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IN MEMORIAM

"Love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person: it is an attitude, an orientation of character which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole..." Thus, in his own words, we might sum up the thoughts and the living embrace of Norman N. Goroff, a founding editor of the Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare. Norm's spirit passed from among us in November 1989. He was 64.

Norm was a radical humanist — not a secular humanist, but a spiritual one. His definition of self was inextricably intertwined with his affirmation of life and of all humanity. He loved all of us, and in turn, he taught us all how to better love each other.

Norm, almost singlehandedly, was the creator of this Journal. Together with Ralph Segalman, he set its original direction. He brought together an editorial board which was both, committed to excellence, yet open to innovation. We aimed to model ourselves after Norm in his role as our leader. He insisted on creativity with a sense for tradition and competence without stuffiness. Within the editorial board Norman brought into being a genuine participatory democracy in action.

Norm began his social work career as a group worker among families of new immigrants at the Educational Alliance on the Lower East Side of New York. When later he moved on, to serve on the faculty of the School of Social Work at the University of Connecticut, he continued to build and expand upon his first experience as an advocate for those who are disadvantaged. He was angered by a society which, while promising opportunity, continued to hobble individuals in the attainment of their goals by fostering within them a pervasive sense of inadequacy — a sense of never being good enough. Quoting Martin Buber, and calling upon his knowledge of the Jewish Chassidic tradition, Norm sought to teach us, his co-workers, his students, and his readers, to recognize the "thou" in one another. He taught us to nurture and support each other in order that we might affirm the power that is within us.

As we continue upon the path that Norm has laid out for us we will aim to sustain his vision of a more caring, more just
world. Norm taught and inspired us to think and act critically. Caring for one another, respecting one another, responding to one another, and understanding one another, these are the elements of the "love paradigm" that he taught us. He and his spirit will always remain by our side.

Shimon S. Gottschalk
April 9, 1990
Implications of Conservative Tendencies for Practice and Education in Social Welfare*

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This essay explores the meanings, sources, dynamics, and ideological themes of conservative tendencies in societal evolution and traces the dominance of these themes and tendencies in social welfare practice and education. The essay also suggests approaches for moving beyond these tendencies in our society and proposes an agenda for transition policies. Finally, the essay examines principles and elements of social-change-oriented political action and their implications for practice and education in social welfare.

Political discourse, public opinion, and public policy in the United States have undoubtedly shifted in conservative directions since the early seventies, and especially so during the Reagan administration. Illustrative of the conservative mentality is the widespread, uncritical acceptance of such notions as: fiscal constraints and their limiting impact in human services; misguidedness of "active government" in the interest of human well-being, and of the welfare state philosophy and programs; balanced budgets without corresponding progressive taxation, economic growth and competitiveness as self-evident public goods; equating democracy with formal elections, freedom with capitalist economics, and "national interest" with the business interests of multinational corporations; defining "national security" in terms of military superiority without clarifying the threats to security and the identity of "the enemy;" and, selfish pursuit of material wealth in the midst of growing poverty, and disregard for a sense of community.

It would be an oversimplification to blame prevailing social ills and waste of human potential and natural resources on the conservative philosophy and domestic and foreign policies of President Reagan and some of his predecessors, although these dehumanizing conditions have certainly intensified since the Nixon years. Rather, it seems that these social, economic, and ecological ills are the inevitable results of pervasive conservative
tendencies which have shaped the institutional order and the public consciousness of this country since colonial times. These tendencies, which were brought to the "New World" by European colonizers, have become the shared ideology, with minor variations, of all major political parties. Evidence of this underlying consensus concerning fundamental economic, political, and philosophical premises can be gleaned from the relative continuity of domestic and foreign policies throughout U.S. history, and from the absence of strong opposition movements promoting alternative visions of social and economic life. More specific evidence of the influence and durability of conservative tendencies, of special concern to the social welfare field, is the continuity of welfare policies and programs focused on changing individuals rather than changing social and economic institutions, and the de-facto acceptance of the alleged inevitability of unemployment, poverty, homelessness and hunger in the midst of affluence.

The conservative tendencies, which are shared, in varying degrees, by the major political parties, are also shared by many practitioners, educators, and professional organizations in the social welfare field, although they tend to identify themselves as "liberals." Hence, rather than merely challenging extreme conservative philosophies and policies of the current and of future administrations, we should explore our personal and collective entrapment in the pervasive conservative mentality of this society and culture, and we ought to search for ways to liberate ourselves from these dynamics and to assist students and people we serve through practice to do likewise.

Meanings and Sources of Conservative Tendencies

Webster's dictionary defines conservatism as: "a disposition in politics to preserve what is established; a political philosophy based on tradition and social stability, stressing established institutions and preferring gradual development to abrupt change." This definition is a good starting point for this exploration, though it does not unravel the roots and dynamics of conservative tendencies. According to anthropological and historical studies, these tendencies involve mutually reinforcing
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biological, psychological, social, economic, political and ideological dimensions.

Humans developed social orders by interacting with one another and with their natural environments in pursuit of survival and security, usually in the face of relative scarcities of life-sustaining resources and other life threatening conditions. As human groups discovered solutions to survival and security problems and established ways of life which somehow satisfied survival needs, they simultaneously evolved a tendency to "conserve" what seemed to work, more or less, because it served their needs and perceived interests. They also came to regard changes in traditional patterns as threats to their very existence, developed taboos against them, and made sure that established ways of life were transmitted without deviations from generation to generation. The slow rate of social change and development in small, isolated, pre-agricultural, communal societies seems largely due to the complementary tendencies of conserving established patterns of existence and of resisting changes and innovation. An important function of religious institutions in these societies has usually been to reinforce these tendencies.

The conservative bias which seems inherent in societal evolution, is reinforced on the individual level by the biological and psychological conditions of the socialization experience of infants and children. This experience takes place in imbalanced, inequalitarian relationships involving physical, emotional, mental, economic and social dependence. Though infants and children are active participants in socialization relationships, adults are in control of power, resources, rewards, and sanctions. Children are exposed to a preexisting way of life as "objective reality" and as "good and valued," and they absorb the ideas which sustain and justify that way of life, under conditions conducive to uncritical acceptance, rather than to critical reflection and informed choice. Children's faculties for critical consciousness emerge only gradually over several years. By the time these faculties eventually mature, children have already internalized their society's institutional order along with the interpretations and justifications which legitimate and validate it, and they are no longer inclined to ask critical questions about it. They have come to take it for granted and are ready, in turn,
to pass it on unchallenged to their children. In the relatively few instances in which "primary" socialization fails to bring about conformity and adaptation to established patterns of behavior, relations, and beliefs, societies tend to respond with concrete and symbolic sanctions, i.e., "secondary" socialization, to promote and enforce social adaptation.

