of involvement, and then they will be more receptive to broader levels of involvement by low-income parents (Chavkin & Williams, 1985; Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986).

(c) Social workers need to facilitate collaboration between parents and educators in developing a clear statement about the goals of parent involvement in their school. The statement should clearly indicate that parents are as impor-
tant to children's academic success as educators. This statement should be clearly articulated in all parent involvement activities (Chrispeels, 1987).

(d) Social workers should advocate for and help develop formal, written school district policies encouraging parent involvement. Written policies will help ensure that parents at all income levels are involved in the school, not just parents who have easy access to teachers (Rich, 1985).

(3) Social workers can provide training opportunities for educators to be trained in how to work with low-income families who have the interest but whose involvement is lower than that of higher-income parents. Learning how to work with diverse income level parents should be a priority in preservice as well as inservice education (Chavkin & Garza-Lubeck, 1987; Chavkin & Williams, 1988).

(f) Social workers should assist educators in asking low-income parents as well as higher-income parents how they want to be involved in their children's education. The written questionnaire may not be an appropriate method to find out this information, and thus social workers may want to consider community meetings, liaisons, or personal contacts as alternatives to the questionnaire (Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986).

(g) Social workers should help educators be sensitive to the skill levels, time of availability, work schedules, and individual preferences as they plan and develop with low-income parents meaningful parent involvement activities. Most important, social workers need to make certain that a variety of home and school parent involvement opportunities are available and that they are based on these parents' interests (see e.g., Arizona Department of Education, 1987; Chavkin & Garza-Lubeck, 1987; National School Volunteer Program, 1980).

(h) More information needs to be given to parents. Low-income parents often do not understand how the school system operates. They do not know whom to contact or where to go for assistance. Sharing positive information about individual children is also a good practice for enhancing the relationships between parents and educators (McAfee, 1984; Sattes, 1985).
With the assistance of social workers, schools need to make available the appropriate kinds of resources for parent involvement efforts. In particular, there should be staff, space, and monetary resources identified and allocated for the implementation of effective parent involvement efforts. Social workers can often use their skills in community organization to locate resources and materials for the programs (Rich, 1985).

Social workers should encourage educators to give low-income parents suggestions for home learning activities. Parents want ideas about the best ways to help their children learn (see e.g., Rich & Mattox, 1983).

Social workers and educators need to make it clear to parents and children that parents are important in schooling. Social workers can help educators encourage and welcome parents to visit the school (Clark, 1988).

Social workers can help parents and educators work together closely to reduce communication barriers. Social workers can increase the opportunities that educators and parents have to work together in both formal and informal settings. Partnership activities with low income parents as well as parents at other income levels need to be expanded (Chrispeels, 1988; Sattes, 1985).

In sum, social workers can assist educators and parents in working together for the benefit of children. The income level of parents may affect the kinds of strategies that are needed to effectively enhance parent involvement, but the income level of parents is not related to the high level of parents' interest in being involved in their children's education. Low-income parents are just as concerned and interested in their children's success at school as higher-income parents. Social workers can help educators recognize this finding, accept the challenge to provide a variety of parent involvement opportunities, and develop the best strategies for involving low-income parents in their children's education.

References

A Court-Ordered Consent Decree for the Homeless: Process, Conflict and Control*

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A 1985 class action suit on behalf of homeless individuals living in the City of St. Louis mandates both short-term and long-term services to homeless persons. These court-ordered requirements bring together an interesting triparite system: (1) the adversarial and justice-oriented legal system, (b) the highly political city government, and (c) the traditionally voluntary system of human service providers. Service provision to the homeless, the utility of advocacy, privatization, and the ethics of public disclosure are examined from a sociological conflict and control perspective. The St. Louis experience provides guidance for communities wishing to engage the legal, political, and social service delivery systems on behalf of the complex needs of the homeless.

Only quite recently and only in a few large urban cities around the country have there been any successful attempts to use the courts to insure the rights of the homeless to minimal relief. The legal aspects of these court actions have been re-

*The authors wish to acknowledge the help of Ken Chackes of Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services for providing the chronology of events relating to the St. Louis homeless litigation.
viewed (Werner, 1984; Chackes, 1987; Hayes, 1987). Nonetheless, the court decree itself is a step marking the culmination of a long process of advocacy and the beginning of a process of implementation. This implementation process involves conflict and control, checks and balances among the several parties involved. In this article, we examine these processes in the light of a recent experience in St. Louis where the court, the local city political leadership, and social service organizations have come together to provide minimal guarantees of survival services to homeless people. This combination of the necessarily adversarial and justice-oriented legal system, the highly political city government, and the traditionally voluntary system of human services is examined from a sociological conflict and control perspective.

Background and Context for the Court Action

Until recently, St. Louis's political and legal systems remained disengaged from providing services to the homeless. Traditionally, only the human service sector had been engaged. However, with the filing of Graham v. Schoemehl (1985a), a class action lawsuit on behalf of homeless clients by Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, the City of St. Louis was charged to provide shelter and additional services to relieve the plight of poor homeless individuals in St. Louis. This action resulted in a court-ordered consent decree that effectually engaged the legal, political and human service sectors in services to homeless persons (Graham v. Schoemehl, 1985b).

Blumer (1971) points out that social problems exist as a fact of collective behavior; they are present in society in a greater or lesser degree at all times. But in order for a particular social problem to become part of public consciousness, it must come to the forefront and be recognized, or legitimized, as a public social problem. Using Blumer's model, Stern (1984) first outlined the process by which homelessness came to be defined as a public problem: (a) EMERGENCE: (through agitation, violence, interest groups, or political attention); (b) LEGITIMATION: the explanation of the problem is agreed upon; (c) MOBILIZATION: forces mount to attack the problem; (d) DEVELOPMENT: an official solution is determined; and (e) IMPLEMENTATION: the plan is operationalized.
This article draws out these stages and clarifies them by the St. Louis experience. It is shown how the assignment of these stages are distributed among the legal, political and voluntary human service systems in meeting the needs of the homeless.

Emergence: Advocacy

A common element in the background of cities which have moved toward litigation to insure the rights of the homeless is the existence of a powerful advocative force. Such advocacy appears collectively in groups like the National Coalition for the Homeless and New York's research-based Community Service Society. In St. Louis, however, a local evangelist, Larry Rice, is credited for bringing ongoing attention to the problem of homelessness. Reverend Rice, who has worked with the homeless for 14 years, operates New Life Evangelistic Center, a downtown shelter for homeless men, and several other shelters state-wide. His work and his calculated use of the media have brought constant awareness to homelessness as a critical social problem in St. Louis.

Rice has openly confronted the Mayor with nonviolent public demonstrations such as sleeping in a cardboard box in front of City Hall. Rice also owns a television station. On his nightly winter trips to gather homeless persons into shelter from abandoned buildings and under bridges, camera crews go with him to film and interview homeless people. Although one may disagree with his methods, the fact remains that he is largely responsible for bringing homelessness to bear on the public consciousness (Lobbia, 1985). In general, public opinion has responded to Rice. A recent City survey indicated that residents felt that homeless shelters and condemned building services ranked highest on the Service Need Index (Mayor's Task Force for Improved City Services, 1986).

Actual pressure for a trial to determine whether the City was responsible to provide shelter and services for the homeless began to build late in December 1984. Before discussing the other phases of the process, we shall present a brief chronology of events relating to the St. Louis homeless litigation:

12/17/84 Plaintiff's attorneys (Kenneth M. Chackes of Washington University School of Law, and Daniel Glazier, Michael Ferry and Sandra Farragut-Hemphill of Legal Services of
Eastern Missouri) sent a letter to Mayor Vincent Schoemehl describing the nature and scope of the homeless problem in St. Louis, asserting that the city had the power and the duty to provide shelter and other necessary services to the homeless, requesting the city to provide such relief, and inviting a discussion of those matters.

1/4/85 Plaintiff's attorneys met with representatives of the city (four attorneys from the City Counselor's Office and a representative of the Mayor) who indicated no dispute about the existence of a problem, but questioned whether the city had a duty, and requested information regarding the size and cost of the proposed shelter operation. Plaintiff's attorneys indicated they would file a lawsuit within three weeks and that if agreement could be reached it should be in the form of a consent decree approved by the court.

1/10/85 Plaintiff's attorneys sent information to the city regarding the cost of operating a "decent" shelter.

1/85 Later in January the Mayor appointed a task force, chaired by George Eberle, to study the problem of homelessness and make recommendations for the city's response.

2/11/85 Plaintiffs filed a class action lawsuit against the Mayor and city seeking a declaration of the city's duty to relieve, maintain and support the homeless, and an injunction requiring the city to provide shelter and other services to the homeless, including food, health care, hygienic services, housing and employment assistance, and transportation. Along with the petition plaintiffs filed discovery requests to determine what the city knew about homelessness and what the city was doing to meet the needs of the homeless.

3/6/85 The city also filed discovery requests seeking information about the individual plaintiffs and information known to plaintiffs and their attorneys regarding the problems of the poor and homeless.

3/29/85 Plaintiffs responded to defendants' discovery requests providing substantial information.

4/8/85 Defendants objected to providing information in response to plaintiffs' discovery requests.

4/19/85 Defendants filed a motion to dismiss the lawsuit, contending that the court had no jurisdiction to hear the case
because the city's response to the problems of the poor and homeless was a political matter, not subject to interference by a court.

4/85 The Mayor's task force completed its study, making essentially the same findings that had been made by plaintiffs' attorneys, and recommending solutions in the same areas for which relief was sought in the lawsuit.

5/31/85 Attorneys for both sides engaged in oral argument before the court regarding defendants' motion to dismiss. While the judge postponed his ruling on the motion pending further briefing by the attorneys, on that and several other occasions he expressed concerns about the problems of the homeless, but serious reservations about his power to issue an injunction ordering the city to take steps to address those problems. Trial on the merits of plaintiffs' petition was scheduled for November 18, 1985.

7/11/85 A hearing was scheduled before the court for the presentation of evidence regarding class certification—whether the case should proceed as a class action and, if so, the proper definition of the class. The judge postponed the hearing because he had not yet ruled on the defendants' motion to dismiss.

9/4/85 A second class certification hearing was scheduled but postponed.

10/4/85 The judge formally overruled defendants' motion to dismiss but expressly reserved the issue whether the court could order any injunctive relief against the city. The attorneys submitted written evidence to the court regarding the class certification issues, and orally argued the discovery dispute arising out of the city's refusal to provide the information requested by plaintiffs. The judge ordered the city to provide whatever information it had readily available that would respond to plaintiffs' discovery requests.

11/8/85 With 10 days remaining before trial plaintiffs took the depositions of four city officials identified by defendants as having responsibility for the city's programs to aid the poor.

11/85 In preparation for trial, plaintiffs' attorneys met with the chairman of the Mayor's task force on homelessness to discuss his group's findings and recommendations, and to determine whether he would testify to those matters at the trial. The
chairman indicated that he would testify if necessary, but that there should be no trial because, as the task force had recom-
mended, the city should provide the shelter and most of the other services sought in the lawsuit. By that time the city was already taking steps to implement many of the task force rec-
ommendations, but had made no progress toward making more shelter available. The chairman of the task force promised to convey to the Mayor his view that the case should be settled.

11/13/85 Five days before trial plaintiffs' attorneys met with the city's attorney to take the deposition of an aide to the Mayor. The chairman of the task force was present, however, and in-
stead of taking the deposition, the attorneys negotiated the basic ingredients of a settlement. The city agreed to a court order establishing its duty to aid the homeless and requiring it to provide shelter and other specified services.

11/15/85 On the Friday before the Monday trial date attor-
neys for both sides met in court, but the city was not yet ready to sign the consent decree and sought a continuance of the trial. The judge put off ruling on that request and the parties agreed to work toward a settlement. By Friday afternoon one issue re-
mained—the portion of the consent decree that would obligate the city to continue to meet the needs of the homeless after the initial one-year programs would expire. Before the day was over the city agreed to a continuing obligation and the parties and the judge signed the decree.

Legitimation: Issues of Ownership

Once advocacy and media attention had moved homeless-
ness toward classification as a social problem, the next step, legitimation, commenced. Like the precedent New York case Callahan v. Carey, 1979 which catapulted homelessness into the national consciousness, Graham v. Schoemehl, 1985 legitimized homelessness as a public social problem in St. Louis. The legi-
timation stage is extremely important—even to the point of de-
termining whether or not the social problem will, in the public sense, survive. And as Stern (1984) points out, the legitimation phase decides who owns the problem.

The law which backed the consent decree had been a state statute since Missouri's territorial days: "Poor persons shall be
relieved and supported by the county of which they are inhabitants” (Missouri Revised Statutes, 1978). The necessary and primary task that followed was the legal determination of class. Once the right to a class action suit is determined, the court must then decide whether or not a government is neglecting or failing to perform its duty within reasonable discretionary standards. It is the court's role to determine if government is meeting its responsibility, rather than dictating how government is to accomplish the mandate. In other words, the courts may require that government do something, but cannot say how that thing is to be done. This accounts for the differences noted later in this article between implementation of the New York and St. Louis consent decrees.

Notwithstanding, it is implicit in the law that relief for the poor must meet conditions necessary for survival. Chackes (1987, p. 193) argues,

Going even further, a court could determine that lawmakers intended that the duty encompass not only short-term help, but assistance to allow the homeless to better themselves and escape the cycle of homelessness. The assistance could include services like life skills education, job training, and assistance in finding employment or permanent housing.

At the same time, however, temperance must guide the use of the power of the court. Although remedial action needs to be taken when other branches of government are in violation of the law, the court must be guided by two additional principles in determining appropriate remedies: (a) the nature and scope of the remedy should be no more extensive than the nature and scope of the right violated; and (b) in order to respect the separation of powers doctrine, the remedy should intrude no more than necessary into the affairs of the coordinate branches of government (Chackes, 1987, p. 196).

Mobilization of Community Resources

Contingent with the filing of the lawsuit, as the chronology reports, the Mayor appointed a task force consisting of the heads of major social service agencies traditionally working with the homeless. Their task was to study the problem and make rec-
ommendations to the Mayor. When the recommendations of the task force aligned with the charges of the legal document, the City had little recourse but to provide services to these poor citizens within its domain. Directives from these professionals, although outside the adversarial stance of the lawsuit, nevertheless added strength to the lawsuit from the legal parties. As the court date grew near, the legal system also sought professional testimony from these same human service professionals, should the matter go to court. Thus, the human service sector provided expert testimony to both the legal and political systems in their adversarial stance.

Development of an Official Solution

The consent decree defined the homeless as "persons without shelter, temporarily staying in a private shelter for homeless people, or with inadequate shelter such that a person cannot live in it without substantial risk to life, health and safety" (Graham v. Schoemehl, 1987b, p. 2). The order mandated that no less than $310,000 be appropriated during FY 1985-1986 to implement services for the homeless.

The consent decree charged the City to increase shelter for the homeless. During 1986, a minimum of 200 additional beds were to be added at the rate of 12 to 20 new beds per month. These temporary shelter beds, available for use 24 hours per day, allowed a maximum 60 day length of stay. Minimum service standards were also set for these temporary shelter facilities. In addition, the City was required to provide at least 100 units of permanent housing for the homeless at the rate of 7 to 10 per month.

A noteworthy and important component of the St. Louis consent decree was that it spelled out what additional services were to accompany the mandate for more shelter beds. Since these services were written into the court document, it was unequivocally established that the development of the official solution to homelessness in St. Louis was more than food and shelter. Specifically mentioned were: (a) a crisis-oriented reception center, (b) transportation services, (c) day center for women and children, and (d) transitional services (Graham v. Schoemehl, 1985b). These programs formed the core of the City's new Homeless Services Network (HSN) designed to coordinate ser-
vices to the homeless on a community-wide level. This Network is now nationally known as a model approach that works (Whitman, 1988).

Lastly, the decree required the City to provide copies of monthly reports submitted by the social service providers to the legal counsel on behalf of the homeless. This court-ordered demand for documentation engaged the services of professional researchers to verify that the consent decree was being followed.

Implementation: The Homeless Services Network

With the signing of the consent decree, the City established the new system to meet the needs of the homeless. Previous to the lawsuit, The Salvation Army Emergency Lodge was the only shelter receiving local government funding through block grant allocations. The Emergency Lodge’s continuum of services model was expanded in the development of the Homeless Services Network (HSN). This multidimensional networking model (Hutchison, Searight & Stretch, 1986) is built on the conviction that comprehensive policy and program planning is needed to meet the needs of homeless persons (Bassuk & Lauriat, 1984; Kaufman, 1984; Stoner, 1984).

Because of their expert and timely involvement in the mobilization stage, social service agency executives were in key positions to responsibly implement the wide range of services specified in the consent decree. A public-private partnership was born as the City contracted out required services for the homeless to five major social service agencies:

(a) The Reception Center, a 24-hour walk-in, call-in crisis hotline operated by The Salvation Army. The Reception Center serves as the central intake and referral point for emergency shelter in St. Louis and the statistical center for the Network.

(b) Christ Church Cathedral Day Shelter for women and children operated by Consolidated Neighborhood Services (CNSI). The day shelter provides daily meals, shower and laundry facilities, and child care.

(c) St. Patrick’s Center of Catholic Charities provides comprehensive employment counseling and housing placement services. In addition, life skills training classes are held on parenting, budgeting, and tenant rights and responsibilities.

(d) The American Red Cross supplies transportation ser-
ervices between emergency shelters, Reception Center, Day Shelter, and other sites like health clinics and job interviews (Department of Human Resources, 1986).

(e) The Good Samaritan Center, in conjunction with Lutheran Family and Children's Services, operates a transitional housing program to prepare families for placement in permanent housing.

Because the implementation phase must necessarily follow directly from the constraints of the court order, the St. Louis case is unique in its requirement for services designed to move the individual homeless persons out of homelessness. Therefore, the privatization outcome of the St. Louis lawsuit departs significantly from the New York model of a public shelter system. Originally, the plaintiffs in the New York case had demanded the right to shelter along with a provision that the shelters be community based. Believing that there would be too much community opposition, the City would not enter into such an agreement (Main, 1983). The outcome of the New York model became the infamous "welfare hotels" where 7,800 families are currently housed. Landlords of these 61 hotels receive an average amount of $30,000 per year for a typical room with no cooking facilities, perhaps a refrigerator, and few, if any, social services. Up to 10 families may share a bathroom (Sommers, 1987). In contrast, City government funding in St. Louis now reaches 41% of the homeless shelters. Most shelters are small and geographically dispersed (Johnson, 1988).

Conflict and Control

This partnership between the legal, political and human service systems in an effort to serve the homeless has inherent elements of conflict and control. These built-in differences, however, can provide a check-and-balance system that can maximize services for the homeless. These issues of conflict and control are perhaps most clearly seen in the area of data analysis and research.

Because the court mandated that monthly reports be relayed to the legal system for monitoring purposes, there was immediate necessity to move service delivery to the point that it could be documented that (a) the City was doing what it agreed to do,
and (b) that the problem was being handled to prevent a return to court. Should the issue go to trial and an unfavorable verdict be returned, more extensive or expensive constraints might be charged to the City. In order to avoid such consequences, it was in the City's best interest to abide by the decree and have reliable data to substantiate compliance.

Thus, part of the funding contract included a research component to computerize data collected from calls to the hotline. This system records demographic information on each homeless person, assesses their present condition of homelessness and reason for homelessness. The hotline staff makes appropriate shelter referrals, based on daily telephone contact with 24 shelter providers throughout the City.