When human societies were not divided into dominant and dominated social groups, and their ways of life were designed to satisfy everyone's needs in accordance with egalitarian, cooperative, and communal values, conserving the status-quo was in everyone's perceived interest. Conformity and adaptation on the part of individuals to the established social order led to a sense of belonging, security, and well-being in physical-material, emotional-spiritual, and social-political terms. Motivation for social change was, therefore, limited, as long as population increases did not upset the balance between natural, life-sustaining resources and the existential needs of people, and encounters with other human groups did not result in tensions, conflicts, and crises.

Following increases of population and the subsequent development of agriculture, crafts, and trade, some 10,000 years ago, societies began to produce an economic surplus. This new societal context and capacity made possible the gradual emergence, within and between societies, of differentiations into dominant and dominated, exploiting and exploited, and privileged and deprived classes, races, and peoples. These social, economic, and political differentiations gave also rise to corresponding differentiations in life-styles and consciousness of different social groups and peoples.

Social differentiation began in nomadic, preagricultural, hunting and gathering societies as a relatively nonexploitative division of work and roles, mainly by age and sex. In sedentary, agricultural societies, social differentiation evolved, however, into essentially exploitative divisions of labor, social status and prestige, economic control and rewards, and political roles and power. Differentiations in agricultural societies did not come about voluntarily, but as a result of coercive processes involving organized physical violence and ideological hegemony by emerging secular ruling classes and their priestly associates.
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Ideological domination brought about internalization into popular consciousness of ex-post-facto validation and legitimation of coercively established inegalitarian, unjust, and exploitative social orders. People came to believe that institutionalized inequalities along occupational, social, economic, political and civil dimensions were "natural," inevitable and unchangeable aspects of social organization. Usually these inequalities were explained and perceived as ordained by super-human sources, rather than as originated and maintained by humans. Having but limited insight into the coercive origins and dynamics of their exploitation and oppression, and lacking awareness of past and possible future, nonoppressive, egalitarian ways of life, people tended to submit to established social arrangements with varying degrees of overt acceptance and adaptation and covert rejection and resistance. Yet frequently throughout history, covert rejection and resistance flared up as overt insurrection, revolt, and revolution.

Once systemic inequalities in human relations and material exchanges have been established within and among different societies, intra- and intersocietal conflicts become inevitable. Inequalities are not readily accepted and maintained in spite of ongoing physical and ideological coercion. Hence, inegalitarian social and global systems tend to be unstable. They are usually in a stage of temporary equilibrium resulting from antagonistic and competitive interactions among individuals, social classes and peoples, aimed at conserving or expanding relative advantages, or at transforming the entire system. Over time, antagonistic and competitive dynamics tend to intensify.

The transformation of early, egalitarian-cooperative-communal societies into later, exploitative, competitive and internally divided ones is reflected also in the emergence of new versions and functions of conservatism. While in early societies conservatism conserved ways of life which served everyone's needs and interests, in antagonistically divided social and global orders, conservatism came to protect primarily the interests of privileged social classes by conserving the structures and dynamics of domination and exploitation, and by resisting efforts to bring about fundamental social transformations. Contemporary "liberalism" is merely a "soft" version of political
conservatism as it aims to conserve "lesser-degrees" of exploitation and privilege. However, just as other versions of conservatism, liberalism is opposed to unconditional elimination of all forms of structural inequalities, exploitation, domination and privilege, though it favors assuring a floor of social, economic, and political rights to everyone.

I ideological Themes of Conservatism

Advantageous conditions of living and privileged social status in stratified societies are usually accepted uncritically by individuals and groups benefiting from them. They tend to take advantages for granted and to perceive them as "natural," valid, and just as long as they conform to "law and order." Privileged conditions have been explained and justified as due to the "grace of god," to "innate superiority," or to merit by virtue of exceptional capacities and unusual efforts. These interpretations are conducive to "victim-blaming" attitudes which place responsibility for the conditions of disadvantaged individuals and classes on them rather than on oppressive social dynamics. Victim-blaming attitudes, in turn, tend to relieve the guilt and conscience of individuals from privileged classes, and also to protect unjust social orders against fundamental structural changes.

Conservative ideology tends to stress negative views concerning human nature, according to which people are selfish, greedy, lazy and power-hungry. Hence, they ought to be closely watched and controlled. Most people are thought to lack capacity for self-direction.

The negative characteristics of human nature are projected in conservative ideology mainly on dominated and exploited social classes, races and peoples while dominant classes, races and peoples are supposedly endowed with positive characteristics. Negative characteristics of oppressed groups are considered biologically determined rather than reactions and adaptations to oppressive conditions, and defenses against these conditions.

A related theme of conservative ideology is that certain individuals, races, and peoples are by nature superior to others. The superior ones should dominate and control and should be entitled to privileged conditions, since they are intrinsically
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worthier and more important. Domination and control by naturally superior individuals and groups is said to be for the benefit of inferior ones who, allegedly, lack capacities to assure their own well-being through productive activity.

Dominance of Conservative Themes and Tendencies in Social Welfare

Overt and covert support for inegalitarian social orders, divided into dominant and privileged, and dominated and deprived classes, can be discerned as major themes and tendencies of institutionalized social welfare throughout history and on the contemporary scene. Of course, other themes and tendencies, including ethical and religious imperatives, and struggles for social justice and human equality and liberation, can also be traced throughout social welfare history; however, these themes were never dominant but merely provided a counterpoint.

In the course of several millennia, community-sponsored assistance to people in need was usually not intended to overcome the sources of poverty and assorted social ills, but only to alleviate their symptoms, case by case, and often in a dehumanizing and stigmatizing manner. Public assistance posed, therefore, no threat to established social orders. Instead, it actually contributed in subtle ways to their preservation by administering limited concessions to the claims of dominated and deprived classes, and by acting thus as a balancing and stabilizing force against potentially insurrectionary tendencies. Along with this conservative function, institutionalized social welfare has also been motivated by genuine humane tendencies, by a vague sense of guilt on the part of privileged, dominant classes, and by religious and ethical values.

On the contemporary social welfare scene, conservative themes and tendencies are evident in theory and practice, and in policies, language, and politics. Dominant theories tend to interpret human problems mainly as rooted in shortcomings and deviance of individuals, and they tend to deemphasize social structural sources of these problems. These theoretical premises are reflected in practice focused on personal solutions through individual change and adaptation to prevailing unjust and alienating social conditions, rather than on collective solutions
through social change and adaptation of existing social conditions to human needs and development.