Concerning referral to the shelter system, conflict surfaced around the definitional problem of who the homeless were. In other words, who was the City responsible to provide shelter for? Although the consent decree had already officially defined the homeless, high demand on the hotline system necessitated operationalization of the legal definition for actual service delivery. This resulted in three categories describing the situation of homelessness: (a) on the street, (b) immediate crisis (homeless within 48 hours), and (c) at risk (homeless within 30 days).

The City allowed that only those persons literally on the street be referred to shelter. Women and children fleeing abusive conditions were given second priority. The hidden homeless—those living in condemned, substandard or severely overcrowded living conditions were, by and large, exempted from referral. Should such persons slide into literal homelessness, referral could occur. However, during the second year of HSN operation, City funding for the hotline increased. A staff person was hired to intervene with at-risk persons to prevent their further descent into homelessness.

Use of the data for public and academic purposes also reveals the existence of conflict and control within the model. Although data collection activities were supported by public funds, a relatively closed system remains around access to and usage of the data. The City requests full knowledge and prior written consent be obtained for articles written for academic journals, books or media reports that use data collected from hotline calls. The data
have the potential to provide a rich source of documentation to advocate for federal funds for local services. However, it has basically been more narrowly used to establish the fact that the literal homeless have been referred to shelter. Thus, although the City works diligently through the HSN to create an open and participative system among community providers, access to data and the disbursement of provider agency reports has been minimal.

Discussion

It has been noted that the few cities which have used the courts in this way have not been totally satisfied with the outcome (Fabricant & Epstein, 1984). It has also been stated that the legal remedies in these cases, although used sparsely and although producing mixed results, have on balance seemed to be good leverage to quickly move political bureaucracy to assume some degree of responsibility along with private agencies in the respective jurisdictions (Sloss, 1984).

Although the courts clearly gave ownership of the problem of homelessness to the City, the City's response of privatization moved the responsibility for primary policy implementation into the existing human service marketplace. Traditionally, such a shift of responsibility through privatization allows government to shift ownership of the problem to the voluntary sector while still retaining control of implementation through its funding options. In other words, privatization frees politicians to say to social service providers "You bought the problem, now why isn't it solved?" In this case, however, the privatization model was not free to operate without the imperative check-and-balance monitoring system of the court; the City could not fully dislocate itself from the homelessness problem. Privatization can also lead to false assumptions on the part of the funding agency to believe that a social problem is taken care of. Sosin (1987, p. 3) writes: "Accordingly, government might make use of private agencies to deal with, or deflect demand through such mechanisms as contracting out . . . to claim that a problem is being handled."

Agencies which have been traditionally advocative for disadvantaged populations, also risk being co-opted by the contract-for-services model with government. At best, they
experience a sense of the loss of advocacy—or they advocate at risk of loss of funding. Within the privatization model, client advocacy must be tempered with the demands and/or constraints of the governmental funding agency. Bassuk and Lauriat (1984) point out the politicalization of homelessness and upbraid the lack of nonpartisan advocates taking a stand for more than short-term shelter provision for the homeless. In the St. Louis homeless arena, Reverend Rice remains an outspoken critic of homeless services. He charges that persons who have received the HSN range of services are being recycled into homelessness as another wave of urban renewal displaces them from Section 8 apartments on the near southside. The power of his advocacy remains based on his philosophical stance and unwillingness to take any public funds.

In summary, privatization as described here, though not without costs, nevertheless is a workable model for the provision of publicly-funded and mandated homeless services. Unlike the more problematic warehousing model of New York City, it does provide scattered site services to the poor. Additionally, needed financial resources are supplied to agencies traditionally working with disadvantaged populations like the homeless. More research needs to be done on the implications of such service delivery systems which employ privatization and the additional component of legal mandate. Smith (1987, p. 4) hypothesizes that “the increasingly extensive use of contracting for government services with nonprofit agencies . . . may generate a new politics of social welfare services with profound implications for the future of social welfare policy.”

References


Old Folks' Homes for Blacks
During the Progressive Era*

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This paper discusses the development of old folks' homes for Blacks during the Progressive Era. Churches, women's clubs, and secret societies played a major role in the development, funding, and operation of these institutions. These groups adhered to the doctrine of self-help and group solidarity which provided impetus for their charitable activities. The members of these organizations believed that leaving "worthy" indigent Black aged to live out their last years in almshouses was cruel and intolerable. This paper highlights some of the efforts and many of the homes that were established for the Black aged through the cooperation and material support of Black churches, women's clubs, and secret societies.

The history of institutionalized care for the Black aged is a little researched area and deserves more attention than it has been given by social welfare historians. The literature is isolated and difficult to locate, yet private archival holdings of some of the currently existing homes and records of women's clubs, fraternal orders, secret societies and churches may reveal useful information to further illustrate their divergent efforts to house indigent Black aged populations. Nonetheless any effort to uncover this material and to highlight the Black social welfare movement clearly reveals that establishing old folks' homes for Blacks was a major charitable activity during the Progressive Era.

Although numerous charitable efforts, such as the establishment of old folks' homes, emerged during the Progressive Era, the dominant trend of that period was a conservative triumph

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Conservative solutions to the emerging problems of an industrial society were applied under nearly all circumstances. Business and political leaders shared the same basic belief on what was the public good. Their primary goal was to preserve the basic social and economic relations essential to a capitalist society. In sum, the goals of business and the rest of the public became synonymous. Business leaders defined the limits of political intervention in Washington, and specified its major form and thrust. Business control over politics, rather than political regulations of the economy was the significant phenomenon of the Progressive Era (Kolko, 1963). The glaring paradox of progress and poverty became quite apparent between the years 1890–1920 in American society.

The Progressive Era marked the beginnings of the Black persons' retreat from the soil, and their northern/urban migration, a phenomenon that pushed tens of thousands of rural Blacks to the growing urban cities of the North. This period also saw new manifestations of discrimination and the expansion of racial segregation in employment, housing, and transportation (Carlton-LaNey, 1984). The lack of socioeconomic progress and increasing impoverishment that Blacks experienced were the impetus for a proliferation of new social welfare organizations, spawned by Black secret orders and fraternities, and other racial institutions led and supported by middle class Blacks (Williams, 1905). The social welfare activities of the Progressive Era included the development and maintenance of institutions to house the indigent Black aged.

This paper examines the development of these charitable institutions during the Progressive Era. In an attempt to fill some gaps in Black Social welfare history and to highlight the doctrine of self-help among Blacks, I discuss specific homes as well as the roles that the Black churches, women's clubs and secret societies played in their establishment and maintenance.

The infirmities of old age accounted for the impoverished conditions of some Black aged, but their destitution can be traced to slavery and the brutalities of racism. Black women and men...
Homes for Blacks

8.5 a home for themselves, or to provide for the coming of old age and infirmities (DuBois, 1909, p. 75).

Their families often took the aged person into their homes rather than leave them to the unpleasant and harsh life of the almshouses (Reiff, Dahlin, Smith, 1983). Many aged Blacks, however, could not enter their old age secure in the knowledge that they would be cared for by their children since their children had their own family responsibilities and sometimes lived great distances from the elderly parents. With both limited available living space, and limited economic resources, in-home care was often not a realistic option for the aged and indigent Black (Smith, Dahlin, Friedberger, 1979). Amos Warner (1918, p. 57) said of poor Blacks, "... they have a dread of being assisted, especially when they think an institution will be recommended." Despite this reluctance, institutionalized care often became a necessary resort for aged and informed Blacks during the late 1800s and early 1900s. W. E. B. DuBois (1909) described the establishment of homes for old people as the most "characteristic Negro charity." This "charity" also illustrated the pervasiveness of the doctrines of self-help and encouraged the ideals of racial solidarity among Blacks. Both self-help and racial solidarity were, in part, defensive reactions to White exclusions and hostility (Meier, 1969).

The segregationist policies of most old folks' homes, like many other social welfare services, excluded Blacks and demanded that the latter develop and rely on their own social welfare resources. These policies existed for a number of reasons including: (a) racism, (b) ethnocentrism, and (c) a desire to separate the worthy from the unworthy indigent aged. Even within the same racial or ethnic group, discrimination was practiced based on the categorization of the poor aged as "worthy" or "unworthy." The practice of categorizing the poor can be traced back to the English Poor Laws of 1601. One was considered worthy or unworthy according to personal merit which was determined by one's present or previous employability. Eligibility for assistance without stigma was determined by one's worth; and worth was defined as "thrift combined with the absence of notorious ill-conduct." In sum, those who could earn
and did not were reprehensible (Mencher, 1967). In general, the elderly were considered worthy because of their inability to work (Haber, 1983), yet they were judged and assisted based upon their work history and their thrift during productive years.

Many Black social welfare organizations, like their White counterparts, accepted this definition of "worth" and committed their social service efforts to the worthy, but often indigent Black aged. These organizations were usually isolated from White society and eventually developed an indifference to social intermingling with Whites. Interracial activities were infrequent and for many Blacks almost unnatural (Drake and Cayton, 1962; Osofsky, 1963). This should not suggest, however that Blacks preferred and accepted segregation. On the contrary, Black leaders vehemently protested against segregation and its consequences (DuBois, 1963; Aptheker, 1968). As difficult as segregation was for Blacks, it may have served a useful purpose in helping Blacks strengthen their group consciousness and awareness. According to Lewis Coser (1964), conflict stimulates innovation and helps maintain out-group as well as in-group cohesion. Conflict also sets boundaries between groups within a social system by strengthening group consciousness and awareness of separativeness, hence establishing the identity of groups within the system (Coser, 1964). The boundaries set by Whites excluded Blacks from full participation in society. Social distance accompanied by a variety of rules and enforcement mechanisms before the Civil War was supplanted after the Civil War with a system of physical distance that preserved the dominance that Whites enjoyed earlier under slavery (Farley, 1987; Woodward, 1957). While Blacks did rebel against these immoral and inhumane practices, they used their physical distance (segregation) to develop group solidarity and to promote both cooperation and efficiency (Broderick and Meier, 1965; Quarles, 1969; Osofsky, 1963).

Organizing For Self-Help

The almshouse, essentially identified as the sole province of the aged by the early 1900s, became an issue of grave concern to social reformers. Reformers found it difficult to tolerate the large number of worthy aged, of any race, who resided in
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almshouses. Social workers who carried forth the ideals of humanitarian reform and social justice used the pages of Charities (1903) to urge the establishment of old folks’ homes as an alternative to the almshouse. Homer Folks, speaking before the National Conference of Charities and Corrections (NCCC) in 1903, stated that, “proper respect for and care of the aged, who are rightly our charges, is a measure of civilization . . .” (Zimand, 1958). These ideals were further encouraged by state and city welfare legislators who offered strong endorsement and financial support to private ethnic welfare activities focusing on the establishment of old folks’ homes. This was partly an altruistic response to the public outcries and admonitions of social reformers, but it was also a way for elected officials and overseers of the poor to supplement, rather than bear the entire cost of care for the indigent aged of any race. Where private funds were not available, race shaped the allotment of public funds for the segregated institutions. In Charleston, South Carolina, for example, the indigent Black aged were housed in the poorly managed and decrepit Ashley River Home, while Whites enjoyed a much safer and healthier public asylum. Records of mortality rates suggest the discriminatory practice which existed. The average annual death rate for Blacks was 40% and around 10% at the White asylum (Haber and Gatton, 1987).²

White racism, as illustrated above in the City of Charleston, is one indication that Black social welfare was not a priority particularly in the South where segregated institutions were prevalent. As Blacks observed and experienced such racial injustices, the need to develop their own social services was reinforced.

Cooperation among the various Black groups was a key element in the development of social welfare services. Yet, there were instances and occasions when competition interfered with the spirit of cooperation. Ministers, as heads of churches were often controversial in their role. Their motives and their commitment to the race were sometimes questioned by Blacks in the community. The church was nonetheless of major importance to most Blacks (Drake and Cayton, 1962). Ministers believed that secret fraternities were of less importance than the church. They questioned the quasi-religious nature of these groups and re-
sented their popularity especially when fraternal activities interfered with parishioners’ participation in church activities (Dittmer, 1977). While these groups’ activities were sometimes in conflict with the church, they stressed racial unity and gave strength and direction to the Black community.

Women’s clubs echoed the philosophy of the secret fraternities adhering to their motto, “lifting as we climb.” Their sincerity as “race women” was seldom questioned because their primary activities provided service to others. These women usually worked cooperatively with both the church and secret fraternities. They generally outnumbered men as church members but their status as women gave them less opportunity to exploit their position as leaders (Drake and Cayton, 1962; Dittmer, 1977). Women’s clubs successfully bridged class barriers and functioned as liaisons encouraging churches, secret fraternities and other women’s groups to work together to reach desired goals (Lerner, 1974; Jackson, 1978).

The Black Church’s Role

The Black church has always been able to marshal the forces needed to move its people out of poverty and despair. Next to the family, the Black church was the most important institution and was also the center of social life. During the Progressive Era, scholars of Black social welfare such as W. E. B. DuBois (1909) observed that while a great share of the churches’ wealth had been allocated for mission work with a portion for proselytizing, a larger portion went for benevolent and social betterment work. Others, such as George Edmund Haynes, maintained that the Black church was “...at once the most resourceful and most characteristic organized force in the life of the Negroes of the Northern cities as it was in the Southern communities” (Haynes, 1925).

As a center of systematic relief, the Black church took on the role of caretaker for needy parishioners and nonchurch members alike. The Social Gospel movement which helped to characterize the Progressive Era added impetus to the Black churches’ roles as caregivers stressing that the church’s main mission was not to support itself, but to uplift the community and to ameliorate hard conditions of the unfortunate (Carter’s Old Folks’ Home,
1906; Williams, 1905). The leaders of the Social Gospel movement attacked labor conditions, corruption in politics, inequalities in wealth and the existence of slums. This movement which cut across all denominations, viewed reform as a social matter rather than a personal one (Mencher, 1967). The historic role of the Black church and the doctrine of the Social Gospel influenced the development of a number of institutions including residential facilities for the elderly.

The Reverend Edward R. Carter, one of Atlanta's most prominent ministers, took an early lead in establishing housing for that city's indigent aged. With the support of his congregation at Friendship Baptist Church, Reverend Carter established Carter's Old Folks' Home in 1898. The home was a three-story building adjoining the church. Reverend Carter and the church members provided the majority of funds needed to operate the home. The City of Atlanta made a monthly contribution to help with the management of the home. The facility housed ten inmates by 1906 with expectations of accepting five others upon completion of the structure's third floor (Pollard, 1978). The growing demands placed on the Carter Old Folks' Home reflected the growth of Atlanta's Black population which more than doubled from 1890 to 1920 by which time nearly 63,000 Blacks lived in the city (Dittmer, 1977).

As a rule, old folks' homes for Blacks grew out of identified need and were located in areas which had large populations of Blacks. While there were relatively few Blacks in the state of Minnesota during the Progressive Era, the largest of the state Black populations was mainly concentrated in St. Paul. Logically, that city was the site of the state's first old folks' home for Blacks. Reverend James W. King, a Methodist minister, established the Attucks Industrial School, Orphanage and Old Folks' Home. The home was "designed for the betterment of the Negro race, to provide a home for the orphans, the aged and the indigent." Reverend King and his wife opened the home about 1908. By July 1909, the facility was home to 11 men, women and children. With the aid of several women's clubs such as the Adelphia Club and the Arbutus Club, along with churches, individual donors, and fund raisers, the Attucks Home moved to a new more adequate structure on December 9, 1916. The new
facility, previously owned by the all-white Home for the Friendless, was a two-story frame structure containing 20 rooms. The building had twelve-foot ceilings and a stairway that led from the front hall to the second floor. The home was said to "... look like a home [with] many windows, light, pretty wall paper... [and was] desperately clean..." The Attucks home remained in its new location from 1916 until it closed in 1966 (McClure, 1968, p. 49).

Other homes started by Black churches and ministers included the Negro Baptists’ Old Folks Home in Richmond, Virginia, which was supported by both Black and White friends, and the Negro Churches of Richmond. Similarly, the Lafon’s Old Folks’ Home in New Orleans was maintained by the "colored Methodist and Congregational" churches of that city. It was home to an average of between 25 to 30 indigent males and females. Thomy Lafon, a Black philanthropist of New Orleans, bequeathed $11,000 to the home, and the city contributed $120 toward its support (it is not clear how often the city’s share was paid) (Dubois, 1909; Work, 1919).

Women’s clubs

Black women’s clubs were sometimes described as "... a most forcible demonstration of the value of organization among women..." Their activities included the development of self-reliance, self-help and other elements so vital to the advancement of Black people. The clubs’ goals were to supply substantial evidence of the moral, mental and material progress of the race (DuBois, 1909). The scope of activities for social betterment among women’s clubs included support of hospitals, orphan homes, kindergartens, and day care centers; the virtual absence of social welfare institutions in many communities also led these women’s clubs to establish old folks homes—deemed an especially important activity.

Described as “noble” and “sacrificing,” these women donated time, money and organizational skills to protect the indigent aged from suffering and to bring a little “cheer” into their lives. In order to provide a sense of direction, several women’s clubs organized themselves into various departments or standing committees such as the “Sick and Aged Committee.” Women’s
journals and newspapers reported the various activities of women's clubs throughout the country providing a means of focus and lending dignity to their efforts. These clubs often consolidated their energies to reach a mutually agreed upon goal. In a broad community cooperative six women's clubs in Chicago joined the Triangle Inner Circle Club to give the Chicago Home for the Aged and Infirmed Colored People a New Year's present. They jointly sponsored a 50-cent-dance with all of the proceeds going to the "dear old folks" at the home (Drake and Cayton, 1962).

In Birmingham, Alabama, another women's club, the Semper Fidelis Club, made a yearly donation of money, clothing and other necessities to the Old Folks' and Orphans' Home of that city. The Ann Arbor Women's Club in Michigan sent canned goods, quilts, rugs, clothing, and money to Detroit's Phillis Wheatley Home. They also placed an inmate at the Home by paying the $200 admission fee. The Labor of Love Circle in Detroit also organized its primary charitable works for the maintenance of the ladies who resided at the Phillis Wheatley Home. Another of Chicago's women's clubs sponsored "Coal-fund Day" and "Canning Day" for the Home for Aged and Infirmed Colored People. In autumn of each year, the clubs' women arranged for collections at local churches solely for the purpose of purchasing fuel for the home; and during fruit season, they took fruit and sugar to the institution to provide a supply of preserved fruits to meet the inmates' needs during the winter months (DuBois, 1909; Jackson, 1978).

The club women's activities extended beyond charitable donations to existing homes for the aged. Their activities expanded to include establishing homes and sometimes taking over the responsibilities of maintaining a home when the home was at risk of closing, or the inmates were believed to be suffering. The Women's Twentieth Century Club of New Haven, Connecticut, took over the management and maintenance of the Hannah Gray Home for Aged Colored Women established in the late 1800s. When the club's women took over the home in 1903, the property was at risk of foreclosure because of a $200 delinquent tax bill. The club paid the back taxes, had the house painted and donated wood and coal for fuel. They also paid the burial expenses for
several inmates, employed an overseer and annually appointed a board of directors to run the home. The fifty-member club operated the home efficiently for many years on donations, gifts, and small sums paid by the inmates (DuBois, 1909).

As with the Women's Twentieth Century Club, the Women's Loyal Union of New Bedford, Massachusetts, assumed the responsibility for maintaining the New Bedford Home for the Aged of that city which opened its doors on March 25, 1897. Ten years later, during Old Home Week in 1907, the Loyal Union purchased a new twenty-one room facility at a cost of approximately $9,000. Several charitable organizations of the city contributed to the purchase and the maintenance of the old folks' home (Work, 1919). Sometimes labeled "... a set of butterflies on dress parade . . ." (DuBois, 1909), these women's records of establishing, maintaining, and supporting institutions for the aged put to rest petty criticism, and reveal important work that has been seriously underestimated.

Secret Orders and Fraternities

Secret orders and fraternities began to flourish during the pre-Civil War era. Next to Black churches, the secret societies had the longest history of any voluntary organizations. By 1880, for example, Chicago contained over 40 secret societies. Many of these groups had women's auxiliaries which doubled their constituency. These organizations which were secret in procedure yet benevolent in purpose, offered opportunities for Black men and women to manage their own affairs and to rise to leadership positions—opportunities not afforded them in the larger society (Spears, 1967). These secret societies can be divided into two classes: the old line societies which included the Masons, the Knights of Pythias and the Odd Fellows, and the benevolent societies such as the National Order of Mosaic Templars, and the True Reformers.

The secret societies were the "conservers of tradition" and the bulwarks of organized middle class life in the Black community (Drake and Cayton, 1962). They were committed to ensuring the health and welfare of their membership. These societies obligated themselves to take care of the sick, to bury the dead and provide a certain amount of money to heirs upon
the death of a member (Williams, 1905). If an organization failed to live up to its agreement, the community stopped supporting it. Those societies that succeeded and faithfully lived up to their responsibilities won the community's confidence. Individuals often belonged to several secret societies in order to reap the benefits of each (Woodson, 1929). The care of old and needy members was one of several social welfare benefits available to members.

One of the most powerful secret societies, the United Order of True Reformers was organized in Virginia in 1881. From its beginning, this order looked beyond its mere secret organizational feature and grew to become a prestigious business organization. In addition to the True Reformers Bank, and a Commercial Department with a chain of stores, the United Order of True Reformers also established the Old Folks Home at Westham, Virginia. The home accepted both the aged and orphans from various parts of the country (Woodson, 1929). Although most of the secret societies were not able to compete with the diverse activities of the True Reformers, several maintained their commitment to care for their aged and infirmed members.

The Grand Lodge of Colored Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania purchased a sixty-acre farm near Harrisburg to provide a home for aged and indigent Masons, their widows and orphans. The Grand Lodge of Colored Masons of Georgia also established Masonic Widows' and Orphans' Homes in Americus and Columbus; and the Knights and Daughters of Tabor established a Taborian Home for Aged and Indigent Members in Topeka, Kansas (Work, 1919).

The female secret orders were also active in developing social welfare institutions for the aged. The Grand United Order of Tents, organized in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1866, established an Old Folks' Home at Hampton in 1897. The home was founded to care for orphan children and disabled sisters of the Tents. The home was supported by contributions from the sisters who were not allowed to solicit aid from the public. They boasted of making no purchases on credit and prided themselves on their self-sufficiency. With a nine-member board of directors, the small Old Folks' Home at Hampton was caring for seven inmates by 1909. A tent Sisters' Old Folks' Home was also established in
Raleigh, North Carolina. This home, unlike its companion home in Hampton, was financed by both the sisters and public contributions. The inmates of the home paid no fees forcing the order to borrow $200 from a building and loan association, and to accept donations of food, furnishings, and clothing from various surrounding towns (Pollard, 1978).

Financing the Homes

Old folks' homes for the Black aged used admissions fees as well as various fund raisers to provide financial resources for the homes. In fact, the need for fund raising was the impetus for the establishment of several women's clubs. Much like their White counterparts, these women were usually college educated, in better financial condition than most Blacks, and married to prominent professionals. They used their influence in the home and the community to raise funds for the old folks' homes. In lieu of money, many gifts were provided which ranged from professional care by Black physicians to canned food and bedding.

It was not uncommon for the homes for Black aged to charge admission fees. Homes such as the Phillis Wheatley Home of Detroit charged a $200 admission fee by 1909. The Colored Aged Home Association of Irvington, New Jersey, collected a total of $400 in admission fees according to their annual report for the year ending December 31, 1908. The Chicago Home for Aged and Infirmed Colored People, according to its first annual report in 1898 charged a $100 admission fee; and the Home for the Aged and Infirmed Colored People of Philadelphia charged a $150 admission fee by 1900. Other homes such as the Tent Sisters' Old Folks' Home in North Carolina and the Home for the Aged run by the Little Sisters of the Poor were available to the indigent free of charge (Jackson, 1978; Haber, 1983; Dubois, 1909).

Some homes engaged in various small business ventures to provide added income. In 1909, the Colored Old Folks' and Orphans Home of Mobile, Alabama, for example, earned approximately $120 from the sale of pecans and pears. The literature suggests, however, that many of the homes discussed above were not financially stable. The financial condition of several
homes suggests that they were in a constant struggle to raise funds to keep their doors open. The overseers of the Colored Home Association in New Jersey, for example, stated that they were compelled to charge an admission fee to run the home but continued to have a shortage of funds. Another home described their financial condition as having gotten "on the toboggan and [gone] to the bottom," while another home reported experiencing "toils and conflicts." Several homes were willed to the city or town with stipulations that they be used to house indigent aged Blacks. In many cases, however, the property was left with no funds for maintenance and management. Homes such as these began their new role as institutions for the aged rift with funding problems. The Hannah Gray Home of New Haven, Connecticut, illustrates this practice. The home left in the hands of White trustees was to be used for aged colored females. There was no endowment with which to manage the Gray Home and no city nor state funds were forthcoming. The small sum that inmates paid for their rooms was insufficient, and tax payments in arrears threatened the home's existence until a local woman's club took management responsibilities for the institution.

Various efforts to raise funds were numerous, but their small scale resulted in limited profits for the homes. Fundraisers included an array of activities such as the 50-cent-dances sponsored by the Chicago women's clubs, rallies, fairs, chairty balls, and bazaars. Still other fund raising efforts required that individual members of the sponsoring organization tax themselves an annual fee. This was the rule of the Tent Sisters Old Folks' Home in North Carolina which required that each sister in the order give a pound of food per month and at least twenty-five cents per year to maintain the home.

In spite of financial hardships, several of these homes survived the depression years to continue to house the Black aged. The Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People in Philadelphia founded in 1864 by Blacks and Quakers continues to exist today. Renamed the Stephen Smith Home for the Aged in 1953 for the Black lumber mogul, philanthropist, and minister who endowed it, the home has since gained a national reputation and was the site for the founding of the National Caucus on Black Aged in 1971 (Pollard, 1980).
Charitable activities devoted to housing the Black aged during the Progressive Era were varied and widespread. There was, nonetheless, a consistent theme. Churches, women's clubs and secret fraternities adhered to the idea of self-help which served as a foundation and major impetus for opening these old folks' homes. Another variable of importance is that, with few exceptions, churches, secret orders and women's clubs emphasized the "worthiness" of the old person as partial criteria for admission to the home. This suggests a belief and adherence to the work ethic. Work history was a valid indicator of worth, but continued work into old age was not an accepted and expected practice, especially for women (Reiff, et al., 1983). Leaving the worthy indigent aged to the almshouse was abhorrent to the members of these organizations (Williams, 1905). They believed that the indigent aged deserved a "home" rather than life in an institution.

Philadelphia's Home for Aged and Infirmed Colored People, like many other similar institutions, was initially established for "worthy and exemplary Blacks who in their old age from sickness or infirmity became more or less dependent upon the charities of the benevolent" (Pollard, 1980). Categorizing the Black aged as "worthy" or "unworthy" may initially seem contradictory given the discriminatory nature of most White homes for the aged. It may also appear somewhat surprising since most women's clubs and secret societies identified the "uplift of the race" as one of their goals. Yet many of these homes, like their White counterparts, desired to spare mainly worthy indigent aged from the almshouses.

Old age poverty and dependence were enduring social problems during the Progressive Era. The general population of elderly did not prepare for old age. Voluntary savings plans were rare; and the idea of compulsory savings was very unpopular. In addition, the amount of savings needed to prepare adequately for old age was greater than most workers could afford (Lubove, 1968; Fischer, 1977). Blacks, motivated by the fear of almshouses and pauper burials, nonetheless, made financial familial sacrifices to join "beneficial societies." Membership in these societies
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offered some measure of psychological peace and satisfaction (Pollard, 1980). Membership in beneficial societies suggested that the indigent aged had been frugal and pious in their youth and were deserving of assistance in old age. These individuals were, therefore, categorized as “worthy.” Many homes for the Black aged such as the Philadelphia Home for Aged and Infirmed Colored People specified in their policies that those who were pensioners of any benevolent institution or society were expected to have their pensions continued to assist in their support. The second woman admitted to the Home for the Aged and Infirmed Colored People in Philadelphia arrived with “full-fledged membership” in the Morris Brown (Benevolent) Society. This not only provided support for her, but attested to her status as both “worthy” and “exemplary” since she had worked and paid her association dues in preparation for old age (Pollard, 1980). It is suspected that the term “worthy” may have been a euphemistic way to suggest that the aged person have some means of financial support such as pensions from beneficial societies since “thrift” during years of employment was a quality held in high regard.

Other homes’ policies were to accept only those residents who were referred by prominent individuals or groups. The Priscilla Brown Mercy Home of Selma, Alabama, for example, required that “. . . all persons coming to [them] be recommended by the pastor or officers of some church or officers of some society” (DuBois, 1909). These entry rules not only ensured that their inmates were of exemplary character and thus worthy, but further suggested that those organizations which recommended elderly persons felt some commitment to them which the Brown Home translated to mean “partial financial” commitment.

Few homes for the Black elderly reported any type of organized activities beyond those needed to provide spiritual fulfillment for the inmates. Several of the better endowed homes had chapels on the grounds. The New Orleans philanthropist, Thomy Lafon, donated money for the construction of a chapel at the Lafon’s Home of the Holy Family before his death. The St. James Old Folks’ Home of Louisville, Kentucky, “erected a handsome little chapel” on its grounds which comfortably seated
150 persons. Other homes such as the Carter's Old Folks' Home of Atlanta were constructed on church grounds in close proximity or adjoining the church.

There is little evidence to suggest that the inmates had any other regularly scheduled activities. Even "Canning Day" sponsored by the Women's Clubs of Illinois for the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People of Chicago did not specify that the aged inmates were involved. Instead the "Canning Day" activities appeared to be an opportunity for the club's women to travel to the home and commit a day of their time to benevolent work. The "dear old folks" were probably discouraged from exerting themselves—reflecting the club women's patronizing and sometimes missionary attitude in dealing with the poor.

The emphasis did not appear to be on activity during old age. Instead the effort was to create a peaceful, comfortable and sanitary environment "... in the truest and sweetest sense a home," or "a place where the aged may pass their last days in comfort." The inmates of the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People in Philadelphia were encouraged to enjoy the "pleasant outlook from the windows and porch of the Home... [as] the birds and flowers cheer them up" (Haber, 1983).

In many cases the aged were expected to do little work in service to benefit the homes because a commonly held belief was that the elderly in general were not expected to work at any task. Yet, as early as 1903, Homer Folks, Commissioner of Charities of New York City, recognized the importance of activity for the aged and encouraged "attractive" employment without remuneration. He believed that life for the aged and infirm dependent should not be simply a "... waiting for the end," but should naturally round out the closing years with opportunity for activity and a "measurable variety of things to interest and occupy" (Folks, 1903).

In sum, housing indigent aged Blacks during the Progressive Era was a major social welfare service and reflects a tradition of support and self-help among Blacks. The cooperation required of churches, secret societies, and women's clubs to establish, fund and maintain these institutions is important both for understanding the nature of self-help among Blacks and for identifying the specific private institutions which cared for that elderly population.
References


**Notes**

1. The “great migration,” as the exodus of over 400,000 Blacks from the rural South has been called, separated families often leaving support systems weak or nonexistent.

2. The average is taken from rates given for the years 1886, 1899, 1903, 1924 and 1928 of the *Charleston City Year Book*. The year book did not list the death rates for each year.

3. The term “inmate” was commonly used in reference to residents of old folks’ homes. While the term may be jarring to us today, the term was used throughout the Progressive Era and well into the 1930s. A few homes were careful to remove the stigma which the term inmate connoted by referring to the elderly as “residents,” “guest” or “the home family.”
The Impact of Americanization on Intergenerational Relations: An Exploratory Study on the U.S. Territory of Guam*

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In-depth interviews with a sample of 60 elderly from the indigenous (Chamorro) population and the immigrant (Filipino) population examined their current lifestyles, with emphasis upon intergenerational relations. Results underscore the dramatic lifestyle changes experienced by Guam's elderly in the wake of Americanization. Among these is an intergenerational "language gap", wherein a majority of the grandchildren do not speak the native language of their elders. Ethnicity, mixed marriage, and length of residence on Guam are discussed as possible determinants of the language gap. The language gap is associated with lower life satisfaction for elders, as well as reduced family contact and less intergenerational assistance.

During the last 40 years, the U.S. territory of Guam has undergone rapid modernization, accompanied by a deliberate attempt to "Americanize" its population. This effort was successful in producing a generation of young people who share American ideals and aspire to an American lifestyle. This pilot study examined the relationships between these young people

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and their grandparents. Findings are interpreted with reference to the impact of Americanization on Guam's families.

Prior to Americanization the care of elderly Chamorros (native Guamanians) was enmeshed in a complex set of extended family relations defined by values of cooperation, mutual assistance, and respect for the elderly. We suspect that the exposure of younger generations to new patterns of language and values has changed the structure of Chamorro families, and that this change has significant implications for the care and well-being of Guam's elderly. This study offers only historical data to show the disruptive power of the external forces of Americanization; however, four aspects of the internal dynamics of the family were explicitly addressed. These included: family cohesion, ethnicity, length of residence on Guam, and frequency of mixed marriage.

As Magdoff (1972) notes, the study of imperialism and colonialism raises serious questions "... about the political, economic and social effects of domination by imperialist powers on colonies, semicolonies and spheres of influence (p. 1). The social effects of colonialism can be both amorphous and far-reaching. When intergenerational bonds are weakened the indigenous culture of a region can be virtually eliminated.

Although not the first to colonize Guam, the United States exerted the most control over the island and so had the greatest effect upon its culture and people (Nevin, 1977). To a large extent, the neo-colonial efforts of the U.S. to control Guam and the rest of Micronesia typically came in the form of social and economic assistance. A primary means of establishing an American presence was the institution of an educational system which sought to create a base of common language and American values among the native populations.¹ This process supported U.S., efforts to secure the land necessary for Western Pacific military bases and to exert influence in a region that was, as history had shown, a crucial link in the control of military and economic activity in the Far East.

In the next section we more fully describe the efforts of the United States to establish American-style schools on the island of Guam. We also shed light on the changes in intergenerational relations which have accompanied Americanization. A language
gap between elderly Guamanians and their grandchildren typifies these changes and is explored in detail.

Guam: Cultural and Historical Background

The geo-political region known as Micronesia has undergone several periods of colonial conquest since its discovery by Spain in 1521. By the mid-1800s several European nations, including England, Germany and France, had sent traders, missionaries, and anthropologists to the island to expand the power and influence of those countries in the Pacific region. Later, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Japan and the United States would play a dominant role in attempting to exploit the strategic importance of the region and its abundant marine resources.

The colonization of Guam began when the island was discovered by Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. Guam's involvement with world affairs may be dated from its discovery and characterized by the following periods which designate Guam's political control by foreign administrations: a) Spanish: 1565–1898; b) American: 1898–1941; c) Japanese: 1941–1944; and d) American: 1944 to present (Carano and Sanchez, 1964). The government of Spain controlled Guam from 1565 until it was ceded to the United States after the Spanish-American War (1898). American possession was interrupted by the Japanese administration of Guam during World War II which extended from 1941 until the island was retaken in 1944.

This cultural and historical overview focuses upon the American, rather than Japanese or Spanish, period of Guam's history because the economic and political development of the island is largely the result of concerted efforts by American interests to utilize the island as a Pacific base for military activity. In order to understand U.S. dominance in Guam's cultural affairs it is necessary to remember that Guam has been an American territory since 1898 with, of course, the interruption of the Japanese occupation of the island from 1941 to 1944.

As a U.S. territory, Guam has been subject to the dictates of a developmental scheme planned and implemented by the U.S. Naval Administration which controlled island affairs from 1898 until the early 1960s. In January of 1899, John D. Long, Secretary
of the Navy under President McKinley, stated that "... the mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation, substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule" (Carano and Sanchez, 1964, p. 184). Later in February of that same year Lieutenant Vincendon L. Cottman wrote,

If the Government [U.S.] intends to make Guam a self-supporting island and a creditable colony it will be necessary to commence immediately and use heroic measures. The following are suggested as some of the necessary means to this end ... 6. Establish Public Schools and compel all children to go to school and teach them English, ... (Carano and Sanchez, 1964, pp. 181–182).

The American policy of rapid acculturation of the Guamanian population was to be "benevolent" and pursued aggressively through education of the children.²

While U.S. Naval administrators who were charged with the direction of Guam's people recognized the importance of education, especially instruction in English, as one important means of control over island affairs, early efforts to establish American schools on Guam met with meager results.³ Although instruction in English was available from the onset of American intervention, most Guamanians did not have access to public educational facilities until after World War II and, in the case of secondary education, until the early 1960s. The first class in English was taught in 1899 by William Edwin Safford who was also Guam's first Naval Lieutenant Governor. By 1901 there were several private schools which specialized in the instruction of English and public instruction began in the town of Agana in October 1901. The three schools were forced to close in 1902 for lack of funds and were not reopened until 1904 (Carano, 1964, pp. 15). Prior to the invasion of the Japanese in 1941 there were 32 public schools on the island. Secondary education was begun in 1917 but the island's first high school—George Washington High School—was opened in October of 1936 and graduated the first class consisting of eight students in 1940, the second class graduated in 1941 and the third class in 1945 after the Japanese occupation (Carano, 1964). As late as 1956 there was only one high school on Guam (George Washington) with an enrollment of about 2,000 students. As a result, the elderly on Guam have
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limited formal education averaging about 5.8 years in school (Kasperbauer, 1980, p. 20).

In the early 1960s the Kennedy administration stepped up U.S. efforts to bring the entire region of Micronesia, which includes Guam, under its control. Peterson (1979/1980) notes that in 1963 the Kennedy administration established a task force whose job it was to lay down a plan to “permanently” bring Micronesia under U.S. dominion. Colletta (1976), in his studies of education on the island of Pohnpei, establishes the leading role of American education in dismantling Micronesian culture and indoctrinating the Micronesian people to an American way of life. The use of educational programs fostered by the U.S. was clearly part of a planned effort to expand American influence in Guam and in the rest of Micronesia. Colletta’s (1976, p. 113) work confirms that since 1962 the United States has increased its efforts to expand American-style education in Micronesia as “... part of a systematic program of development and acculturation”.