Dominant theories also tend to fragmentize human problems into separate fields of practice, each concerned with different sets of symptoms and different population groups. Fragmented conceptions of human problems suggest, analogous to medical models, that experts can devise specific technical-professional solutions and treatments for every problem, and that, therefore, fundamental social change is not necessary for dealing with them. Alternative social welfare theories reject fragmentation and view all human problems as linked and rooted in underlying, common social dynamics. This view suggests interventions, analogous to public health models, involving long-range political efforts toward fundamental social change along with services aimed at immediate and short-range relief of human suffering.

As to policy development, conservative tendencies of social welfare are reflected in support for incremental, "liberal" reforms which accept, rather than challenge, the continuation of injustice and privilege, albeit with minor modifications. An apt illustration of this is support for "welfare reforms," rather than political action aimed at eliminating poverty and the welfare system and welfare mentality through policies such as constitutional guarantees of suitable, meaningful work and adequate income.

The language of spokespeople for social welfare in policy and political discourse also reveals conservative tendencies. They will often advocate "more justice and more equality," rather than "unqualified justice and equality." What they are actually advocating are merely different levels of injustice and inequality from levels now prevailing. Qualifying the concepts "justice and equality" with the term "more" is also illogical, since there are no degrees of justice and equality. A social order is either just and egalitarian, or it is not so designed. There are, to be sure, degrees of injustice and inequality. Another semantic reflection of conservative tendencies in social welfare is the use of the adjective "poor" as a noun in the phrase, "the poor," when referring to poor people. When used as a noun to designate a class of people, other, no less important, attributes of the
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same people are ignored, and the condition of poverty is treated as their main characteristic, as if it was intrinsic to them. Once poverty is perceived as intrinsic to a class of people, rather than the result of human-created, changeable social conditions, it assumes an aura of permanence. This is a deeply conservative position, an implicit confirmation of the ancient myth that poverty is inevitable.

Involvement in politics by social welfare organizations conforms usually to conventional "realpolitik," an approach used by most participants in the political arena in the United States. Realpolitik can be effective for short-range, limited objectives within the established social and economic order. However, it is not suited at all for a long-range political struggle and strategy toward an alternative social order shaped by values of social justice, equality and liberty. It follows, that the political style of social welfare organizations, with very few exceptions such as radical caucuses and the Bertha Reynolds Society, is thoroughly compatible with their conservative, incremental policy agenda.

The earlier noted fragmentation of social welfare into fields of practice concerned with different problems and populations, tends to reinforce the political pragmatism, as different fields are usually forced to compete against each other for the limited resources available for human well-being under prevailing political conditions. This destructive competition tends to reinforce the status-quo. It is unlikely to be overcome as long as social welfare organizations are trapped in the conservative mentality of fiscal constraints and scarcity of resources for human needs. Some day they may come to realize that this scarcity is a fiction, that it is not real in an economic sense but only in a political sense. The simple evidence of the fictional nature of scarcity in the midst of plenty is the vast aggregate material wealth available in this country and a trillion dollar annual federal budget of which some 300 billion are invested in the illusion of national security, and about 150 billion are used to pay interest on the national debt—a euphemism for a "guaranteed income" to privileged classes from whom the government borrows to cover the budgetary deficit, instead of taxing their wealth.
Beyond Conservative Tendencies

Conservative tendencies which have dominated societal institutions and consciousness for centuries in the United States and many other countries, have led to conflicts and wars within and among nations, as well as to worldwide deterioration of the quality of life in social, psychological, economic and ecologic terms, in spite of advances in science and technology, and increases in material production. By now, these trends pose threats to the survival of the human species and necessitate a search for alternative societal paradigms geared to free and full development for all people, anywhere on earth. These paradigms should incorporate values and principles such as these: that all people be considered equals in intrinsic worth, rights and responsibilities; that no individual and no social group be exploited and dominated by others; and that the concrete and abstract resources discovered and developed by people throughout history be considered the shared inheritance of the species, to be used and preserved rationally in the interest of present and future generations.

Paradigmatic shifts of social institutions and values, from dominant conservative tendencies toward egalitarian, cooperative, communal, and liberating alternatives, will take much time to accomplish, as there are no known short-cuts to such comprehensive fundamental transformations. Widespread assumptions notwithstanding, such changes are unlikely to be achieved coercively through violent revolutionary events aimed at the seizure of state power. Rather, they seem to require extended, non-violent, democratic-revolutionary processes, designed to facilitate large-scale transformations of consciousness, involving new insights into history, present realities, and future human possibilities, and redefinitions of individual and social interests. Such transformations of consciousness seem to be essential precursors of fundamental institutional transformations, and social movements are therefore needed to act as catalysts for these transformations.

Practitioners and educators in social welfare, because of their work with people victimized by existing social conditions, and with students of these conditions, could contribute to the development of social movements toward fundamental social change.
Agenda for Transition Policies

They could do so by consciously integrating a liberating political perspective into practice and education in human service settings. More specifically, they could develop and advocate equitable transition policies to replace the prevailing conservative social policy system, and they could experiment with innovative approaches to political action, practice, and teaching, designed to be consistent with the goals and values of liberating societal paradigms.

An important step in challenging the prevailing conservative mentality is to put on the political agenda a coherent set of social policies, derived from values of social and economic justice, yet feasible within the legal framework of the established social order. Such policies are intended to eliminate unemployment, poverty, and related conditions, and to obviate thus existing, demeaning welfare programs, rather than merely "reform" them. The elimination of unemployment and poverty are feasible, first-aid measures, attainable even before overcoming their sources in capitalist dynamics.

The policies suggested below are based on an economic and political analysis which rejects many assumptions of neoclassical economics, including the notion of fiscal constraints with respect to human needs. Assumptions implicit in these policies are: that the real wealth of a society, as differentiated from symbolic wealth, i.e., money, consists of the physical, intellectual, and emotional capacities of all its members, the aggregate of natural resources, and the aggregate of human generated material products, knowledge, and technology; that these "factors of wealth and well-being" be used and allocated rationally, so as to meet the needs of the entire population, rather than the profit interests of dominant individuals and classes; that these factors of wealth and well-being be developed and preserved wisely, rather than wasted; and finally, that decisions concerning the use and investment of societal resources be made democratically rather than by economic elites.

Here are a set of policies suggested for a transition program.

(a) Constitutional guarantees of employment suited to individual capacities and compensated at wage levels corresponding, at least, to the actual cost of a decent standard of living. Full employment can be achieved through adjusting the legal length of the workday of workweek in order to match
the number of positions in the economy to the number of individuals requiring work, or by publicly sponsoring projects designed to meet human needs not filled by private enterprise (e.g., housing, highways and bridges, hospitals, schools, parks, etc.)