During the centuries prior to the influx of American education Guamanians learned skills, knowledge, beliefs and language in an informal way through the extended family network. This smooth, informal transmission of culture from one generation to another was disrupted by Americanization. In addition to the teaching of English, Guamanians were indoctrinated with American ideas and accustomed to the American life style. As the push toward greater U.S. involvement in Micronesian affairs was felt in the early 1960s, students in Guam (as well as in the rest of Micronesia) began, like their counterparts in America, to see education as the key to success in the new way of life. Henny (1968) notes that the process of “credentialling” became increasingly important during this period and that the credentialling process relied heavily upon the use of standard American-designed achievement tests like the California Achievement Test (CAT). Henny (1968, p. 404) states, however, that these achievement tests were culturally-biased and, “... actually measure[d] proficiency in the English language rather than general achievement ...”.

Thus, over the past 40 years the younger generations of Guamanians have learned to compete for jobs and leadership in an
Americanized world in which English was a crucial tool for success. Within the last 20 years it has become virtually impossible for a Guamanian student to excell in school and, later, work without complete command of the English language.\(^5\)

No other generations of Guamanians have experienced this kind of pressure to put aside their language and culture and adapt to new and foreign ways. Because it is only within the last 20–40 years that English has become the language of commerce on Guam, individuals who went through adolescence prior to 1944 are generally not proficient in the English language. Those who were born and raised on Guam after World War II and especially those born since 1960 have nearly complete proficiency in English; many of these are fluent in English only and unable to communicate in the language of their elders.

Intensive efforts to Americanize the island since World War II have clearly changed the lifestyle of Guam's elderly. Within 40 years the island has developed an infrastructure which resembles that of any small town in America. These physical changes are obvious. But the social consequences of Americanization are elusive to the casual observer. This study represents an initial attempt to describe the impact of Americanization on family relations, particularly those between the elderly and young family members.

Method

In-depth interviews were conducted with 60 individuals, ranging in age from 55 to 94. Most interviews (56%) were conducted in respondents' homes and senior centers (34%).

Interviews were conducted by research assistants of Chamorro and Filipino backgrounds. The longest interview took four hours. Usually interviews were completed in two sessions, ranging in length from one to two hours. Interviews were conducted in Chamorro, or a Philippine dialect (either Tagalag, Visaya, or Ilocano), depending upon the respondent's preferred language.

Sample

The nonpurposive sample of 60 was drawn from a variety of sources: Senior Centers located in central Guam (62% of sample); Guam Memorial Hospital (12%); caseworkers serving the
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homebound elderly (16%); and volunteers from the community (10%). The sample was chosen from diverse sources to insure representation of elderly with various levels of functional impairment. Because the sample was not randomly selected, this group cannot be considered representative of the entire population of elderly on Guam. Nonetheless, this diverse group does offer insight into the lives and needs of Guam's elderly.

For the present analysis of intergenerational relations, only those of Filipino or Chamorro background who had both children and grandchildren were included. This subsample of 48 had an average age of 72. Compared to the general population, men were somewhat over-represented in this group, making up 42% of the subsample. Thirty of the subsample (62.5%) were Filipino, and 18 (37.5%) Chamorro. Within the Filipino group, the mean length of residence on Guam was 12.5 years, with a range from less than one year to 39 years. Guamanian and Filipino elderly were chosen because these groups comprise about 90% of all the elderly on Guam (Kasperbauer, 1980, p. 21).6

The experiences of Filipino elders serve to demonstrate the effects of American intervention across cultures. By considering family relations in two groups, each having distinctive cultural patterns, we are in a better position to judge the dynamic relationship between dominant (American) and subordinant (Guamanian, Filipino) social systems.

Survey Instrument

The instrument used was modeled on an exhaustive tool development by California's Multipurpose Senior Services Project (MSSP). The interview schedule was modified to be appropriate for local conditions. It included six major sections. The first assessed the strength of the person's family and social networks. The second examined significant life events and daily activities. Third, general health status was considered, as was mental status. Fourth, a series of questions designed to address functional status considered the need for and receipt of assistance with ADL (Activities of Daily Living) and IADL (Instrumental Activities of Daily Living). Fifth, the individual's health habits and life satisfaction were examined, as well as income and expenses. A final section addressed utilization of and satisfaction with the formal services available in the community.
This article presents selected findings from the first section of the instrument.

Findings and Discussion

Both qualitative and quantitative findings shed light on changing patterns of family relations. Within this group we have observed shifting patterns of intergenerational assistance and communication.

*Shifting Patterns of Intergenerational Assistance*

Direct intergenerational assistance is still more prevalent on Guam than on the U.S. mainland. Shared residence can be viewed as a form of intergenerational aid. In 1980, 24% of Guam's elderly lived with their children (Kasperbauer, 1980). Authors of a 1984 study conducted on the U.S. mainland estimated that 16% of U.S. elderly live with their children or grandchildren (Mogey, 1988). Guamanian elderly also report close relationships with slightly more relatives. In this sample 22% reported feeling close to six or more relatives. This compares to 19% in a California sample (Lubben, et al., 1987). Elders in this sample also reported a higher degree of family contact than is usually the case on the U.S. mainland. For example, among those who have children, 86% reported that they usually saw them at least once a week. This compares to 73.8% (for those 65–79) and 81.3 (for those over 80) in a recent California study (Lubbin & Becerra, 1987). By U.S. standards Guam’s elderly report a high degree of family contact. But Guam’s elderly do not hold U.S. standards of family interaction.

Members of this sample were raised with very different expectations from members of the same age cohort on the U.S. mainland. Born around 1913, they grew up prior to the post World War II expansion of American involvement on Guam. During their adolescence and young adulthood, family life on Guam was embedded in a system of reciprocal obligations. For example, Tan Maria told our interviewer of her vivid recollections of family support and assistance in times of need. She described a house which was constructed in one day by family and friends of its future occupants. She also observed that this could not happen today, “It is just not like before. Children are
all working . . . they have no time. Education is so important . . .” When she was little all she had to learn was how to write her name and read a little. Tan Maria also acknowledged the comfort of modern conveniences. She compared today’s automobiles favorably to the carabao cart which was the sole means of transportation in her youth.

Guamanians surveyed by Workman (1983) also described shifting patterns of family relations. One respondent described the situation by saying the children and grandchildren have “lost inheritance to the land” (p. 14). Another, like Tan Maria, noted that family interaction was less than it should be because adult children must work and “keep up with financial responsibilities” (p. 14). Workman also found that some families rejected the notion of filial obligation. Describing tensions and conflicts between a young couple and their kinship network, he reports that the young couple felt that “a family unit should be separated from the extended family and its influences. They felt that a family “needed to prove its own survival without help or assistance from other family members” (p. 15).

Marvin Sussman (1979) observed that in complex societies differentiation in occupational systems, as well as social security and health care programs have “eclipsed the importance of the single family modus operandi for guaranteeing the well-being of older members” (p. 232). The testamentary power accorded to the elderly once enabled them to control most family wealth by controlling the distribution of land.

On Guam, inheritance of land has lost much of its importance. Within our sample we have observed shifting occupational patterns, which reflect an increasingly complex economy. The proportion of farmers appears to have dropped considerably, from 35% of the parent generation to 8% of this sample. Evidently many sons of farmers entered the unskilled trades (laborer, domestic helper, dishwasher). The proportion involved in these occupations increased from 3% to 18% in the two generations. Increases were also seen in government work (from 3% to 12%) and skilled trades such as carpentry, masonry, weaving (from 13% to 20%). However, women in our sample were about as likely to have been housewives as their mothers were. The majority of these women (76%) listed this as their
primary occupation. The same proportion reported this was their mother’s primary occupation.

Members of the middle generation in this sample are increasingly involved in occupations which restrict their ability to provide intergenerational assistance, and diminish the importance of land inheritance. A decline in aid to the parent generation is seen in our sample. Among today’s elderly 82% reported that they had provided help to their parents. This generally involved either money, or in-kind contributions such as food and other goods. But only 10% reported that their children gave them financial or in-kind assistance. Even when we allow for a tendency to exaggerate one’s role as a provider rather than a recipient of aid, this drop is striking.

Exchanges, between Guam’s elderly and their adult children continue to exceed those normally found in the U.S. Guam’s elderly are more likely to live with their children, to feel close to younger generations, and to see their children at least once a week. But the process of Americanization, has dramatically altered the island’s economy. Subsistence farming, once a primary occupation, has been replaced by paid employment. Jobs reduce the time available to provide help to the elderly. They also reduce the importance of land inheritance, thereby diminishing the elder’s ability to provide a resource in exchange for assistance.

Shifting Patterns of Intergenerational Communication

The vast majority (83%) of respondents in this sample speak rudimentary English. The English language is, however, a second language for most, if not all of this sample. As indicated earlier, the average number of years of formal schooling for Guam’s elderly is 5.8 years. Thus, it is not surprising that our respondents chose not to use English for their interviews. English is clearly not the preferred language of most elderly on Guam (Kasperbauer, 1980).

In this sample, 65% reported that their grandchildren speak only English and are unable to communicate with the elders in their preferred language. This “language gap” is especially prevalent within the Chamorro population, where 78% of the elderly indicate that their grandchildren do not speak the native tongue. Within the Filipino community the figure is 55%.
Possible Consequences of the Language Gap

Bengtson and Robertson (1985) identify four functions widely attributed to grandparents: “being there”, “family watchdog”, “participant in the construction of family history” and “arbiter”. Inability to communicate directly and smoothly with grandchildren can interfere with three of these functions. The grandparent in this situation is certainly “being there”. That is, serving as a sort of mortality buffer by standing between death and the next generation. But the other functions are adversely affected by a language gap. The family watchdog function involves being alert and ready to provide assistance, if needed. Since communication is an important aspect of perceiving need and providing assistance, the language gap is likely to impair a grandparent’s ability to fill this function. The construction and interpretation of family history is also impaired to a limited extent by the language gap, though grandparents might use their older children as translators to participate in this process. As arbitrators, grandparents transmit values and negotiate value differences between their children and grandchildren. In this role grandparents are likely to serve as “generational allies” to the third generation. Value transmission relies heavily on shared language. It is difficult if not impossible when the grandparent speaks only rudimentary English and the grandchild does not speak the native tongue.

How does this language gap affect the older generation? This study was not primarily designed to explore this question, but, by comparing participants who do experience the language gap with those who do not, we can offer direction to future studies in this area. Results suggest that the “language gap” between generations may be associated with negative consequences for life satisfaction and emotional health of the elder. It is also associated with less intergenerational assistance.

Life satisfaction was measured using a scale developed by Wood, Wylie and Shaefer (1960). It consists of a series of 19 statements, indicating either positive or negative outlook. Response options were “agree”, “disagree”, or “undecided”, with the total score going from zero to 36 (see Lubben, 1984 for a more detailed description of this measure). Failure of grandchildren to speak the grandparent’s tongue is related to some-
what lower scores on the life satisfaction index. The mean score for those whose grandchildren do speak their language is 26.2. For those whose grandchildren do not the mean is 24.3.

Emotional health was measured using the MSSP Mental Health Index. The index consists of a list of 11 emotions. Respondents indicate how frequently they experience each (see Lubben, 1984 for a more detailed description of this measure). On the Mental Health Index, those whose grandchildren speak their language reported experiencing boredom less frequently. Twenty-two percent of those whose grandchildren speak the language experience boredom sometimes, compared to 41% of those whose grandchildren do not.

Further, those whose grandchildren speak their language report that they experience restlessness less often. Sixty-nine percent of those whose grandchildren speak the native tongue report never experiencing restlessness, compared to 48% of the other group. Those whose grandchildren do not speak their language are more likely to report that they sometimes experience restlessness.

Because of the importance of the extended family as a support system for old age in both Chamorro and Filipino cultures, we were especially interested in the consequences of the language gap on intergenerational assistance. The measure of family assistance used was a 19 point scale indicating the tasks with which the person received assistance. The tasks included: laundry, housework, transfer from bed, walking, wheelchair use, stair climbing, bathing, toileting, incontinence care, dressing, grooming, shopping, meal preparation, eating, money management, telephoning, medication management, foot care, and transportation. One point was given for each task with which an individual received family assistance, so the index ranged from zero to 19.

Thirty percent of our sample reported receiving some assistance from their grandchildren. When overall scores on our assistance index are compared, there appears to be a small difference between those whose grandchildren do and those whose grandchildren do not speak their language. The average for those in the first group is 1.0 tasks; for those in the second, .65. When assistance is treated as a dichotomous term,
reflecting not the extent of help, but whether or not it is available we find that the likelihood of receiving assistance is influenced by language for the Filipino subsample only. In this group, 18% of those whose grandchildren do not speak the language receive assistance, compared to 31% of those whose grandchildren do. Another significant difference appears when we consider maximum scores on this assistance measure. Filipinos whose grandchildren do not speak their language report receiving help with a maximum of one task. Those whose grandchildren do speak the language report receiving help with a maximum of five tasks. This difference was smaller in the Chamorro sample, where the maximums were eight and seven, respectively. Chamorros, on average receive somewhat more assistance from grandchildren (mean = 1.33 tasks) than do Filipinos (mean = .47 tasks). Thus the immigrant population receives less aid from grandchildren, and that aid is more likely to be contingent upon a shared language than is the case with the indigenous population.

A common language may be more important in receiving assistance with some tasks than it is with others. If this were the case we would expect an association between grandchildren speaking the respondent's language and the respondent receiving assistance with particular tasks. Of the 19 tasks we considered, 10 showed this association: medication management, transportation, telephoning, stair climbing, walking, footcare, grooming, toileting, bathing, and eating and feeding. In each case, grandchildren speaking the native tongue increased the assistance received. Only three of these associations approached statistical significance, however. These involved grooming, bathing and eating and feeding, all personal care tasks, involving fairly intimate contact.

Possible causes of the Language Gap

The language gap on Guam is determined by two distinct kinds of cultural processes. In the first case the family, as a network of social support for its members, seeks to maintain the basic tools for meeting needs and solving problems. One of the most fundamental of these tools is language. There must be effective communication in order for the family to meet the needs of its members. Thus, the family exerts a certain internal pres-
sure on all members to speak the same language. On the other hand, forces external to the family network, especially in societies undergoing rapid social change, disrupt the transmission of culture from one generation to the next. In the case of Guam, this disruption has entailed a conscious effort on the part of the U.S. to change the language spoken by the native population. This program was and is being carried out by teaching school-age children the English language and not providing sufficient opportunity for learning their native tongues.

Family cohesion, as measured by frequency of visits, is associated with grandchildren learning the native dialect. The elderly whose grandchildren speak their language tend to see other relatives more often. They report seeing 5.5, as opposed to 4.9 relatives in the month prior to the interview. Indeed, these elders may have more social contact in general, as they report feeling close to more people, 7.1 compared to 6.0. These data suggest not only a positive relationship between family cohesion and intergenerational communication, but also a possible association between general sociability and such rapport.

Ethnicity is clearly a strong predictor of fluency in the third generation, with Filipinos much more likely to have grandchildren who speak their language than are Chamorros. As reported earlier, only 55% of Filipinos report that their grandchildren do not speak their language, compared to 78% of Chamorros.

Length of residence on Guam may determine the extent of assimilation into the predominantly modern American culture. The average length of residence is 33 years. Those whose grandchildren do speak their language have lived on Guam an average of 7 years less (mean = 27) than those whose grandchildren do not (mean = 34 years). This supports the view that the intergenerational language gap is a result of Americanization.

It also explains to some extent the difference between Filipino and Chamorro families. Many Filipino elderly have recently immigrated to Guam. In part this migration reflects a tendency of elders to follow their children to a new place of residence. Weeks and Cuellar (1983, p. 371) offer evidence of this tendency when they state, "[i]n 1977, parents of U.S. citizens migrating from Asia outnumbered immigrant parents from any
other area of the world, with those of the Philippines leading...". Because Guam is a major port of entry for Filipino immigrants into the United States, we feel secure in our assumption that many recent older immigrants are following families who have also recently moved to Guam so that the younger generation of Filipinos remains more closely connected to the language and traditions of their own culture.

But length of residence does not explain all of the difference between Chamorro and Filipino families. The effects of Americanization can evidently be buffered by cultural characteristics. Chamorros who have been on Guam for longer than average (89% of Chamorros) are more likely than Filipinos who have been on Guam for longer than average (16% of Filipinos) to experience the intergenerational language gap. Eighty one percent of Chamorros who are long-time residents report that their grandchildren do not speak their language, compared to 40% of Filipinos who have been on Guam for a long time.

The presence of mixed marriages in the parent generation was expected to be a strong predictor of grandchildren's language. There is a dramatic difference between Filipino and Chamorro populations in the frequency of middle generation mixed marriages, with 23% of the average Chamorro's children married to someone of another ethnic group, and 8% of the average Filipino's children in mixed marriages. This suggests that the difference between the two ethnic groups might be largely attributable to different rates of mixed marriage. When the relationship between mixed marriage and grandchildren's fluency is examined, however, no significant effect emerges. This may reflect a weakness in the data, which do not enable us to identify grandchildren with their parents. (Each generation is treated as a separate entity.) Comparison of grandchildren of mixed marriage with those of unmixed marriage, might reveal a strong language effect.

Summary and Conclusions

Traditionally, the elderly of Micronesia have occupied positions of high status within their families and communities (Mason, 1982). Even in the face of rapid modernization islanders maintain that the extended family network cares for its elderly
members. To the casual Western observer it is all too easy to succumb to the pastoral, mythic quality of this view that, even today, the needs of Micronesia's elderly are being met by the family. This study identifies subtle changes which have occurred in Guam's families during the lifetimes of today's elderly. Qualitative findings reveal the elders' perception that patterns of intergenerational assistance have changed. This is consistent with Marvin Sussman's statement that a complex socio-economic system reduces the importance of intergenerational exchange, in part by reducing the value of land inheritance. Results also reveal a language gap created by the intervention of American educational policies on Guam.

This study suggests that the language gap is a significant aspect of family life for both native and Filipino residents currently living on Guam. We were able to describe some of the effects of cultural influence by studying both Chamorro and Filipino populations. In this way, we could be confident that the appearance of a language gap in both groups signaled the influence of external forces (e.g., schooling in English) rather than some internal cultural dynamic of family life which produced the language gap between elders and grandchildren. Both elderly Chamorros and Filipinos reported a language gap. To some extent we can explain the smaller number of Filipino elderly who reported a language gap by reference to the length of time they have resided on Guam.

The fact that a significant number of elderly Chamorro and Filipinos do not communicate effectively with their grandchildren does not mean that the family is completely unable to respond to the needs of the elderly. In many cases it is the children, not grandchildren, who are primarily responsible for assisting the elderly and the children of Guam's elderly are more likely to be able to communicate in the elder's native tongue. Instead, the language gap between grandparent and grandchildren is likely to deprive both younger and older generations of support and socialization. These results, while not definitive, provide a new direction for future research into the long-term effects of colonization.

As Mark Lusk (1984) points out, "The dynamics of societal development and aging are sometimes paradoxical" (p. 11). This
is certainly the case on Guam. Americanization has brought improved nutrition, sanitation, and health care, even as it threatens intergenerational assistance and communication. When the inability to communicate threatens intergenerational bonds it also undermines cultural integrity. The language gap is not only a clinical concern for social workers serving the elderly and their families, but a policy issue for educators and legislators. It must be addressed if Micronesia is to enjoy the benefits of Americanization and maintain its unique cultural heritage.

References


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Notes

1. In imposing its language on Guam the U.S. was not unlike other colonizing powers. Kramarae and Colleagues note that: "part of the colonization process is generally the imposition of the colonizer's language as the "high" language of the dominated culture" (1984, p. 18).