(b) Constitutional guarantees of adequate income, out of tax revenues, for people unable to work due to age, illness, and handicapping conditions. Income guarantees can be implemented through universal systems of children's allowances, retirement pensions, and sickness and disability benefits, and paid at levels corresponding to the actual costs of a decent standard of living.

(c) Legal redefinition of the care of one's children and of disabled relatives in the home as socially necessary work; inclusion of such work in the G.N.P., and payment of adequate wages out of federal revenues to individuals engaging in this type of work rather than working outside their homes.

(d) Federally financed high-quality, public child care as an option for parents.

(e) Paid parental leave of 12 weeks; paid annual leave of 4 weeks; and eventually a universal system of paid sabbatical leave.

(f) Federally financed, preventive and curative health care, administered in a decentralized manner.

(g) Federally financed, life-long education, administered in a decentralized manner.

(h) Federally financed construction and maintenance of housing stock, infrastructure, and public transportation within and between cities and towns, administered in a decentralized manner.

(i) Federally financed environmental protection and conservation programs.

(j) Comprehensive tax reform, to assure adequate financing, without requiring government borrowing, for the policies listed above. Tax-reform should establish a tax-exempt basic income corresponding to the actual cost of living. Income beyond this level, regardless of source, would be subject to progressive taxation.
(k) Elimination of existing, stigmatizing welfare programs, AFDC, SSI, food stamps, Medicaid, etc., and phasing out of the regressive social security system.

(l) Moratorium on interest payments on the public debt.

Implicit in this policy agenda is an unequivocal rejection of the notion that the people of the United States cannot afford the programs to be authorized under these policies. Contrary to widely taken-for-granted assumptions, these programs do not involve real economic cost, but only political costs. Rather, they are likely to revitalize economic activity and human resources, and to enrich the quality of life and human relations. They involve full use and development of available productive and creative human capacities, and reallocation of existing factors of wealth and well-being. They also imply equitable redistribution of rights to use available resources and wealth.

Implementation of the proposed transition policies would make possible further stages of social and economic development which are unrealizable under present conditions. Full employment and elimination of poverty would reduce the dynamics of individual and intergroup competition, and would thus remove economic sources of discrimination by race, sex, age and other factors. Once economic sources of discrimination are overcome, it should be possible to deal with its psychological and social dimensions.

Next, it will be possible to focus on reorganizing and redesigning work in order to minimize stress and alienation and overcome obstacles to individual development inherent in the present mode of work and production. And, it will also be possible to focus on transforming the quality of goods and services in order to eliminate built-in obsolescence and waste of resources and to assure long-term use of high-quality products.

The foregoing changes would be conducive to a global justice focus which necessitates voluntary reductions of resource use by “over-developed,” countries to fair levels in terms of population size, and cooperative, nonexploitative economic relations between developed and developing countries. Fairness and justice in economic relations among the regions and countries of the world are preconditions for real peace. In turn, elimination of economic sources of wars should make possible
significant reductions of massive, irrational and wasteful investments of resources for "defense," thus freeing these resources for programs focused on the real needs of people.

Implementation of a nonconservative policy agenda requires readiness to reintroduce the notion of social and economic planning to the public agenda. Planning for people's needs through democratic processes would have to become a public priority, replacing the prevailing laissez-faire ideology, since fulfillment of human needs cannot be left to selfish interactions of profit-motivated actors in the market place. History has proved convincingly, that reliance on automatic, self-regulation by the "invisible hand" to promote the public good, is a hopeless fallacy.

Social Change Oriented Politics

Working toward a just society requires a style of politics compatible with the goals and values of such a society, rather than with those of prevailing unjust social orders. This means that pragmatic interest-group politics concerned with short-range solutions for separate policy issues and with winning limited concessions which do not challenge the status-quo of power and privilege, would have to be replaced with principled, nonmanipulative politics, aimed at promoting critical consciousness and redefinitions of interests, and at organizing social movements committed to long-range efforts toward social and economic justice. Realpolitik, the dominant mode of conventional politics, and the assumptions underlying it, are shaped by the dynamics and mentality of the established way of life and tend, therefore, to reproduce it, more or less intact. This approach can achieve incremental changes which may ameliorate suffering and problems. Such gains are meaningful as first-aid measures, but they are unlikely to add up to fundamental social changes.

Electoral politics in the United States and in many capitalist democracies are usually not conducive to alternative approaches to politics. Electoral politics are geared primarily to winning by manipulating the voting of ill-informed electorates. This involves dichotomizing issues into over-simplified alternatives, reinforcing unexamined assumptions and stereotypes, and
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generating distorted images through media-technologies. Fun-
damental social change which requires profound transforma-
tions of consciousness and actions, is therefore unlikely to be
accomplished through electoral politics. In spite of these
dynamics and limitations, the arena of electoral politics should
not be abandoned by social change activists. Rather, participa-
tion in this arena seems necessary for the following reasons,
provided such participation is free from illusions concerning the
social change potential of elections:

(a) damage control or containment and reduction of the degree
of destructive consequences of conservative politics for
exploited and oppressed classes;
(b) protection of civil and political rights by resisting tendencies
to inhibit expression of system-challenging political posi-
tions, and to repress social movements promoting funda-
mental social change;
(c) using the electoral arena for political education by pre-
senting critiques of capitalist democracy and its fallacious
assumptions, and visions of feasible, alternative social
orders based on social and economic justice, and doing this
in an open, honest, nonmanipulative dialogical manner.

From a social change perspective, electoral politics seem
thus suited mainly for defense against severe exploitation,
oppression, and repression, but less suited to advancing long-
range social change goals. Those goals require strategies that
reach beyond the electoral arena. Under present conditions, in
the United States, these strategies should include the following
components:

(a) promoting critical consciousness through communications
and interactions in everyday life, in places of work and
education, and in social situations;
(b) building networks of liberation movements, starting
through organizing on local levels and linking up with simi-
lar efforts elsewhere, within and beyond national bound-
aries;
(c) organizing active, nonviolent resistance to, and nonpar-
ticipation in, unjust practices and institutions;
(d) developing horizontally linked and coordinated networks of
voluntary, egalitarian-cooperative-democratic institutions
for production, exchange, and consumption of goods and services, in available spaces within, or parallel to, existing institutions and organizations.

Should conditions become more repressive, strategies may have to be modified, since every social situation requires different approaches toward social transformation.

Social Change-Oriented Practice

To overcome conservative tendencies in practice, and to function as agents for fundamental social change, practitioners require different theoretical frameworks from those now dominant, as well as attitudes of experimentation and critical consciousness toward their practice experience. They also need to help one another to study and evaluate evolving alternative approaches to practice, and to deal with resistance from administrators and supervisors in organizations practicing along conventional, status-quo reinforcing lines. An effective means for such help are support groups of practitioners from different organizations, who feel isolated and alienated in their respective places of work.

The following are suggested as elements of a framework for social-change-oriented practice:

(a) Human problems with which social welfare practice deals, are usually rooted in societal institutions and values, rather than in people's attributes and shortcomings. Resolution and prevention of these problems require therefore, not merely individual adjustments, but transformations of established societal patterns in ways conducive to fulfillment of human needs and to individual and social development for all.

(b) People, through their interactions, shape and maintain societal institutions and values. Hence, they are also able to transform established institutions and values through collective action, and to adjust them in ways compatible with their needs and with requirements of healthy development.

(c) Practice cannot be politically neutral. It always involves explicit or implicit political dimensions; it either confronts and challenges established societal institutions or it conforms to them openly or tacitly. Practitioners should avoid
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the illusion of neutrality and should consciously choose and acknowledge their political philosophy.

(d) Practice can also not be value-neutral; it either reflects or rejects of the dominant values of the established social order. Social-change-oriented practice should reflect values opposed to those underlying the status-quo: equality, cooperation, freedom from domination and exploitation, and affirmation of community.

(e) Practice should transcend technical-professional approaches, fragmented by fields, and concerned with relieving symptoms, reducing suffering, and facilitating adaptation and coping under prevailing social conditions. While these are valid and important, short-range objectives, they are not sufficient to overcome problems which are essentially social, economic, and political. Furthermore, human problems are usually not isolated fragments which can be solved by specific technical fixes, but symptoms of a way of life which needs to be transformed so that the problems may be overcome and prevented;

(f) A major medium for social-change oriented practice is a dialogical process, which begins with a sensitive exploration of problems experienced and perceived by people and moves on to help them discover links between their problems and societal dynamics. The process should facilitate insights into people’s capacities to shape and change societal institutions, and should help them to assert their worth, dignity, and rights. Finally, it should encourage and support people to work on solutions to their problems through involvement in collective action for necessary social change. The dialogical process must never involve indoctrination and manipulation: its aim is to facilitate the development of critical consciousness through a supportive, liberating, non-authoritarian, sensitive relationship.

(g) Practice should involve advocacy to assure for people the rights and services available under prevailing conditions. However, the maximum available at present is unlikely to be just and adequate. Hence, advocacy should transcend demands for fulfillment of already existing rights, present demands for equal rights and responsibilities, and reject
policies which are merely variations on the ancient theme of inequality.

(h) Practice should encourage development of everyone's innate capacities as the goal of just and free societies. It should unravel obstacles to such development in institutional and interpersonal violence—consequences of coercively established and maintained exploiting and alienating modes of work and exchange. And it should facilitate insights into the need for reorganizing and redesigning work as a condition for unobstructed human development.

(i) Practitioners should explore, individually and in support groups, whether, in prevailing social realities, they too are unable to actualize their innate potential; whether their individual development is also inhibited; and whether they too are victimized by exploiting and oppressive social and economic dynamics, though in different forms and to a lesser extent than the people they serve. They may realize through such explorations that they too have a personal stake in human liberation and equality, and that they should cease to identify with dominant classes and their agencies and policies, and should instead identify with, and join the struggles and movements of oppressed people. They may also conclude that they should transcend divisions between themselves and the people they serve, divisions reflective of conservative concepts of professionalism, according to which education and professional skills entitle people to privilege, higher status and authority.

(j) As far as possible, social-change-oriented practitioners should aim to transform the style and quality of practice-relations and of administration from vertical, authoritarian, inegalitarian toward horizontal, democratic, egalitarian patterns. Every space over which practitioners have influence, should be so transformed to reflect alternative possible human relations. In this way, counter-realities or prefigurations of future possibilities can be imagined and experimented with within existing human services settings, by and for the providers and users of the services. Unions and support groups of workers and service users could incorporate such prefigurations. Undoubtedly, such experiments are difficult.
They do involve risks, resistance and conflicts, since they test and strain the limits of what is possible within the prevailing social order. Such testing and straining of limits are, however, necessary elements of liberation processes.

Finally, social-change-oriented practitioners should initiate dialogues with colleagues concerning practice and workplace issues, in order to spread critical consciousness concerning these matters. They should also try to organize unions, support groups, and units of social movements at places of work, and they should participate in social and political action.

Social-Change-Oriented Education

Universities, and especially professional schools, tend to prepare students for "successful" adaptation to established ways of life and for assumption of appropriate roles and positions, rather than for critical consciousness concerning societal dynamics and their consequences. Because of these conservative tendencies of schools, teachers pursuing a social-change perspective through education, are often isolated and may encounter resistance from colleagues and administrators. Philosophically, these teachers inhabit a different universe of discourse than most of their colleagues, and they have to link up with similarly oriented teachers and practitioners from other schools and work places, to develop mutually supportive and affirming relationships, and help one another to develop and evaluate their educational practice.

Style and substance of social-change oriented teaching are discussed below separately. It should be noted, however, that these are but two related dimensions of a unified process. For style is also substance: it either complements and reflects social-change-oriented substance, or it contradicts it.

Education can be a liberating experience when students are expected to be responsible for, and self-directing in, their studies, and when teachers serve as advisors, facilitators, resources, and nonauthoritarian assistants. This does not mean abandoning responsibility, initiative and leadership by teachers. It does mean, however, clarity concerning the limits of responsibilities of students and teachers, and fulfillment of one's part of a shared undertaking.
Major aims of liberating education are development of critical consciousness concerning socially shaped realities, alleged facts, and personal opinions, and discovery of one's self as a potentially creative, productive, and self-directing subject in relation to community, society, and nature. Such critical consciousness and self-awareness tend to emerge within cooperative, nonhierarchical settings in which teachers act as colleagues in pursuit of knowledge rather than as "experts" and authorities. In such settings, learning can be mutual and dialogical rather than competitive and one-directional. Also, in such a context, learning goals, requirements, and evaluations can be worked out cooperatively by students and teachers.

Teachers should map and recommend domains for study, facilitate the dialogical learning process, suggest appropriate sources and projects, consult with students on individual learning goals, respond critically and constructively to student projects, and facilitate student evaluations of their own learning. Implicit in this teaching style is the assumption that education toward self-actualization in a just and democratic society of the future, requires creation, in the present, of liberated spaces, i.e., counter-realities to domination and control, in which students can experience in the here and now of a classroom, prefigurations of self-directions and freedom.