2. See Carano and Sanchez (1964, pp. 404–438) for a more comprehensive history of education on Guam.

3. The history of the United States' involvement in Micronesia is a fascinating area of study for those interested in military strategy, foreign dependence on U.S. aid and the political economy of the world system. For those who wish to know more about American involvement in Micronesia we recommend the following: David Nevin's (1977) *The American*
4. Colletta (1976, p. 41) views a similar situation in Pohnpei with great distaste when he states, “In short, the indigenous forces of enculturation have been challenged by the alien acculturative phenomenon of schooling. Schools have become the primary instrument of foreign dominance and control.”

5. During informal discussions about the Americanization of Guam Chamorros told us that teachers would punish students who were caught using their native languages. During school hours it was standard policy to allow students to speak only English.

6. Kasperbauer estimates that approximately 68% of his sample identified themselves as Guamanian and 21% said that they were Philippine. As of the 1980 census, Guam’s civilian population was 105,979, with 2.8% over 65 years of age.

7. In view of the exploratory character of this study, and in recognition of the impact of our relatively small sample size, results which only approach the traditional .05 level of significance are presented.

8. Shimamoto (1984, p. 14) makes exactly this error during her brief contact with geriatric nurses from Palau.

9. While we were only able to examine the elderly on one island, we suspect that, to varying degrees, a language gap exists and is growing on other Micronesian islands, currently undergoing socio-economic development.
Eastern European Refugees:
Implications for Social Work

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The project examined and analyzed the adaptation and ethnicity of Eastern European immigrants. The methodology consisted of in-depth interviews with 28 families. White ethnic groups are able to rapidly adapt to their new environment, but their ethnic heritage diminishes. Securing employment and learning the language are the two most serious problems for immigrants. A serendipitous analysis concerns the estranged relationship between the immigrants and the refugee center. Improvement of social services to immigrants is also addressed.

This paper focuses on the adaptation and ethnicity of Polish and Czechoslovakian refugees who had been living in Boise, Idaho, for two years. The subjects left their native countries because of oppressive political conditions, and blamed the communist government for the terrible economic conditions. All of the refugees said they left their countries illegally, escaping by taking vacations to other European countries. They spent six months to a year in refugee camps before obtaining permission to enter the United States. They did not have many options regarding the country or city to which they would be sent. There has been no prior immigration of Eastern European immigrants to Boise.

Methods

The author, with the cooperation of the local refugee center (Southwest Idaho Refugee Services Program), conducted 28 in-depth interviews with immigrant families. At the time of the study the refugee center's records revealed that 52 refugee families resided in Boise, Idaho. Through the records of the refugee center and the telephone directory, and by relying on the "snowball" effect, the author contacted 31 of the families. Three fam-
families refused to be interviewed. Some families had undoubtedly moved and some were without telephones; therefore, the exact number of immigrants was unknown.

The interview schedule was partially standardized by asking the subjects to respond to 25 topics which explored the subjects' institutional relations and interpersonal relationships. Most interviews occurred in the subjects' homes in the evenings or on the weekends since most of the subjects worked. The immigrants were friendly and eager to share their experiences. Frequently, the whole family participated in the interview. Interviews were tape recorded except for one-fourth of the families who insisted that the author take notes.

It was necessary to include two ethnic groups in the project because of the small number of available respondents. Thus, the study is a qualitative project which assesses how a unique group of immigrants are adapting to life in Boise, Idaho.

Theory

Extensive adaptation literature exists, mostly associated with the study of Southeast Asians (Bach, 1980; Bromly, 1987; Cohen, 1981), but some adaptation studies of Slavic peoples have been written (Weinfield, 1985). The interviews were analyzed to assess how the respondents fit the adaptation model. Figure 1 identifies the factors that assist and impede adaptation of the immigrants to Boise.

The interviews were also analyzed to evaluate the ethnic identity of the subjects. Sociologists in both the United States and Canada (Weinfield, 1985; Frideres and Goldenberg, 1982; Alba, 1985) found that ethnicity has been relegated to family reunions, holidays, and an occasional folk festival. Gans (1985) conceptualized "symbolic ethnicity" to represent the curtailment of ethnicity, which entails a limited expressive psychological attachment where only a small portion of identity is ethnically oriented.

Feagin's (1984) concept of "modernity" holds important implications for this study. He contends that European immigrants to North America no longer come from folk cultures. The white ethnics come from industrialized societies. These modern European countries are less distinctive culturally. However, a body
Refugees

Figure 1.

*Factors that assist and impede adaptation.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assist Adaptation</th>
<th>Impede Adaptation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small population</td>
<td>Working class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural similarities</td>
<td>Poor language skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Unrealistic expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of an ethnic enclave</td>
<td>Limited education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly American friends</td>
<td>Weak local economy</td>
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<td>Weak religious ties</td>
<td>Brief time in host country</td>
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<td>Low prejudice/discrimination</td>
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<td>toward immigrants</td>
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<td>Rapid assimilation of children</td>
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of research on the white ethnics in North America (Lopata, 1976; Sandberg, 1972) supports the view that ethnic identity has survived. The present research project assessed the degree of ethnicity of the Boise immigrants.

Gordon’s (1964) classic book on assimilation is still relevant. In his analysis, ethnic groups assimilate on the cultural level but retain significant aspects of the ethnicity in their informal and primary relationships. In his view, ethnic groups, in their family, friendships, and civic groups, retain a sense of their heritage. This research explores and explains how the Boise immigrants are coping with the immigrants’ experience.

**Employment and Language**

Adaptation research supports the view that the two most important factors in adaptation are employment and language (Bach, 1980; berry, 1987; Finnan, 1982; Haines, 1982). The subjects of this research believe that the most crucial variables in successful adaptation are having a good job and command of the English language.

For the most part, the subjects had found work in a variety of low-income positions. The single largest employer was a producer of computer chips. The five most successful male immigrants secured employment as computer programmers. Some of the immigrants continued their crafts such as cabinet maker and barber. The few professionals found their training to be non-
transferable and exhibited less enthusiasm about their immigrant experience than other types of workers. The women, as a group, had less education and training. Most of the women worked as homemakers or found employment in the low paying service sector of the economy. About 20% of the adults, male and female, had matriculated to vocational schools or the local university. The most popular vocational goal of the immigrant women was nursing. Ten percent of the immigrants planned to enroll in educational programs in the near future.

The majority of the immigrants expressed satisfaction with their employment status. However, one third of the subjects responded negatively about their economic situation. These immigrants had experienced more unemployment than those who responded positively, and when they worked the pay was minimum wage.

The immigrants expressed anger that so many of them had experienced serious unemployment problems. Idaho's economy had been in a long recession. Many of the immigrants reported that 200 Eastern European immigrants had left Boise because they could not find steady work. The refugee center supervisor responded that this claim was grossly exaggerated and estimated the number to be about 100.

The subjects responded that they had experienced considerable stress and insecurity associated with the world of work, including lay-offs and the frustrations of seeking employment. Almost all had received government financial assistance. They expressed displeasure with governmental bureaucracies. The fluidity of the job market and the necessity to be assertive left some with a "Kafkaesque" sense of mystery about the employment market. The need to seek out employment was not part of their previous experience. Here is how one immigrant described his work experiences,

My first job in Boise was janitor. Oh, this job last about ten months, I think. I was working these two jobs because the second job was not exactly full-time, so I was this job and this job in restaurants, too. My employer sell his business to someone else. Is new management and I think this is, temporary, therefore—I don’t like this job but it is not the kind of job which give me much money, much more to do this what I would like to do.
Nonetheless, the immigrants appeared optimistic about their economic futures. The following representative quotes indicate this optimism as well as unrealistic expectations. "Oh sure, I would like a different job. I would like a lot of money, twenty apartments and big house. I would like to be wealthy, why not? (Do you think you will be able to reach this goal?) Yeah, I think so." "Life in America is better than I expected. You really have, I believe, very strongly, that you have thousands of opportunities in American and all you need is your decision and your work, what you would like to do with yourself."

The immigrants sensed a potential for economic advancement in comparison to the economic situation in their native countries. The next quote is not atypical,

See my friend he sent me the letter, George, don't work so hard, see we have the first years when we are young and to use your life, OK go to skiing and lots of traveling and you know. You can do everything in Czechoslovakia because you don't go Friday to the job and you just tell the supervisor that you don't feel good and you leaving for three or four days for the mountains. O.K. The people here, they looking more how nice is car, how many—you have, I feel here, if I live right life, I can be really better, you know. It was like I didn't care in Czechoslovakia.

Most of the immigrants seemed highly motivated and willing to work hard to get ahead. The following quote depicts the immigrants' commitment to economic success,

I still, I must finish, I think that I—see I start my college with computers and I never work with computers in Czechoslovakia. I just go to college now and here is the big opportunity and maybe I want to finish my college with the computers. It is my dream.

Considering that the immigrants had been in Boise for only two years and that most were not skilled, it is surprising that they felt economically successful. Even those having employment problems felt optimistic about their economic future. By American standards they had a low standard of living, however they were not unhappy because they believed this was a temporary condition. Subjects expressed anxiety, with good reason, about the insecure nature of their employment. One subject summarized his work experiences in a way that is representative
of the subjects who had problems with work. "Oh, I have so many jobs, I janitor, I be painter, and now I be salesman, but I don’t know, you know, how it will last—Oh, yes, I was laid off; it hard to get job here, Boise."

The immigrants exhibited concern about their deficiencies in speaking English. They considered it their second most serious problem and believed that it burdened their employment opportunities. However, in only two cases was a translator needed to assist with the interview. Some of the immigrants had limited English vocabularies. In several interviews the adults asked their children to translate for them. The response below was common.

Because I think I had possibility to do much quicker what I did and, for example, my language can be much better than it now is and I think language just now is most important limitation for me. I think that I waste some time and I should spend this time to learn much quicker English. I feel that I can do much more and better and only I have problems because of language.

The immigrants believed their language problems hindered their overall social adjustment. They frequently remarked on how their language problems affected their social relationships. "It’s pretty good neighborhood for me because I know who I am and I can’t want to be—I do what I can do now, because my language is not good. I have to learn better language to be neighborhood part."

The immigrants stated that they had not been the victims of prejudice or discrimination. Almost all commented on how friendly the people in Boise had been, yet they felt somewhat isolated because of their language problem.

The study had a small number of subjects, nevertheless the adaptation model described earlier was supported by the analysis of the interviews. Those with a higher social class background, with full-time employment, and more years of schooling considered themselves more adjusted and they had a higher sense of well-being. Those immigrants with lower social class background, with periods of unemployment, with less education, and who were not fluent in English felt less adjusted as well as having a lower sense of well-being.
The immigrants had unrealistic expectations; they experienced a weak local economy, and were newcomers in Boise. Yet these factors appeared to have little negative impact since, as a group, the immigrants expressed moderate satisfaction with their lives and the immigrant experience. Their satisfaction might be attributed to the small number of immigrants and the fact that no established ethnic community existed. These circumstances may have facilitated adaptation.

Cultural Differences

The subjects retained a sense of cultural superiority. Most of the immigrants thought life in European cities more exciting than in the United States. The immigrants believe European cities have more cultural events that are accessible to everyone. They also disliked American architecture because they perceived it as functional and without durability. They did not approve of the reliance on automobiles for intercity travel. What they miss the most is captured in the following quote,

One thing which is perhaps not realized here, there is no street life. In big cities here is less street life. In Europe when you go for a walk there are many people there; there is a density of traffic or personal traffic, of persons that are walking around the streets and looking at the shop windows and just—you can meet many different people. There is not existing here—and here is just a, where people are coming by cars. In Boise there is no clustering of restaurants and night clubs for you to visit.

The Eastern European immigrants have doubts about the level of materialism in the United States. Many mentioned that Americans are always so busy.

Sometimes I think that Americans, they spend too much time working and they make money. They make lots of money, but they still work and they, I don’t know. Maybe it’s, you know, the level of education and they still work seven days a week. They still work and they don’t have time for anything else because they have to make money.

The immigrants thought the quality of education and television embarrassing. They commented that their children’s education far exceeded that of American children of the same age.
Many felt that cultural programming was more prevalent in European television. Two additional aspects of American society surprised the immigrants. The degree and severity of poverty in America shocked them. They thought the cost of health care exorbitant and they expressed chagrin at the inaccessibility of health care.

The similarity of advanced industrial societies is confirmed by the responses of the subjects who compared European and United States society. The immigrants did not experience culture shock. In the following quote, we have one of the more humorous accounts of adapting to life in Boise.

Now I like 'cause Boise is easier, easier, slow town. Is conservative town. I was afraid if I would go from Poland where the life for some reason is back twenty-five years, to find myself in the—another world, much far ahead, I would get lost, but in Boise I feel almost an equal to the people who live here— But Krakow and Boise, it's like some people are coming from San Francisco to Boise and they say, oh, here is twenty years behind San Francisco, so for me Krakow and Boise is almost more one level.

The findings of research on ethnicity report ethnic identity as a declining phenomenon among white ethnic immigrants (Isajiw, 1985; Elliott, 1979; Frideres, 1982; Alba, 1985). The immigrants agreed with this view of ethnicity because they recognized the insignificant role it played in their current lives. The immigrants observed minor differences in some mannerisms and social customs, such as holiday celebrations and food preparation, yet they also commented on the relative insignificance of such differences.

The immigrants had more American friends than ethnic friends despite the fact that many lived in the same apartment complex and worked for the same company. Most stated that they did not want friends from their native countries. Lopata's (1976) research on Polish immigrants explains this phenomenon. In her work, she developed the term "status competition" to explain the character trait wherein an intense rivalry develops among individuals of Slavic descent. The resulting animosity prevents social cohesion as illustrated in two representative quotes. "A lot of Czech people here are envious. I have a better
life than they do. So there is not a lot of close contact between us.” “Yeah, we have some, not many because is like everywhere, some people are jealous or there—if I’ve got better job they asking why I have better. They have not the same. This still happen here in America.”

Political Views

The immigrants adamantly expressed their opposition to communism. The immigrants remarked that the researcher, as an American, could not appreciate the extent of the control over their lives. Many stated that life in their countries resembled life in a prison. One immigrant described the political situation in his country: “The communist party is absolutely controlling the country. Is trying to control almost everything. Almost every piece of your life.”

The Eastern Europe immigrants resented the communist control of their economies. They commented that the absence of basic necessities frustrated the people of their homelands. They felt cheated because only members of the communist party could improve their economic position. The following quote is indicative of the immigrants’ views: “But you must be communist if you want to make money, if you want take some good job, you must be communist.” The immigrants expressed a deep appreciation for the political freedoms that exist in America. “It’s hard to explain feeling and you have to live there. I have quite different feeling here, since I came over—I think I am different person. I feel really more free.” The immigrants frequently remarked on how much they appreciated the democratic system. One subject put it this way: “Perfect system. And I think this American system is, of course, not perfect, but is best from this what just nowhere in the world, but I think this is really best system of democracy in the world.” The refugees initiated more conversation around the political differences between their countries and the United States than any other topic.

Refugee Assistance

The community agency with primary responsibility to aid the immigrants in Boise, Idaho, is the Southwest Idaho Refugee Center. The majority of the immigrants had a negative view of
the refugee center. They believed the agency provided inadequate assistance and they questioned the level of training of the staff. Many of the immigrants criticized the employment assistance of the refugee center. Some of the subjects had to find their own jobs. Most of the immigrants believed that the refugee center would only place them in menial jobs. Some observed that the refugee center's staff did not appreciate their backgrounds and problems. The following quote is one example of their frustrations.

The refugee center, they are working with a lot of refugees, they don't have any idea where we are from. They didn't know anything about our culture, like that. They are very surprised that people have some good, how explain that, like we are from central Europe and a lot of us have very good education. Of course, is different situation and you can't imagine how you would feel if with your education somebody will make you situation that you have to leave U.S. You will feel not like part of—your education will be like zero, like junior high school and they will ask you maybe you will be dishwasher or some, you know, like that.

Three fourths of the Eastern European immigrants expressed dissatisfaction with the language training provided by the refugee center. Many thought the training too elementary and lacking in advanced classes. Some commented that classes were not offered at convenient times. Many immigrants thought the entire language program should be modified. The following quotes are representative of the immigrants's sentiments: "The language training was a disappointment because it was only few hours a day. It's not enough." "One would think what I really expect was really good language school, because if I America, I expect to get good English school, but it was not here."

The immigrants complained that no one on the staff spoke their language. The following quote best illustrates the subjects' view on this issue,

There was many of Polish people here, so one person supposed to talk Polish, I think. I mean from refugee center, one person supposed to talk Polish because of nobody from immigrants can speak English, so it was impossible to communicate.
The staff of the refugee center was interviewed to obtain their views about the immigrants' complaints. Every person on the staff rejected the validity of the criticisms of the immigrants. The supervisor said the center had an excellent record in securing employment for the immigrants. The staff defended their program and felt they provided adequate services. They felt disappointed because they considered themselves hardworking and dedicated to assisting their clients. They reacted with surprise when informed about the large numbers of immigrants dissatisfied with their programs. The staff recognized unique problems in working with Polish and Czech refugees and attributed a number of the problems to cultural misunderstandings. The staff felt that the Eastern European immigrants had a "poor attitude." The staff believed that the immigrants did not understand the employment market. They felt that the refugees did not understand that they had to be willing to start with low paying jobs and work their way up to higher positions. The staff believed that the subjects did not appreciate how hard it is to find jobs. The staff stated that the refugees thought that everyone in America was rich. They observed that no group of clients was as hard to work with as Czechs and Poles. They felt these refugees complained all the time.

The staff explained that Eastern European refugees distrusted them because they came from communist countries where government workers received kickbacks for placing workers in jobs. The staff thought such experiences made the immigrants cynical about the services of the refugee center.

The staff responded to the criticisms about the language program with surprise and chagrin. They stated that the language program provided a great variety of classes to meet the needs of clients at any stage of language development. The staff reported that the Eastern Europeans had low attendance at the language classes. The refugee center's staff believed their program merited high evaluation marks. They did not dismiss the criticisms; rather, they were concerned with how these attitudes had developed.

A number of the immigrants' comments indicated that they held some unrealistic expectations about social services in Idaho.
Idaho is a poor and conservative state that consistently underfunds its government programs. It appears that the immigrants, as a group, may be unable to separate how governmental agencies function in the native countries from that in the United States.

Discussion

The data indicate that an isolated group of Eastern Europeans are experiencing a rather smooth transition to life in America. In a very short period of time they say that, for the most part, they feel adjusted. The subjects state that they feel happy and that they like Boise. When asked if they had it to do over again, would they still leave their country and come to Boise?, all but two said, yes, they would. The immigrants think the Boise community has accepted them. Though the immigrants feel a sense of job insecurity and language deficiency, they perceive these problems to be temporary. They expressed optimism about their futures. The subjects recognize that their ethnicity does not play a significant role in their new lives.

When examining the factors which assist and impede adaptation we find a complex pattern. The subjects of this research have characteristics that should assist adaptation and characteristics that should impede adaptation. The current research reveals that when only a small number of immigrants settle in an area without an established ethnic community, the immigrants appear to adapt rapidly regardless of features that generally would impede adaptation.

However, there appears to be some anxiety associated with the subjects' immigrant experience. For example, inconsistencies exist between their attitudes and behaviors. The immigrants expressed strong support for American democracy, without knowledge, understanding or interest in the everyday functioning of the American political system. Despite the immigrants' sensitivity about their language deficiencies, not one was involved in a language program. The immigrants felt pleased with their children's rapid adjustment, but simultaneously disturbed because their children preferred to speak English. The immigrants' favorite topic of conversation was their intense anticommunism.
Assimilation is a long-term process, yet the subjects have rapidly adapted so that one might predict a progressive integration of these immigrants into the Boise community. The effectiveness of the refugee center in assisting in this assimilation was severely hampered, because none of the staff had majored in social work or any related field. One must surely question the judgment of the entrepreneurial-grant writer who arranged for so many immigrants to settle in Boise in light of the limited employment opportunities. One must also question why the staff of the refugee center appeared so unaware of the immigrants' dissatisfaction with their services. The recent social work literature (Bromley, 1987; Brown, 1982; Goldstein, 1986; Humm-Delgado, 1986; Ryan, 1985; Timberlake, 1984; SewellCoker, 1986) recognizes the special problems in reaching clients from different cultures. Several recommendations are offered: (a) establish an inservice training program that addresses problems in working with clients from different cultures; (b) hire staff who speak the language of the immigrants; (c) establish an outreach program to reestablish meaningful contact with a reluctant clientele; (d) establish a client advisory board that would facilitate both the staff and clients gaining a better appreciation of each other.

References


Counseling Troubled Adolescents: An Evaluation of a Statewide Training Program

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This article describes the methods and results of a training evaluation project that assessed behavioral change following training. Child welfare workers were trained in counseling methods for working with adolescents who behave in ways that challenge conventional therapeutic techniques. As part of the training, participants developed action plans, which were lists of behaviors they wanted to implement in their counseling. Training participants were interviewed by telephone two months after the training. Results indicated that a number of action items were successfully implemented and that workers found the action process to be helpful in this regard. Results also indicate that success could have been enhanced if certain supports had been included in the training or in a follow-up session.

Acting out adolescents are possibly the most difficult clientele served by child welfare and mental health staff. Many of the
foster care placements nationally are resulting from parent-adolescent conflict, chronic truancy, and other status offenses. About 10% of the clients seen at community health centers are youths between the ages of 10 and 14 whose presenting problems often take the form of behavior disorders such as truancy, substance abuse, or delinquency. Twice as many boys as girls are seen (Rothman & Kay, 1977, p. 14). Typically, these adolescents are threatened by therapy and are involuntary referrals. They confront the caseworker with anger, silence, or defiant indifference; and relationship building techniques used typically may fail miserably.

Techniques especially suited for working with resistant clients have been developed in the field of communications therapy (see for example, Jackson, 1963; Erickson, 1964; and Haley, 1963). Even though these techniques are not new, they are often missing from the educational programs of social workers. Inservice training is therefore necessary; indeed, a recent survey of departments of social services found that training in methods of working with adolescents constituted one of the most pressing training needs (Hartman, Jackson & Tomlin, 1981, pp. 32–38).

Because training funds are so scarce given recent federal, state and local funding cuts, administrators are especially concerned that staff training provide job-related knowledge and skills. Increasingly, the effectiveness of training must be proven in order to fulfill the demand for fiscal accountability. Following a brief overview of various training evaluation methods, this article describes the application of the Participant Action Planning Approach (PAPA) to evaluate the impact of statewide training on casework skills for working with troubled adolescents and their families.

Training Evaluation Methods

Training evaluation methods tend to focus on either the process of training or the outcome. Valuable information is gained from both types of evaluation. Process evaluations enable administrators to determine whether the training content was appropriate, and whether the presentation and facilities were conducive to learning. Process evaluation may focus on assessing any or all of the following: (a) learning objectives,
Training Program

(b) curriculum characteristics, (c) trainer characteristics, (d) instructional methods, and, (e) environmental characteristics of the training setting (Zober, 1980).

Outcome evaluations are becoming essential as budget restrictions increase. They provide data for documenting the value of training. There are several kinds of outcome evaluation designs, including those which test behavior change across time (Weiss, 1978; Benjamin, 1982; Smith & Schinke, 1985; Reid & Beard, 1980), behavioral differences between groups (Kirkpatrick, 1975), attitude change (Pecora, Delewski, Booth, Haapala, & Kinney, 1985), and competency development (Moore, 1984).

Most outcome evaluation methods measure training outcomes during or immediately following training. Although helpful, these evaluations often fail to measure on-the-job applications of learning. In many cases, the skills that trainees learn during training are necessarily general and have broad application. To be highly effective the skills must be tailored to the practice requirements of the job over time. Research has shown that to accomplish this transfer of learning to the workplace is extremely difficult. If training has been effective in producing learning, the critical issue becomes motivating trainees to work towards successful implementation of new skills (Mosel, 1957; Morton & Kurtz, 1984).

The Participant Action Plan Approach to Training Evaluation

The Participant Action Plan Approach (PAPA) has been shown to be an effective method for motivating and evaluating long-term application of learning (United States Office of Personnel Management, 1980; Salinger, 1979). The PAPA method involves trainees in the development of individualized “action plans” at the conclusion of training. Action plans are lists of behavior or skills which trainees plan to implement when they return to their jobs. The action plans motivate trainees to plan and implement on-the-job changes. Mail or telephone follow-up evaluations of the implementation action plan assess the extent and types of behavioral changes which actually took place following training.

The process of action planning and follow-up enables trainees to determine: (a) What job related changes were planned and
which items were actually implemented following training? (b) How on-the-job changes were related to the goals and objectives of the training? (c) What may have interfered with participant application of training content?

Since successful transfer of learning begins even before training ends, action plans are useful tools in prompting and motivating changes in work behavior. The process of developing the plan during training increases commitment and motivation to make on-the-job changes (Zober, Seipel, & Skinner, 1982), while the process of setting specific goals increases the likelihood of task completion (Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981). In addition, those changes that participants generate for themselves are more likely to be implemented than those imposed externally (McLagan, 1978).

Along with motivating change, action plans encourage workers to implement changes. Action planning encourages participants to think through how the training will be relevant to their jobs and to select the most applicable and useful goals. Participants gain a better understanding of the course content and its possible applications to their own work setting through the development of action plans. Most importantly, participants who have developed action plans leave the training with clear ideas of types of problems they may encounter in applying the training and possible methods to overcome those problems. They are better able to prepare for, and overcome, barriers to on-the-job changes. Finally, knowing that a follow-up evaluation will take place, on-the-job changes are encouraged (Salinger, 1979).

Supervisors and administrators find that the PAPA method helps document on-the-job changes by providing qualitative evidence for transfer of learning from classroom to workplace. Action plan approaches have been utilized to evaluate child protective services training, (Delewski, Pecora, Smith & Smith, 1986), supervisory training, (Austin & Pecora, 1985), and social services staff training (Mueller, 1985; Zober, Seipel & Skinner, 1982). Many of these applications have used a mailed questionnaire to gather the follow-up data. The method and results of an evaluation using phone interviews with 21 training participants are reported below.
Method

Training Format and Content

The PAPA evaluation method was applied to two separate workshops involving state child welfare workers. The training format employed for the workshops used role-playing techniques and small group interaction to develop clinical practice skills. Communication and systems theories and related techniques were presented as tools to understand and productively engage resistant clients in individual and family counseling sessions. The goal of the training was to help workers develop specific plans for interviewing and treating adolescent clients in their current caseloads.

The workshops provided 12 hours of training in two days. Working with adolescents who are withdrawn, disinterested, or oppositional was emphasized. Each workshop began with a presentation of the principles of communication theory (e.g., Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). Counseling techniques were demonstrated through roleplays, and trainees were subsequently paired to practice the techniques. The techniques included reframing, the use of statements and stories as alternatives to asking questions, and the use of nonverbal communication.

Part of the workshop was devoted to family therapy techniques. Systems theory was introduced as a way to understand family dynamics. Related techniques, such as circular questioning, were again demonstrated through roleplaying and practiced in small groups. Throughout the workshops, trainees were encouraged to ask questions and provide case examples so that the trainer could demonstrate the applications to actual cases.

Development of Action Plans

The action plan process and its objectives were described to participants at the beginning of training. They were informed that a follow-up telephone interview would take place approximately two months after the completion of training. Participants were given a written set of guidelines for developing action plan goals. Time was set aside during the workshops for participants to jot down ideas for action plan items. At the conclusion of the workshop, each participant prepared his or her written plan.
Participants turned in one copy of the action plan and kept one copy for themselves. Participants were encouraged to share their plans with their supervisors. Supervisors were informed that their staff would return from the workshop with action plans and that there would be a follow-up evaluation.

**Follow Up Procedures**

Fifty-four child welfare workers attended the workshops and 21 participated in the action plan evaluation process. Thirty-three did not participate because of partial attendance, staff turnover, or shifts in job responsibilities. Of the 19 participants who were educated in social work, one had a doctorate, 11 had a master's degree, and 7 had a baccalaureate degree. Two participants had master's degrees in education. The group represented various agencies and work responsibilities including state child protective services and foster care workers, juvenile corrections staff, and group home workers. Three administrators and supervisors also attended the workshop. Both rural and urban work sites were represented.

Prior to the follow-up interview, two reminder letters were sent to the trainees. A letter was sent to all participants one week following training, thanking them for their participation and reminding them of the follow-up in two months. Another letter was sent approximately six weeks later, stating that they would be contacted within a week or two to schedule follow-up interviews. This letter also reviewed the purpose of the follow-up, and the rights of participants, including voluntary participation and confidential recording of their responses.

Telephone interviews averaging 20 minutes in length were conducted by two social work graduate students. A standardized format was followed which included forced-choice and open-ended questions in the following areas: (a) the extent to which the plan was completed, (b) impact (positive or negative) of implementing the goal, (c) obstacles encountered, (d) methods used to overcome obstacles, (e) other on-the-job changes since the training and, (f) other comments about the training.

Most participants developed between one and three action items and these participants were interviewed regarding all of their action items. Those who developed more than three action
items were interviewed on three randomly selected action items in order to maintain comparability and to ensure that the interview was kept to a reasonable length.

The data were grouped in various ways to analyze the interview responses. First, because some participants developed plans made up of several action items, each action item was treated individually. Second, some action items were not attempted as planned, or were not completed to a sufficient extent to enable responses to all of the interview questions. Two response categories were created for these data, one for action items that had been at least partially completed and one for items that had not been completed to any significant extent. The interview results are reported for each completion category.

Results

Types of Action Plan Items

Each participant developed between one and six action items. A total of 50 action items were developed, and these items were summarized in five categories (see Table 1). Most participants (19, 90%) chose to work on clinical skills application; however, seven workers (33%) planned to share workshop skills with coworkers and to continue personal development of knowledge or skills in relation to various training topics.

Goal Completion

During the follow-up interviews, participants reported the degree to which they had accomplished each of their goals. Of the 50 action items, 78% (39) were reported to be at least partially complete.

There did not appear to be differences in the types of goals which were completed versus those not completed. However, differences in goal completion rates were noted between the two workshop sites. This could have been caused, in part, by the nature of the training site. The more comfortable training site had higher process evaluation ratings and higher rates of goal accomplishment (39% accomplished "most" or "all" of their action items) compared to the second training site which was crowded and unable to be rearranged for easy group interaction. The success rate for its participants was 18%. 
Table 1

*Action Items and Behaviors Implemented by Participants and Their Outcomes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item Categories</th>
<th>Number of Participants Attempting to Implement Item</th>
<th>Total Number of Action Items by Category</th>
<th>Number of Specific Behaviors and Their Degree of Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Utilize reframing</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Share Concepts with co-workers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Utilize neurolinguistic programming methods</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Utilize communications theory and methods (other than reframing)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Continue personal exploration of workshop topics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total is larger than participant group size because many workers included more than one action item in their plans.*
Description of Action Items That Were Completed

Nineteen of the participants (90%) completed at least part of their action plans, involving a total of 39 action items. Workers were asked to indicate whether working on an action item produced benefits in certain areas of overall job performance. These performance areas and the number of action items that were linked to these improvements are: (a) overall job effectiveness (90%, n = 35), (b) working with certain clients (92%, n = 36), (c) managing job/workload related stress (79%, n = 31), and (d) working with community resources (38%, n = 15).

Participants spontaneously reported additional positive effects as a result of working on the action items. Improvements in direct practice skills were noted in the areas of improving relationship building by lowering resistance (n = 5), and using humor (n = 1). Improvements were also reported by 11 participants in the area of more personal casework skills. These action items included stress management (3), increased flexibility and/or increased options in casework (6), improved confidence (6) and fewer inhibitions in interviewing adolescents (3). No training participant reported negative consequences as a result of implementing any action items.

Obstacles to Goal Accomplishment

The participants who completed at least some part of their action plans identified obstacles that had interfered with the full completion of their goals. Limited practice with the techniques (17 or 89% of the respondents) and a shortage of time to implement the plans (12, 63%) were the most frequently reported obstacles. Suggestions were made to extend the scope of the training to include follow up supervision to help trainees integrate what had been learned.

While the strength of this evaluation method lies in its ability to motivate and facilitate efforts to apply learning on the job, a few trainees (7, 37%) reported having difficulty implementing their action plans because of personal obstacles such as forgetting the plan, inadequate organization, low motivation, and difficulty breaking old habit patterns.
Description of Action Items That Were Not Implemented

Eleven action items (22%) were not implemented at all. This involved seven participants, and of these, three stated that they needed more help from others. Two stated that they needed more time in order to complete their plans. Three participants stated that they needed more skills, and five trainees required more practice. Three of these participants felt that the workshops could be improved by additional skill demonstration, possibly through use of videotapes and more role playing. Despite the obstacles, most of these respondents were still interested in working on their goals.

Similar to participants who completed their action items, five out of these seven participants encountered personal obstacles such as forgetting to work on the plan, procrastination, or not acting upon their plan out of fear of failure.

Discussion

Study Limitations

A major limitation of the PAPA method is its total reliance on trainee self-report measures. While supervisory reports are valuable supplements, they cannot supply data on all types of action items and they do not wholly substitute for more rigorous pre-post tests or performance evaluations.

Another study limitation has to do with the timing of the follow-up interview. For some participants, the interview may have taken place too early or too late to detect changes. It is also possible that participants revert to old work patterns after an initial period of change. The follow-up procedure, as currently constructed, is unable to monitor these particular shifts.

Finally, the nature of the goals themselves may be a limiting factor. In spite of the guidelines provided, some participants developed more behaviorally specific goals than others. Some action items were also more complicated than others, or involved more steps to complete. Some goals were written to include a specific task, while others dealt with being “more aware” of a topic or skill. These variations were not calculated separately in the follow-up evaluation, yet they may have had an impact on the extent and results of implementation.
Strengths of The Participant Action Plan Process

Fourteen (66%) of the PAPA participants, including those who did and did not complete their action plans, felt that the action plan process was helpful to them in two significant ways: the ability to focus on and attempt positive applications of training material to their work (8, 57%), and the ability to apply skills (6, 43%). These responses highlight the ability of the PAPA evaluation method to facilitate the transfer of learning to the workplace by specifying the behaviors to be performed and by encouraging workers to attempt new practice behaviors or achieve new practice goals.

Recommendations for Using the PAPA method

Based on the experiences of the adult services training and other applications of the PAPA method, the following practice suggestions are recommended.

Use a phone interview follow-up method. Many training evaluation projects utilize questionnaires as the follow-up tool. It has been suggested that telephone follow-up yields higher participation rates (Austin & Pecora, 1985). Many adolescent therapists are burdened by paperwork requirements and are reluctant to complete surveys, however short they may be. Personal phone interviews yield higher response rates and are often viewed as a helpful follow-up and break from the routine.

Allow sufficient time for action plan development. The PAPA method can be seriously compromised if there is inadequate time during the workshop to develop action items. It is important for participants to think through how they will apply the training and to consider ahead of time obstacles which may prevent implementation. In sharing action items at the end of training, some participants gain new ideas for on-the-job applications which they had not thought of previously.

Allow sufficient time for practice of skills. The PAPA method encourages trainees to apply new skills on-the-job. Unless adequate time has been included in the training to plan and prepare for future work applications, participants may become frustrated in their attempts to implement their action plans. By emphasizing in training the practice of skills, the strength of the
PAPA method to facilitate the transfer of learning, would be enhanced.

*Use reminder letters.* Follow-up methods utilizing “reminder” letters appear to produce high response rates. Some participants felt that sending another copy of their action plan along with the second letter would have been helpful, too.

*Promote supervisory involvement.* Even though participants were encouraged to share their plans with supervisors and supervisors were notified of the action plan process, sharing did not occur as often as expected. Some participants reported that their pain seemed too “personal” or that they didn’t want to take up more of their supervisor’s time. If trainers want to strengthen supervisory involvement and support, then strategies for promoting more effective linkages will need to be explored.

*Provide follow-up supervision.* Some participants reported that as they implemented their action plans, questions arose as to how to “fine-tune” the application of skills learned during training. They believed that they could have been even more successful if follow-up supervision had been provided, possibly through short review meetings or phone consultation with the trainer. Another possibility that would have the added benefit of promoting supervisory involvement, would be to train supervisors in the skills so that they could monitor and assist the participants as they implemented their action plan.

*Extend the evaluation period.* On-the-job implementation of training skills is a complex task. It demands planning, testing, and refinement of work behavior over an extended period of time. The PAPA evaluation method may be able to show greater overall behavioral change and provide insight into the process of behavioral change by incorporating follow-up evaluations at various times following training. It may be more effective to use two or four-month follow-up contacts, depending on the nature of the training.

**Conclusion**

The Participant Action Plan Approach has been useful in enabling caseworkers to focus on positive applications of the training material to their work with adolescent clients and in prompting and reinforcing on-the-job changes. It has also been
useful in providing on-going feedback on the relevancy of communications theory to the realities of clinical work with adolescents, and in actively involving participants in the evaluation process. When used as an integral component of evaluation procedures, participant action planning is an effective approach for motivating and measuring change. Its simplicity, wide applicability, and flexibility make it a good choice for social service administrators and trainers seeking new approaches to evaluating the impact of training.

References


Race Differences in Seeking Help from Social Workers

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ROBERT J. TAYLOR

Michigan State University
Department of Sociology

This paper examines race differences in the use of social workers. A major finding is that blacks are more likely to consult social workers than are whites. Socio-demographic variables did not affect this pattern, nor did the type of problem. Implications for the training of social workers are discussed.

A developing area of research concerns the various social processes that impact on the mental health of black Americans. One focus of this research has been to describe the distribution of psychological distress within the black population (Neighbors, 1986). Research has shown that one of the most important influences on the distribution of psychopathology is how one copes with stress (Neighbors, Jackson, Bowman, and Gurin, 1983). This research has also shown that seeking outside assistance, especially the use of informal network members and health care professionals, is an important coping response used by a significant number of black adults (Broman, 1987).

In addition to studying factors related to the decision to seek help, this research has focused upon the practical policy issue of access to specific professional help sources, particularly the use of the specialty mental health sector and the use of the general medical care sector by people with mental health problems (Neighbors and Jackson, 1984). In a recent analysis comparing the National Survey of Black Americans data with another national dataset, The Survey of Modern Living, Broman (1987) found that blacks were more likely than whites to use mental health services. Such findings are important and provocative because they contradict the widespread notion that blacks are
underserved with respect to mental health services. Such find-
ings also suggest that the issue of race differences in help- seek-
ing behavior is more complex than previously thought. Thus, we can no longer afford to rely upon the simple, general state-
ments so easily made in the past.