The teaching style suggested here involves, however, dilemmas concerning the reactions of students to the absence of structures and controls and to the expectations that they assume responsibility for self-direction of their studies. For most students this is a new experience, different from previous schooling as well as from experiences in other classes in which they are concurrently enrolled. Reactions tend to range from uncertainty and helplessness to creative and enriching learning and personal growth. A constructive response to this is using reactions of students as opportunities for exploring the meanings, costs, and benefits of self-direction and freedom.

Other dilemmas result from conflicts with colleagues concerning the introduction of a radically different educational style and philosophy into a school. An appropriate focus for coping with this is everyone's commitment, in principle, to academic freedom. Experience suggests that being open about what one
does, asserting one's right to teach in accordance with one's educational philosophy and values, while respecting different philosophies, styles, and values of colleagues, does eventually bring about a modus vivendi and a measure of mutual tolerance.

As to substance, the following social-change-oriented curriculum has been derived from the practice framework suggested above. It reflects efforts to help students overcome misconceptions concerning societal realities which result from the hegemony of conservative ideology over all stages of education and consciousness formation:

(a) human nature, human needs, and the natural environment of human life: the human condition;
(b) requirements and dynamics of human development;
(c) natural and human created obstacles to human development;
(d) sources, evolution, and dynamics of social life and of different cultures;
(e) consequences of variations in social institutions and ideologies, and in the organization of work, production, and exchange for human development and well-being;
(f) critical-historical analysis of social, economic, political, cultural, and ideological dimensions of life in the United States with special attention to race, gender, and social class dynamics;
(g) sources, evolution, and functions of value systems in social life;
(h) exploration of personal values and interests in relation to personal history, experiences and goals;
(i) social-change-oriented practice in direct service to individuals and social units, service design and administration, analysis and development of social policy, and social and political action toward short- and long-range objectives;
(j) psychological insights for working sensitively and constructively with people of diverse backgrounds, in different situations, focused on different human concerns;
(k) critical approaches to social research, transcending empirical, descriptive, positivist approaches.

The study foci listed here are organized by issues rather than by academic disciplines. Studying these issues may require dif-
fferent combinations of sources and methods from social and natural sciences. The various sciences should be viewed and used as complementary perspectives on aspects of human life in nature and in society.

The social-change-oriented curriculum suggested here involves dilemmas. It is obvious that there is more to study than students are able to in a conventional graduate program in social welfare which usually leaves little time for elective studies. The reason there is so much, is that preparation for alternative practice does require an entire "alternative" curriculum, including studies of theoretical foundations and practice, as well as analysis and critique of conventional foundations, assumptions, and service approaches. There is no solution to this dilemma other than acknowledging it, introducing students to the many domains they ought to explore, and motivating them to continue the process of study and critical experimentation as an integral aspect of responsible practice throughout their lives.

A related dilemma is that teachers may lack competence in some substantive domains to which students should be exposed. Here too, the solution is to acknowledge this reality, and to guide students to appropriate study sources. Of course, teachers are also students, and they should over time broaden and deepen their own knowledge, experience, and competence.

Epilogue

I have argued throughout this essay that people can overcome conservative tendencies which now threaten human development on local and global scales. I have also suggested approaches through which social-change-oriented practitioners and educators in social welfare can contribute to the struggle for human survival and liberation. The suggestions sketched here are tentative and incomplete, for the search for practice and teaching approaches consistent with an egalitarian-democratic philosophy is only in its early stages. This search has been going on for several years in the United States and elsewhere. Gradually, organizations and a literature have been emerging through which people are sharing and examining relevant experiences and ideas. Also, in many places, practitioners and teachers are meeting regularly to support one another and learn from
one another, in order to advance the liberation process and to transcend firmly entrenched conservative tendencies. The more people will get involved in these efforts, the greater the likelihood that we will succeed, and that the human species will survive and actualize its rich potential.

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Philosophical Disputes in Social Work: Social Justice Denied

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The debate in the social work academy about the pertinence of empiricist/positivist modes of knowing and doing is epistemological in character. It is the argument of this essay that prior ontological questions must be answered before the profession of social work can profitably enter this debate. These questions center on the nature of social work, the symbolic and moral essence of the social work enterprise and what the profession is becoming.

The profession of social work as actually practiced could hardly be accused of a mania for a positivist tools for practice (Welch, 1983). The social work academy, however, is buzzing with a debate about the relevance of such tools and their accompanying presuppositions for practice (Fischer, 1981, 1984; Gordon, 1983; Heineman (Pieper), 1981; Hudson, 1982; Karger, 1983; Ruckdeschel and Farris, 1981; Brekke, 1986; Weick, 1987). The debate, now soft and insinuated, now loud and bitter, centers on selecting either a rigorous or a relevant epistemology to guide social work education, practice, and research.

It is the intent of this essay to briefly assay and critique core elements of the debate; to account for the ostensible and premature resolution of the debate; to argue that prior questions must be answered before the epistemological conflicts can be reasonably resolved; and to suggest that these prior questions are ontological and to suppose how they might be answered.

The Debate

If the debate is about the fundamental epistemology of social work knowledge and practice it is about questions of how professionals know, how professional knowing is different from mundane knowing, and how professionals come to know, evaluate, and characterize their practice. The roots of the debate
extend back for centuries, fertilized extensively by Enlighten-
ment fomenting over the best avenues to apprehend and control
elements of the universe in the interest of "progress" and "free-
dom" (Gay, 1969). The empiricist contends that all knowledge
must be based on the perceptions of the senses. Such knowledge
can be systematically gathered and accumulated, and its validity
put to the test by standard method and instrumentation. Ratio-
nalists on the other hand, argue that the mind inevitably
enlarges, shapes, and or imbues impressions gained from sen-
sory, empirical experience. Another related facet of the debate,
again embedded in our past, is the tension between realists and
idealists, the former asserting that the objects of our knowing
are, in fact, real and have an existence apart from us and they
can be known as they exist, while the latter posit that these
objects are to some degree, a product of mind's intention, experi-
ence, and desire (Popper, 1982; Eccles, 1980).

In the social work academy, this hoary debate can be exem-
plified by the exchange between Martha Heineman-Pieper (1981;
1985) and Walter Hudson (1982). Others have contributed to this
occasionally acrimonious dialogue, not the least of whom are
(although the irony of their particular foofaraw is that they both,
as Haworth (1986) has pointed out, are empiricists). Heineman-
Pieper believes that the positivist approach to understanding
human experience is naive, inadequate to such a task and may
even falsify, in its reliance on measurement, the essence of
human experience. She asserts, in summarizing critiques of pos-
itivism from a variety of fields, that what is unique about human
experience is that it is formed and can only be known in inter-
action, participation, and dialogue (Heineman-Pieper, 1985).
Hudson (1982), on the other hand, puts it quite directly: "Constructs that cannot be defined, operationalized, and then measured are mentalisms that are useless to an understanding of the world in which we live" (p. 256).