It appears then, that despite research focusing on race and help-seeking, the issue is still unclear. This lack of clarity can be traced to limitations in studies focusing on race differences in the use of help. The limitations of these studies are conceptual as well as methodological. The conceptual confusion stems from different definitions of the term "utilization" in utilization re-
search. Many studies define utilization research as the study of help-seeking decisions that take place before making contact with a professional helper, for example, pathways into treatment (Horwitz, 1977). Other studies define utilization as the study of what happens to the client or patient after entering a health or mental care facility (Mollica, Blum, and Redlich, 1980). Both types of studies offer valuable information about the utilization experiences of persons in distress, but the findings generated by each must be kept separate when attempting to summarize what is know about the level at which blacks use professional services relative to whites.

These studies also have key methodological limitations. First, small numbers of black respondents are sampled, thus increas-
ing the unreliability of estimates. Second, many studies fail to study the influence of important variables known to be associ-
ated with race (e.g., class) and help-seeking behavior (e.g., stress, health status). Third, there is a general lack of attention paid to selection into specific types of professional facilities.

More importantly for this paper, however, is the fact that the vast majority of all types of utilization research ignores the im-
portance of race on the use of social service agencies in general, and social workers in particular. Regier, Goldberg, and Taube (1978) documented the fact that most people with mental health prob-
lems utilize general medical care services as opposed to the special-
ity mental health care sector. The Regier et al. (1978) article led to a number of studies describing the magnitude of this phenomenon (Horgan, 1985). What has been neglected by re-
searchers, however, is Regier et al.'s statement that data are not available to estimate the number of people with mental health problems who use family service agencies or social welfare organizations.

Most help-seeking studies focus on the use of physicians, hospitals, or mental health services (Fabrega and Roberts, 1972). Rarely are social service agencies or social workers singled out as the topic of investigation. This is a serious oversight, especially when one considers that in comparison to Psychiatry, Psychology and Nursing, social workers provide a significant amount of mental health treatment (Knesper, Pagnucco and Wheeler, 1985). This is even more true for the poor and for blacks (Knesper, Pagnucca, and Wheeler, 1985).

An analysis of the National Survey of Black Americans (Neighbors and Taylor, 1958), demonstrated that social workers and social service agencies play an important role in delivering mental health services to blacks. Fourteen percent of black respondents with a serious personal problem utilized a social service agency; and, the poor and those with economic problems were particularly prone to contact social service agencies for help, and many saw a social worker. Although that analysis represented an important step in clarifying the role of social work in the mental health of blacks, it did not specifically measure whether or not a social worker was seen by the person seeking help. Furthermore, we know that social workers are employed in a variety of health care and help settings, not just social service agencies (Knesper et al., 1985). In order to expand upon our previous work, and to ensure comparability across two national datasets, the present analysis uses a dependent variable that measures the use of social workers specifically, regardless of the setting in which they are employed.

In summary, it is the purpose of this paper to explore race differences in the use of social workers in response to a serious personal problem. Two national datasets (The National Survey of Black Americans and The Survey of Modern Living) are used. In addition to employing race as a predictor of the decision to contact a social worker, the analysis includes measures of the severity and the type of problem for which help was sought.
Method

Sample

The data used in this study are from the National Survey of Black Americans, (NSBA) and the Americans View Their Mental Health restudy (AVTMH). The NSBA is the first, nationally representative, cross-section sample of the adult black population. The survey was conducted at the University of Michigan in 1979–80. The sampling and interviewing procedures resulted in 2,107 completed interviews, which represented a response rate of nearly 70%. More detailed information on this sample may be obtained from Neighbors and Taylor (1985). The AVTMH data were collected at the University of Michigan in 1976, and are based on an area probability sample of the general population of individuals living in private households. The final N is 2,264, representing a response rate of approximately 72%. More detailed information on this sample may be obtained from Veroff, Kulka and Douvan (1981).

Instrument

The section of both the NSBA and AVTMH questionnaires designed to study help-seeking issues were organized around the concept of a stressful episode. Respondents were asked if they had ever experienced a problem which caused them considerable distress. Measures of psychological distress, coping, and the utilization of informal and professional help resources were assessed for all respondents who had a crisis experience (NSBA N=1,322; AVTMH N=1,968). A smaller proportion of each sample sought professional help, and the present analysis focuses on these respondents. The data are analyzed by race, and the samples are: AVTMH whites, n=767; AVTMH blacks, n=98; and NSBA blacks, n=631.

Measures

In both studies, professional help-seeking was measured from a question which asked respondents if they talked over the crisis with anyone. Respondents were given a list of professional help sources, and instructed to indicate if they talked to any of them. In both the NSBA and AVTMH studies, respondents mentioned
use of a social worker. The socio-demographic measures used in this analysis are age, sex, education, and family income. Age and education were measured in years, and income was measured with an ordinal variable which grouped income into $1,000 increments until $10,000. Higher incomes were grouped into larger categories.

Problem type was assessed from a question which asked black respondents: “Thinking about the last time you felt this way (had a serious personal problem), what was the problem about?” For whites, the question was: “Now think about the last time you felt that way (bad from a serious personal problem). What was it about?” Identical coding schemes were used for responses to these open-ended questions. For analysis purposes, these responses were collapsed into five categories: (a) physical health or injury problems; (b) interpersonal problems (relationship problems with spouse, children or close friends); (c) death of a significant other; (d) economic problems; and (e) emotional adjustment problems (references to self-doubt, mood disturbances, and phobias). Table 1 presents the descriptive characteristics of both study samples.

Analysis Strategy

The data used here are analyzed in two ways. First, the percentage seeking social worker help is computed for each racial group. These percentages are tested for race differences by a difference in proportions test (Blalock, 1972). This test assumes that there are two independent random samples drawn from a population with normal mean and variance. When N is large (greater than 50), the normality assumption can be relaxed. These data are also analyzed using more powerful multiple logistic regression procedures. In these procedures, the dependent variable is the expected log-odds of seeking help; otherwise the form of this equation is similar to an ordinary multiple regression equation.

The coefficients in all logistic equations are transformed so that the results can be stated in terms of odds. This is accomplished by taking the antilog of each coefficient. The transformed dependent variable becomes the expected odds of seeking help. This antilog transformation of the logit model becomes what is
Table 1

**Descriptive Characteristics (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AVTMH Whites</th>
<th>AVTMH Blacks</th>
<th>NSBA Blacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–44</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–64</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
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<td>631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0–8 years</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–11 years</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>28.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 or more years</td>
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<td>20.4</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000–14,999</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>$15,000–19,999</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>$20,000–24,999</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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<td>$25,000 or more</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>98</td>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Problem Type</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>13.3</td>
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<td>Interpersonal</td>
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<td>Death</td>
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<td>Emotional</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

known as a multiplicative logistic regression model (Swafford, 1980). The directionality of the coefficients is indicated by their departure from unity. Coefficients of greater than one indicate
that the variable increases the odds of seeking help, while coefficients of less than one indicate that the variable decreases the odds of using professional help. The statistical significance of coefficients is tested using a statistic which approximates the Z-distribution for large samples.

Race differences in seeking help are explored in two ways. First, using the AVTMH dataset, a logistic regression equation with interaction terms for race with other predictors is examined. For ease of presentation, however, separate within-race equations are presented. Second, race differences in the use of social workers are assessed using two datasets, the AVTMH whites and the NSBA blacks. Because these two datasets were collected using a different sampling frame, a different statistical comparison procedure is called for. The procedure used is commonly known as meta-analysis. This technique provides a more statistically rigorous approach to comparing effects of individual predictors across independent datasets than is offered by simply depending upon the knowledge that effects across samples are either all significant or all not significant (Rosenthal, 1978). The technique used compares Z-statistics for individual predictors. These are compared using the equation:

\[
\frac{(Z_1 - Z_2)}{(2)^{1/2}}
\]

This ratio is distributed as t, and statistical significance is indicated at \( p < .05 \) if it is greater than 1.65 (one tailed test, \( df > 120 \)). If it is greater than this value, then the conclusion that the effect of the predictor differs across race-specific equations from different samples is warranted.

Results

Table 2 reports the bivariate percentage seeking social worker help by socio-demographic characteristics across race. All race differences are significant, with exceptions listed at the bottom of the table. Blacks are significantly more likely to visit social workers than whites in both datasets. Socio-demographic factors generally affect the magnitude of the race differences in the use of social workers; however, the direction of the relationship is usually unchanged. Blacks are usually more likely to consult social workers regardless of socio-demographic characteristics.
Table 2

Percent Using Social Workers by Demographic Characteristic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AVTMH Whites</th>
<th>AVTMH Blacks</th>
<th>NSBA Blacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–44</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–64</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0–8 years</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–11 years</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 or more years</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000–14,999</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000–19,999</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000–24,999</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 or more</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall use</strong></td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>767</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>631</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Race differences for all percentages are significant at \( p < .05 \), using a difference in proportions test. Exceptions: AVTMH whites and blacks less than 30; AVTMH whites and blacks 13 or more years of education.

Among the socio-demographic factors, age plays a significant role in the use of social workers.

Among the young, aged less than 30, whites and blacks are equally likely to use social workers. The difference between the AVTMH and the NSBA samples is significant, but there is no significant race difference among the young AVTMH respondents. The pattern changes for older respondents. AVTMH whites 65 and over are more likely to consult social workers than NSBA.
blacks age 65 and over. But blacks, age 31–64, are more likely to consult social workers than whites age 31 to 64. It is also noteworthy that the relationship between age and social worker use is not a linear, monotonic one for any group. For AVTMH whites and blacks, the relationship is u-shaped, but not so for NSBA respondents. Among NSBA blacks, the old have a very low rate of use of social workers.

The results for education and income reveal an interesting pattern. At lower levels of education and income, blacks in both datasets are more likely to use social workers, and the percentage difference is large. As education and income increase, whites are more or as likely as blacks to visit social workers in the AVTMH Study, while the race difference in the NSBA Study is not as large. There is also an important result within racial groups: among whites, the middle income group is most likely to visit social workers, whereas among blacks, it is the lowest income group that is most likely to consult a social worker. Gender is the only socio-demographic factor that does not affect the relationship between race and the use of social workers. However, it should be noted that these results do not control for the influence of other variables.

Table 3 presents logistic regression analyses of the use of social workers on socio-demographic variables by race. The results found for education disappear in this multivariate analysis, but significant effects across race are found for income and age. There are two important results for age. First, the relationship between social worker use and age varies across race, as indicated by the superscript $t$. Age is significant for whites, and we can see that there is no significant effect of age among blacks in either sample. The second important result is that there is a negative relationship between age and the use of social workers. Young people are more likely to consult social workers in all samples, but the result is significant only among AVTMH whites. There is only one other significant socio-demographic variable. Among AVTMH blacks, the relationship between use of social workers and family income is negative. Lower income blacks in that sample are more likely to consult social workers, than are higher income blacks. However, the relationship is not powerful enough to be significantly different across race.
Table 3

**Logistic Regression of Social Worker Use on Demographic Characteristics (multiplicative coefficients)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AVTMH Whites</th>
<th>AVTMH Blacks</th>
<th>NSBA Blacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>.372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.939*</td>
<td>.964*</td>
<td>.990*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.13)</td>
<td>(1.42)</td>
<td>(.901)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.915</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>.787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.248)</td>
<td>(-.422)</td>
<td>(.749)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.958</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.583)</td>
<td>(-.264)</td>
<td>(-.017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.985</td>
<td>.717*</td>
<td>.942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.374)</td>
<td>(2.64)</td>
<td>(1.76)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The variable sex (1 = male) is a dummy variable.

Z values in parentheses.

*p < .05, within race

'Difference across race is significant at p < .05.

It is important to be able to specify the conditions under which people utilize social workers, and previous research has found that problem-type is one critical condition (Broman, 1987; Neighbors and Taylor, 1985). In Table 4, the percentage using social workers by type of problem is presented. In Table 4, the percentages are adjusted for the socio-demographic variables age, sex, education and family income using analysis of covariance.

The results of this table, and Table 5 show that problem-type plays no role in race differences in the use of social workers. Table 4 shows us that regardless of problem-type, blacks in both samples are significantly more likely to consult social workers (this is indicated by the superscript t).

Further, Table 5 shows us that in neither sample is problem-type a significant factor in the use of social workers generally, or in predicting race differences in the use of social workers. Further, analysis (not shown) revealed also that there were no significant interactions between problem type and socio-de-
### Table 4

**Percent Using Social Workers by Problem-Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AVTMH Whites</th>
<th>AVTMH Blacks</th>
<th>NSBA Blacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>4.2(^t)</td>
<td>10.8(^t)</td>
<td>15.9(^t)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>8.8(^t)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>13.6(^t)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>1.9(^t)</td>
<td>8.1(^t)</td>
<td>5.2(^t)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>4.4(^t)</td>
<td>11.5(^t)</td>
<td>9.4(^t)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>6.6(^t)</td>
<td>17.7(^t)</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 726, 95, 508

Percentages adjusted using analysis of covariance for age, sex, education and income.

\(^t\)Differences across race are significant at \(p < .05\).

### Table 5

**Logistic Regression of Social Worker Use on Problem-Type**

* (multiplicative coefficients)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AVTMH Whites</th>
<th>AVTMH Blacks</th>
<th>NSBA Blacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>9.93</td>
<td>.488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>.553</td>
<td>.394</td>
<td>.939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.684</td>
<td>.778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>.225</td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>.594</td>
<td>.484</td>
<td>.674</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All coefficients are net of age, sex, education and income.

Z values in parentheses.

\(^t\)\(p < .05\), within race

\(^t\)Difference across race is significant at \(p < .05\).

Emotional problems are the omitted category.
mographic variables in the use of social workers for either race or sample.

Discussion

Race differences in the use of social workers have been found in this research. The most important finding was that blacks were more likely to consult social workers than whites. This finding held when other factors were accounted for. The role of socio-demographic factors was minimal, with only age having any effect across race. For respondents under 30 years of age, differences in the use of social workers by race were not as pronounced. However, even accounting for this effect, blacks were more likely than whites to consult social workers. Multivariate analysis also showed that family income was significant among AVTMH blacks, however, that family income did not differ significantly across race. Problem-type played no role in race differences in the use of social workers.

Overall, these results show that seeking help from social workers is a response of only few people. A small percentage of people consult social workers in times of personal distress, and other research has shown that a variety of other professional mental health sources are consulted in times of distress (Veroff et al., 1981). However, it is significant that blacks are more likely than whites to consult social workers, and research to explain this phenomenon is important. Our research has generally ruled out socio-demographic factors and type of problem as explanatory variables, but there are other factors which may be of importance.

Social workers may be more available and accessible in the black community than in the white community. More importantly, it may be that blacks are more likely than whites to perceive that social workers are available and accessible for consultation. This perception might increase the likelihood of blacks using social workers, because research has shown that if a person believes a professional service to be available, they are more likely to seek out those services (Veroff et al., 1981).

Another factor of possible importance is the extent that blacks, more so than whites, believe that social workers are an appro-
appropriate source for help with personal problems. A key factor in seeking help from professionals is the belief that they are appropriate sources for help, and that they will help with the problem (Veroff et al., 1981). In general, what we are suggesting is that the experiences of blacks may predispose them to using social workers more so than whites.

The implications of these results for social worker training need to be emphasized. The finding that blacks have a higher probability of utilizing social workers than whites, is critical. First, social work students should receive training on how to effectively administer services to minority clients. Research has shown that blacks in particular, and minority clients in general, receive unequal and poor mental health services when they consult mental health service providers (Sue, 1977). For example, Sue found that blacks who utilize community mental health facilities received differential treatment, and had poorer outcomes than whites (Sue, 1977). This poor treatment is probably due to several factors, but one is that the expectations of minority clients may not mesh with those of white service providers (Korchin, 1980). Of course, Sue's research focuses on community mental health facilities, not necessarily social workers. For this reason, different findings might result. Research has further indicated that the attitudes and biases of clinicians severely limit their ability to effectively treat minority clients (Parloff, Waskow and Wolfe, 1978). Consequently, any training that can assist mental health service providers in general, and social workers in particular, to become more knowledgeable and sensitive to the concerns and lifestyles of minority clients will help facilitate the treatment process.

A second implication of these findings concerns the need to increase the number of black and other minority social workers. Available data from the National Association of Social Workers indicates that the percentage of black and other minority social workers is extremely low relative to their percentage in the U.S. population (Hopps and Pinderhughes, 1987). The low percentage of minority social workers is significant when considering the large number of minority clients seen by social workers. As Korchin (1980) has noted, there are several reasons to increase the number of minority social workers. First, due to cultural
similarities, minority service providers may be better equipped to assist the problems of minority clients. Minority practitioners are also more likely to work with minority clients, and may be more motivated to do research on issues affecting minorities. Lastly, an increase in the number of minority practitioners will help to broaden the perspective and effectiveness of white mental health service providers when working with both minority and nonminority clients.

The role of race in the use of social workers has been studied in this research. Blacks were found to be more likely to consult social workers than whites. Further research is necessary to understand fully the important influences on black use of social workers. Additionally, more research on the processes that influence the quality of service rendered to blacks and other minorities is necessary. Through such study a more complete understanding of these issues is possible, and improvements in mental health service delivery may follow.

References

Race Differences


Notes

1. For exceptions, see Mindel and Wright, 1982.
2. Unpublished analyses revealed that over two thirds of blacks who went to a social service agency saw a social worker.
3. Some AVTMH respondents were asked: "Now think about the last time something really had happened to you. What was it about?" The coding of this question was identical.
Social Work and Sexual Harassment

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University of Kentucky
College of Social Work

Marlene B. Huff
Multidisciplinary Center on Aging

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Ninety-seven members of the Kentucky chapter of National Association of Social Workers were surveyed about their knowledge of and experience with sexual harassment in their work places. Fifty-one percent knew of sexual harassment of female social workers and 18% knew of similar harassment of male workers. Twenty-six percent had themselves been victims of sexual harassment. Verbal harassment was the most common followed by a combination of verbal and physical harassment in the form of sexy jokes and unwanted touching. A majority of the victims resorted to either avoidance, defusion, or reason in dealing with their harassers. Young workers from small agencies with few years of employment viewed the problem of sexual harassment as serious. A majority of respondents, irrespective of their gender and education, were ignorant of the provisions of the Civil Rights law pertaining to sexual harassment. Implications of the findings for social work are discussed.

Despite heightened awareness of the illegality of sexual harassment in the work place, several studies show its wide prevalence. The Merit report (Mathis & Prokop, 1981), for example, showed that out of approximately 23,000 federal employees surveyed, 42% of female workers and 15% of male workers reported being sexually harassed. In other studies percentages of working women reporting sexual harassment have ranged from 40 to 85 (Wymer, 1983). Only two studies of sexual harassment
of social workers in human services agencies have been reported in the literature. These (Judd, Block & Calkin, 1985; Maypole, 1986) have shown that human services agencies are not free from this problem. Thirty-eight percent of a sample of social work field instructors representing health and human services agencies throughout Colorado (n=112), surveyed by Judd and his associates and 27% of a sample of members of the Iowa chapter of National Association of Social workers (n=319) studied by Maypole, reported having experienced sexual harassment.

Both these studies have thrown some light on different dimensions of this phenomenon. Judd and associates have described the frequency and type of sexual harassment, its effects on the emotional and behavioral functioning of victims, and organizational responses to it. Maypole tested a number of hypotheses derived from power theory: (a) Women consider sexual harassment more serious than men do; (b) women in direct service positions, in small agencies, with less than ten years of employment, and with salaries less than $20,000 view sexual harassment more seriously than their more powerful counterparts in supervisory/administrative positons, in large agencies, employed for more than ten years, and with high salaries; and, (c) women who are unmarried or divorced, under 44 years of age, and have a BSW degree consider sexual harassment more serious than those who are married, are over 44 and have an MSW degree. His findings supported most of these hypotheses.

These studies have highlighted the need for more knowledge about sexual harassment of social workers in their places of employment. The study reported here addresses that need. Besides replicating the Maypole study, our aim was three-fold: (a) to discover the extent of the problem of sexual harassment of social workers in Kentucky in their places of employment; (b) to gather data on the opinions of social workers in Kentucky about the nature and seriousness of this problem, their familiarity with the relevant Civil Rights law, and the institutional arrangements in their places of employment for dealing with the problem; and, (c) to learn about the type and source of sexual harassment as experienced by individual social workers, and their response to that experience.
Methodology

Sample

In the spring of 1987, a random sample of 227 members of the Kentucky chapter of National Association of Social Workers was drawn from the membership roster. The sample constituted 25% of the total membership of the chapter (N=908). These members were sent a questionnaire along with a letter and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Ninety-seven (43%) completed the questionnaire.

The respondents represented a cross-section of the social work population in the state of Kentucky. The sample was compared with the total NASW state chapter population on a few demographic variables for which information was available from the state chapter office. It was found to be representative of the population. The distributions of our sample and the population among the four age groups (24 and younger, 25–44, 45–64, and 65 and older) were quite similar. Whereas 8, 64, 20 and 8 percent of our sample were in these groups respectively, the corresponding percentages for the population are 10, 61, 23 and 4. In terms of education, the percentages of MSWs in the sample and population were almost the same, 71 and 69 percent respectively. The racial and gender distributions of the sample and population are also similar. In the sample 97% were white and 80% were female whereas 94% are white and 75% were female in the population.

The age range of our respondents spanned over forty years with 8% in the '24 & under' and another 8% in the '65 & over' categories. The majority (64%) were between 25 and 44 years. Slightly more than half (56%) were married and the remaining were either single, separated or divorced. In terms of their education, 71% had an MSW degree. Fifty-six percent were in direct service, 27% were in supervisory/administrative positions, and the remaining included community organizers, social work students and those who were unemployed at the time of the study.

One-third (32%) of the respondents had work experience of 5 years or less, almost a quarter (24%) had 6 to 10 years of
experience, a slightly larger percentage (27%) had been in social work practice from 11 to 20 years, and the remaining 13% had more than 20 years of experience. They were serving health and human service agencies of varying sizes. Six percent were in agencies employing five or fewer professionals, 21% were in agencies that had 6–15 employees, 29% were in medium-sized agencies (16–45 employees), and the remaining 44% were in larger agencies with more than 46 employees. One-third of these agencies are public. One-third (33%) of the respondents made less than $15,000 a year.

Instrument

The questionnaire developed by Maypole and Skaine (1982) and modified by them to suit a social work population (Maypole, 1986) was used for data collection. It is a comprehensive instrument which measures not only the opinions of respondents about sexual harassment and its seriousness as a problem but also seeks information on its many dimensions such as: (a) their knowledge of the incidence of sexual harassment of male and female workers in social service agencies; (b) their personal experience of harassment by a supervisor, coworkers and client; (c) the form of that harassment, and their response to that experience as victims; (d) their knowledge of the civil rights law; and (e) their agency's provision for dealing with this problem. The psychometric properties of this instrument are reported to be acceptable by Maypole and Skaine (1982).

Findings

Incidence of Sexual Harassment

Fifty-one percent of our respondents (n=97) claimed to know of women social workers who had been sexually harassed and 18% were aware of male social workers who had been similarly harassed in human service agencies. These figures are close to the ones reported by Maypole with 53% and 14% of his sample being aware of sexual harassment of female and male workers respectively. No statistically significant differences were found between the two sexes in their knowledge of sexual harassment of female and male workers. Twenty-six percent had themselves
been the victims of such harassment, which is almost the same rate of victimization (27%) discovered by Maypole. Twenty-five social workers experienced sexual harassment, 9 of them from their supervisors, 7 from coworkers, 4 from clients, 2 from a supervisor as well as a client, and 3 others from a coworker as well as a client. These incidents had occurred both in large and small, and public as well as private agencies. Sixty percent of these agencies were large employing 45 or more professionals, 24% were small agencies which employed less than 15 workers, and the remainder were of moderate size. Sixty percent of these included such agencies as a community mental health center, a family service association, and a general hospital. Thirty percent were public agencies such as county division of social services.

Sexual harassment occurred in agencies that had adequate policy and procedures regarding sexual harassment as well as in those that did not have such mechanisms. The respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement: "The management of your agency has made adequate provisions for dealing with sexual harassment." Of the 92% of the victims who responded to this question, 35% agreed, 39% disagreed, and 26% were not sure. Although 88% of the victims were female, males were not immune from sexual harassment. Both men and women workers experienced harassment. Maypole had found 36% of female and 14% of male workers (21% and 6% of the total sample respectively) to be victims of harassment. The corresponding figures in our study are 29% of female and 17% of male workers (23% and 3% of the sample).

Social Workers' Views about Sexual Harassment

Several questions sought to understand the meanings the respondents attached to sexual harassment and motives they attributed to harassers and their victims. Seventy-five percent of our respondents agreed with the statement that "When a person sexually harasses another at work, exerting power over the other is more important than sexual gratification." Nineteen percent were unsure and only 5% disagreed. A larger percentage of respondents (90%) agreed with the statement: "Sexual harassment at work is unwanted sexual behavior toward women/men." Only 2% disagreed and 8% were undecided. Similarly, 95%
agreed that sexual harassment is emotionally upsetting to the receiver.

Eighty-six percent disagreed with the notion that sexual harassment at work is provoked by the receiver. Seven percent agreed and 6% were unsure. Opinions of the respondents became much more varied regarding the statement that, “Preserving the dominance of males over females is more important than sexual gratification in sexual harassment at work.” Fifty-seven percent disagreed, 25% were unsure, and 18% agreed. A much larger majority of women than men (62% versus 41%) were in agreement with this statement. This finding is similar to that of Maypole.

In pursuance of the same theme, another statement read: “Men feel it’s O.K. to sexually harass women at work.” Only 32% agreed with this statement, 39% disagreed, and 29% were unsure. The agreement response rates (35% for women and 18% for men) are similar to those of Maypole (36% and 18% respectively). However, unlike his data, differences between the sexes were not statistically significant. A surprising 62% agreed that coworkers may use sexual harassment more to “put down” the receiver than to seek sexual gratification. Twenty-four percent were not sure and 11% disagreed. Again, unlike Maypole’s finding, although larger percentage of women workers (69% compared with 53% of men) agreed, the difference between the two was not statistically significant.

There were no statistically significant differences in their opinions when the respondents were classified into subgroups in terms of their age, marital status, education, job position, salary, years of employment, and the size of their agency. Regarding the statement that “Men feel it is O.K. to harass women at work,” although 59% of the male respondents compared with 35% of female respondents disagreed with the statement, the differences between the two groups did not attain statistical significance. The following were the only exceptions. Age and years of employment were found to be associated with the opinion about sexual harassment being provoked by the receiver ($r=.19$, $p=.035$ and $r=.23$, $p=.012$ respectively). More young workers with few years of employment tended to disagree with this notion.
How serious is the problem of sexual harassment?

Opinion about the seriousness of sexual harassment was measured on a seven-point scale, 1 representing "Not serious at all," and 7 indicating that it is an "Exceptionally serious problem." Three-fourths (76%) of our respondents considered it either not serious or only moderately serious. This is surprising in view of the fact that 26% had themselves been victims of sexual harassment. Their perception of seriousness was found to be inversely associated with age (r = −.23), years of experience (r = −.27) and size of the agency (r = −.32), all statistically significant at .01 or lower levels. These associations suggest that older workers with long work experience in large agencies do not consider this problem as serious. Conversely, relatively young workers with short employment history and in small agencies view the problem more seriously. Maypole had found age, education, and years of employment significantly influencing his respondents' assessment of the seriousness of this problem. Education did not seem to make a difference in our sample. We also did not find significant differences between male and female workers in their opinion about the seriousness of the problem.

A majority of our respondents were not familiar with title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Only 46% knew of the legal protection against sexual harassment provided by this law. This lack of knowledge was found to be associated with age, job position, and salary. Of those who were familiar with the provisions of the law, the majority were likely to be 45 and older, in supervisory positions, and with salaries over $20,000. For example, whereas 78% of direct service workers did not know the relevant provisions of the law, 76% of the supervisors did, and those in the 'Other' category (community organizers, unemployed workers and students) were equally divided between those who did know and those who did not. These differences were statistically significant ($X^2 = 15.11, df=2$; $p = .000, n=91$). Similarly, 65% of those making less than $20,000 were not aware of the provisions of the Civil Rights Act whereas 61% of those making more than $20,000 were familiar with those provisions. This was another significant difference ($X^2 = 5.51, df=1, p = .018,$
As compared with 60% of those in the younger group (44 or younger), only 31% of the older (45 and over) group were ignorant of the law. This difference was also statistically significant at .01 level ($X^2=6.57$, df=1, n=94). Sex or education did not seem to make a difference. More male (56%) than female workers (44%), and more BSWs (54%) than MSWs (46%) were knowledgeable about the law but these differences were not statistically significant.

Despite this lack of knowledge, did the respondents consider their agency to be adequately prepared to deal with the problem of sexual harassment? They were asked to agree or disagree with the statement: "The management of your agency has made adequate provisions for dealing with sexual harassment." Eighty-six (about 90%) of them responded to this question, 41% of them agreeing, 29% disagreeing, and the remaining 30% being unsure. Again none of the demographic variables were significantly associated with these responses.

**Experience of the Victims**

Of the 25 victims, nine (36%), all female, experienced sexual harassment from their supervisors/superiors who were male. In five of these cases harassment was verbal in the form of sexy jokes or asking for unwanted dates; in three cases it took the form of unwanted touching and/or kissing, and in one case it culminated in unwanted intercourse with consent of the victim. In four cases the supervisor also resorted to such tactics as creating a chilling atmosphere, threatening reprisals, and altering the job of the supervisee. Two other female workers (8%) were harassed by their male supervisor as well as three clients, two male and one female. Harassment by the supervisor involved both sexy jokes and unwanted touching, and whereas one of the male clients did not go beyond making sexy jokes another male and a female client tried to indulge also in unwanted touching.

Seven (28%) victims, five female and two male, were subjected to sexual harassment by their coworkers of the opposite sex. In five of these cases, harassers did not go beyond making sexy jokes or asking for unwanted dates. In three (12%) other cases, one male and two female workers experienced harassment at the hands of their coworkers (one male and two female) and
Sexual Harassment

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Victims (n = 25)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>(88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age at Harassment</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–44</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>(72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–64</td>
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<td>(8)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
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<td>B.S.W.</td>
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<td>(16)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.S.W.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>(84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Married</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Service</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Duties</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration/Supervision</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (Students/Unemployed)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer than 5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of Employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 and more</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 employees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency Size</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26–35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 and more</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(56)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

clients (two male and one female). In two of the three situations involving coworkers as well as clients, harassment was limited to sexy jokes. One coworker and one client tried to force unwanted touching/kissing. One of these victims experienced harassment from another female worker. In the remaining four (16%) cases the victims were female and their harassers were all male clients, two of whom tried unwanted touching. Table 1 shows demographic characteristics of victims.
Table 2

Type of Sexual Harassment and Victim Response by the Source of Harassment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
<th>Coworker</th>
<th>Client</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TYPE</td>
<td>No. (%)</td>
<td>No. (%)</td>
<td>No. (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Harassment</td>
<td>5 (46)</td>
<td>7 (70)</td>
<td>5 (56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted Touching</td>
<td>1 (9)</td>
<td>2 (20)</td>
<td>1 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal &amp; Unwanted Touching</td>
<td>4 (36)</td>
<td>1 (10)</td>
<td>3 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted Intercourse</td>
<td>1 (9)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>11 (100)</td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
<td>9 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>3 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defusion</td>
<td>3 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning</td>
<td>3 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confrontation</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of Responses</td>
<td>2 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>11 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus we find that 25 out of 97 social workers (88% female and 97% white) experienced sexual harassment. The majority of these victims were between 25 and 44 (72%), MSWs (84%), in nonsupervisory positions (68%), and with less than ten years of employment (67%). Fifty-six percent were employed in large agencies. Fifty-six percent were married.

These workers were harassed by 30 individuals, of whom 11 (44%) were their supervisors, 10 (40%) were coworkers, and 9 (36%) were clients. All supervisors were male and the receivers of their harassment were all female. Of those experiencing harassment from coworkers, 3 (30%) were male. Whereas all male workers reported being harassed by their colleagues of the opposite sex, one of the female victims was harassed by a female coworker. All the receivers of harassment from clients were fe-
Sexual Harassment

male workers although their harassers included both males and females. With the exception of one case of unwanted sexual intercourse, most harassment in majority (60%) of cases was verbal. In the remaining third (35%) cases it involved either unwanted touching, fondling, kissing or a combination of sexy jokes and unwanted touching. Table 2 displays type of harassment by its source and the victim's response.

How did the victims respond to the situation?

Victims used the following approaches in dealing with the harassers in almost an equal number of situations. In nine (30%) situations they avoided or ignored the harasser, in nine others they tried to play down the harassment by joking about it, and in eight (27%) situations they informally reasoned with the harasser. One used a combined approach of ignoring the harasser and joking about the harassment, and another tried combining ignoring and reasoning with the harasser. In only two situations did the victim resort to direct confrontation but in no case was a formal complaint made. Maypole had found larger proportions of the victims in his study using avoidance with supervisors, defusion with coworkers, and reasoning with clients. Our data did not show such a pattern in responses to harassment but the use of confrontation in his study also was found to be minimal. A majority in each group of situations, in our study, six (67%) of those who avoided/ignored, six (67%) of those who made light of the harassment by joking about it, and seven (87%) who reasoned with the harasser found these approaches effective. So did the two who confronted the harasser. Combined approaches worked in one case and did not in the other.

The numbers in these categories being small, it is hard to interpret these findings with confidence. Nevertheless, the general tendency to avoid confronting the culprit is obvious. Confrontation was used in only two out of 30 situations. A look at the responses to another question illuminated this situation somewhat. The question sought to know whom the victim had turned to during his/her experience of harassment. Over a third (36%) had kept it to themselves and had not reported to anyone, others had told such individuals as their spouse, friend, co-worker, and (in 20% of cases) also their supervisor.
The following comments of some of the victims provide some understanding of this general tendency to defuse the situation rather than confront the harasser. One female worker compared sexual harassment in the business world with social work situations and comforted herself with the belief that harassment is much greater in business. Another thought that, to a degree, it came with the territory and was therefore not completely avoidable. A third had found the experience very frightening and intimidating. She was afraid of "making waves" and losing her job. Still another thought that harassment by the supervisor would be very difficult to prove. Her advice was that a victim should request a transfer or begin hunting for another job. Another, who used confrontation as her major approach also recommended a change in job.

Summary and Discussion

The incidence of sexual harassment in work places of social workers in Kentucky is almost the same as found in Iowa (Maypole, 1986) but lower than that of Colorado (Judd, Block & Calkin, 1985). Twenty-six percent of our sample and 27% of those studied by Maypole had experienced sexual harassment. Sexual harassment occurs in social work agencies of all sizes and types. Although the majority of victims are female, male workers are not completely free from this experience.

A majority of our sample of 97 social workers in Kentucky viewed sexual harassment as unwanted sexual behavior which is emotionally upsetting to the victims and is not provoked by them. Although larger percentages of women than men workers subscribed to the opinion that sexual harassment is a reflection of a desire of males to dominate females or a coworker to "put down" a colleague rather than the desire for sexual gratification, these differences were not statistically significant. These findings are similar to those of Maypole (1986).

Fifty-one percent of our respondents knew of sexual harassment of female workers although a smaller number (18%) knew of similar harassment of male workers. This figure is slightly lower than the one reported by Maypole but is similar to that of Judd and associates (1985), 50% of whose sample were aware of others being sexually harassed. However, a large majority
Sexual Harassment

(76%) of our respondents did not consider the problem of sexual harassment as very serious. Only young workers with few years of employment and from small agencies viewed it as serious. Being young, inexperienced and less secure in their job positions, they possibly considered themselves more vulnerable. Besides the informality of small work places which is likely to discourage the establishment of strong guards against sexual harassment, employees of small work places are also not legally as well protected as those in larger organizations. Under the protective wing of Title VII of Civil Rights Act of 1964, sexual harassment is considered sex discrimination, and the law applies to work places with 15 or more employees.

A majority (54%) of our respondents were found to be ignorant of the provisions of the Civil Rights law pertaining to sexual harassment. Similarly, 59% either did not consider their agencies adequately prepared to deal with sexual harassment or were not sure about it. The percentage (41%) who considered their agencies adequate in this regard, is smaller than the 53% reported in the study by Judd and associates (1985).

Twenty-five (26%) workers experienced harassment from 30 individuals. Twenty-three (92%) of the victims were female and 24 (80%) of harassers were male, and with one exception harassers and victims were of opposite sexes.

Making sexy jokes and asking for unwanted dates were the most common forms of sexual harassment (in 57% of situations), followed by unwanted touching or kissing as well as sexy jokes (40%). There was one case of unwanted sexual intercourse. A vast majority of victims resorted to either avoidance or defusion or reasoning as the major approach to dealing with harassment. Only in two cases did the victim resort to confrontation. None chose any form of legal recourse.

Sexual harassment is a generic term covering a wide range of behaviors from sexy jokes to sexual intercourse. In surveys of the type reported here, these behaviors are given equal weight with the result that the findings provide only gross indicators of the problem. Thus there is the need for more in-depth exploration of the problem of sexual harassment. Similarly, more research with larger samples is needed to understand the relationship between sources of harassment and patterns of re-
sponses as well as the relative effectiveness of those responses. The general tendency to avoid confrontation, also needs to be further investigated. Is it because social workers lack confrontational skills, or is it because social workers in a poor state like Kentucky with fewer employment opportunities are afraid to risk their jobs, or is it because confrontation involves the possibility of the victims' experience becoming public and his/her becoming an object of gossip and ridicule? Such questions remain unanswered.

Individual worker's efforts to deal with sexual harassment need to be supplemented by formal well-publicized institutional arrangements. In a majority of the cases either the agencies did not have an adequate provision for dealing with this problem or the victims did not know of them. It seems that both undergraduate and graduate students in school of social work are not learning enough about sexual harassment in human service agencies and what to do about or how to cope with it. This gap in the professional training of social workers needs to be addressed. Social workers should be made aware and responsive to this problem. Harassment is a problem in human relations and as such can be remedied through legislation, policy, education and greater respect for the value that each of us places on our life at work (Judd et al., 1986, p. 21). The National Association of Social Workers should use its resources on these approaches to the problem of sexual harassment.

References


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