This pale summary on the central issues at hand indicate that
its substance is, in fact, epistemological, although there are those
who have tried to extend the argument beyond questions of
knowing (Weick, 1987). Confusions and conflicts over the nature
of practice knowledge and the state of mind of the practitioner
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have obscured prior questions that must be analyzed, appreciated, and answered before the epistemological issues can be reasonably grappled with: questions about the very nature of social work and what social work is becoming; that is to say, what exactly is the essence of the profession of social work's being?

These are ontological questions; and require inquiry directed to the existential basis of the profession. If social work as a profession, merely deals with questions about knowing, however constructively, we stand in danger of the tail wagging the dog, the method dictating the meaning, a prospect that forebodes the devolution of social work into technique or technology. To embarrass an old biological saw, in this case ontology must precede epistemology.

The Debate: Resolution by Default

Other forces and developments move to harden the debate and to assure a resolution in the direction of what Donald Schön (1983) calls the Technical/Rationalist or empiricist model of thinking and acting.

The most stentorian note sounded in the blare of the debate has been the rise of professionalism to unprecedented hegemony in authoring social decisions. In our culture, professions have become the standard-bearers of science and its progeny, technology. The prevailing definition of the concept of profession would denote something like "... professional activity consists in instrumental problem-solving made vigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique" (Schön, 1983, p. 21). Ernest Greenwood (1957) in a most celebrated discourse on the nature of professions generally, and the social work profession in particular, argues that "To generate valid theory that will provide a solid base for professional techniques requires the application of the scientific method to the service-related problems of the profession" (p. 76). In essence, professionals are to become applied scientists.

Schön (1983) is highly critical of the Technical/Rationalist model because it distorts, if not denies altogether, the actuality of what most professionals know and do. It also comes tantalizingly close to confusing method with essence and tends to
belittle other ways of knowing and doing as either soft-headed or subversive of rigor.

The professional as Technical/Rationalist becomes part of an elite, bureaucratic and entrepreneurial, that institutionalizes the positivist perspective (even though much of what passes for science and technology would fail any positivistic test of rigor and validity). No less a contributor to this hegemony, perhaps even a result of it—it is difficult to say—is the rampant individualizing or psychologizing of social misery. In our world, the idiom and world view of capitalism, and the language and judgment of the professions have become one. In a world where the marketplace rules, a blithe ignorance of the historical evolution and political/economic configurations that abet what we define as individual difficulties makes some sense. This “social amnesia” (Jacoby, 1975) has cast the professions adrift from social relevance so that some have evolved into a “jejune conglomeration of technical devices and methods” (Saleebey, 1987). So, for example, it is not politic to raise serious social, and economic, questions about why more women than men suffer depression. It is far more lucrative, and amenable to the extension of available technology, whether pill, placebo, or panacea, to treat each woman one by one as they troop through the office, consulting room, or clinic. We do postulate some notions about collective forces that may be involved but they usually are little more than multipliers of the single case. In social work, there has been notable effort to develop characterizations of the environment but even they may be somewhat debilitated by social amnesia. Germain (1987), in her review of developmental theory and the passing away of stage theories, gives a nod to the mutually interactive effect of individual-environment relationships, but speaks nary a word about the historical embeddedness of, or institutional pressures that drive, the course of individual development. Jacoby (1975) says it well in his critique of the individual psychologies that rule today’s consciousness:

The convergence from contrasting directions on the importance of the subject as an emotional and psychic entity points to a real development of society; not as apologists would have it, that society has fulfilled basic material needs and is moving to the higher reaches of liberation, but the reverse:
domination is reaching the inner depths of men and women. The last preserves of the autonomous individual are under siege. (p. 17)

The Technical/Rationalist model, funded by the individualist bias, has swept (or is sweeping) other points of view, looney and legitimate alike, under the rug. To its credit, social work resists, but these forces are impressively powerful and culture is shot through with them. We should not, as a profession, engage in the debate over rigor versus relevance until we are clear about our identity, until we firmly understand what we are about, and thus, can assess the epistemological questions from a sound ontological vantage point.

The Ontological Issues Denied

As I said above, broad cultural forces conspire to embolden the advocates of a "scientific" world view. These forces work as well to sap the identity of the profession of social work.

Christopher Lasch, in two books (1979; 1984) has drawn a portrait of contemporary culture shot through with "narcissism", not the self-love of the overweening, strutting egoist, but the self-doubt of an individual uncertain of the boundaries and contours of the self, an individual who has trouble distinguishing between me and not-me, one who cannot comfortably discern what is illusory and what is real about the self. Add to this a miasma of disaster and threat permeating the culture—"the threat of AIDS, the terrors of air flight, the looming of the Big Earthquake", etc.—and you have individuals who must travel light, avoid lengthy or profound personal commitments, disavow emotional encumbrances, and ignore communal burdens and responsibilities. Such penetrating themes in our culture make the very notion of social welfare, of caritas, of responsibility to others quaint, if not frankly annoying. Social workers live in this culture, too, and it is not far-fetched to imagine that such themes and strains can make us deaf to our basic commitments and raisons d'être.

The gradual decline of New Deal sensibilities and the weakening of the liberal agenda of the past few decades, and more pointedly, over the last eight years, have also eroded the firmness of our ontologic sense. Listen to Republicans and Demo-
crats today talk about social welfare policy—if they do at all—about the social good, and you might be listening to a cadre of parvenus bat around stories about welfare "abusers." The error here is to think, as some do, that the liberal quest has been accomplished or to think, as others do, that it has abysmally failed. But thinking either to be true, in a climate of political/economic rationalism and restraint, dampens, in the profession and outside it, the central ontological business of social work, the pursuit of social justice. Recoiling, perhaps, from the excesses and failures of the 60s we find ourselves faced with a public morality that reflects, more often than not, the credos and prescriptions of the marketplace.

Not, then, simply the rise of the Technical/Rationalist conception of the professions has led us to this debate, but wider social and cultural trends compel us as well. Not only have they conspired to make us less certain than we might be about who we are, but they have suckered us into a debate which we cannot competently argue until we more firmly establish a professional identity.

The Ontology of Social Work

The word ontology promises more than I can deliver: all that is intended here is a survey of what I regard as the symbolic and existential infrastructure of our professional edifice. As you may discover, if we accept these notions, two effects follow: social work will never be, nor should it, like the other, more established professions; in the academy, we must spit out the positivist bit, and continue the search for a more thorough-going and humane inquiry.

It was John Romanyszyn (1971) who, years ago, through the power of his example, the clarity of his thinking, and the depth of his commitment best exemplified what might be the existential heart of this profession. We begin, he suggested, we are instructed and fueled by an ethic of indignation (Romanyszyn, 1972), not bloated self-righteousness, or mindless indignation, but a palpable sense of hurt and outrage at indignities afflicting—unjustly, unnecessarily, and often illegally—on people(s). It is a kind of rectitude, even resentment, over acts and attitudes which deny human dignity and thwart human possibility. It is a
sense that, in all ways, we should strive for and support the triumphs of organism over machine, of home over institution, of learning over profit, of identity over celebrity, of the real over the illusory. This ethic requires that, in our small way, individually and collectively, we be stewards over the possibilities and requisites of humanness, and, as is needed, advocates for those who are oppressed, denied, misrepresented, and vulnerable.

*Humane inquiry and understanding* is part of the corpus of social work (Hampden-Turner, 1970; Romanyshyn, 1971; Reason and Rowan, 1981). We seek means of understanding that without violating its meaning, or distorting its nature, can bring us closer to the vagaries and mysteries of the human condition. Life is awash in ambiguity, change, paradox, contradiction, and the continuing tension between the possible and the thwarted, the tragic and the hopeful. We are reluctant to give up our own illusions and myths and to confront these sometimes discordant and frightening elements of the human condition. But we must. We do not want to lapse into the cheery bon mots of modern pop-psych, to pin on the "smile button" that obfuscates the genuine struggles and the real sadness that are the mortar of civilization's bricks (Saleebey, 1987). Neither do we want to wallow in a kind of European existential muck waiting for the Godot of unkind fate. And we may not want to distantiate ourselves from the objects of our interest and concern as the positivists urge. To be conversant with the tragic, to be aware of oppression is not to lose sight of the possibilities of liberation, the turning of the dross of mechanical detached labor, emotional numbness, and intellectual limit into the potential gold of eros—sensual, natural energy, and individual and collective empowerment. To accept the tragic is liberating because, no longer deluded, we can use our own powers of mind and body, our will, and our ethic to restrict the scope of ignorance, fear, prejudice, and oppression. Having confronted it, we can resolve to use the fruits of any inquiry in behalf of improving the human condition.

A second presumption of humane inquiry is that such inquiry is always participatory, a product of a mutual quest, dialogue, and joint learning. Just the opposite, of course, typifies the most elegant positivist mode of inquiry, the experiment. As
Argyris (1975) says of this exquisite jewel in the empiricist crown:

An experiment is a peculiar 'temporary' system. In order to obtain as unambiguous evidence about causation as possible and in order to control extraneous variables, the experimenter strives to gain as much control as possible over the design and execution of the experiment. (p. 474)

This is not a scenario in which one can easily discover the elements of human experience, although one might conceivably discover how people act when they are deceived, encouraged to obey, and not allowed to learn. More humane inquiry, however, rests on vastly different assumptions, and among these are that reality is, in significant degree as far as humans are concerned, constructed symbolically and through interpersonal negotiation; that discovery of lawlike constructs and the causal links are unlikely if not impossible goals, that research methodology is participatory and idiographic, and that all theories, methods, and questions for inquiry are enshrouded with values (Rodwell, 1987; Reason and Rowan, 1981).

A third ontological obligation of social work is focused compassion and caring, requiring of us a mimetic or empathic lens through which to see; a stance toward the world of human experience based on a profound appreciation of the root similarities of the human condition for all of us, a positive affective identification with others' humanness, a deep respect for others' uniqueness, and an active resolve to participate in the gathering of individual and group strengths, aspirations, and possibilities (Rifkin, 1983). The manifestation of such caring is dialogue, a peculiar sort of relationship between individuals based upon the mutual appreciation and respect of two (or more) people engaged in a joint project carried out in an affective matrix that is loving, humble, hopeful, trusting, and dedicated to a critical search for possibility, liberation, and empowerment within the surrounding environment (Freire, 1973).

Dialogue is the only way, not only in vital questions of the political order, but in all expressions of our being. Only by virtue of faith, however, does dialogue have power and meaning; by faith in man (read: humanity) and [its] possi-
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bilities by the faith that I can only become truly myself when other [individuals] also become themselves. (Jaspers, in Freire, 1973, p. 45)

The last and most important element of our being is the quest for social justice, and although the most resonant, it is possibly the most difficult to pin down. Incapable of a philosophical treatise, I can only offer some of the threads that, with others, form the wholecloth of the social justice.

(a) Social resources are distributed on the principle of need with the clear understanding that such resources underlie the development of personal resources, with the proviso that entitlement to such resources is one of the gifts of citizenship.

(b) Opportunities for personal and social development are open to all with the understanding that those who have been unfairly hampered through no fault of their own will be appropriately compensated.

(c) The establishment, at all levels of society, of agenda, and policies that have human development and the enriching of human experience as their essential goal and are understood to take precedence over other agenda and policies is essential.

(d) The arbitrary exercise of social and political power is forsaken.

(e) Oppression as a means for establishing priorities, for developing social and natural resources and distributing them, and resolving social problems is forsworn.

These four cornerstones—indignation, inquiry, compassion, and justice—have at least two important corollaries. The first is that all human beings, even the most debilitated, defiled, and disenfranchised, have strengths and potential and some capacity to transform themselves. We do not give power to the people, we encourage them to discover and employ the powers of the self or of the people. Second, every human being exists in a web of relationships, institutions, and sociohistorical circumstances that are profoundly important in determining the possibilities of liberation, transformation, or development.
These first principles of our professional being, to the extent that you accept them, precede our participation in the great debate and suggest some of the terms of that debate.

(a) The personal is political: Even the most private problems of relationship and consciousness have political and social dimensions. In Jacoby's (1975) words: "... the isolation that damns the individual to scrape along in a private world derives from a public and social one" (p. 44).

(b) The politics of helping for social work centers on empowerment: We are committed to helping people discover and employ the resources (knowledge, experience, motivations, skills, relationships) that may have been suppressed by self-limiting ideologies and oppressive institutional arrangements. This requires that we focus on the strengths inherent within individuals, groups, neighborhoods and communities.

(c) Insight is, first and foremost, inspired by social critique: Transforming actions, strategies, and ideas are funded, in part, by a peoples' capacity to see beyond the conventional wisdom, and institutional ideologies and arrangements. The anorexic young female, for example, must be helped in understanding how her (and others) self-image, her very identity is obscured and manipulated by the marketplace and media, otherwise she remains at risk for other consequences of a distorted and abused identity (Saleebey, 1987).

(d) Closeness to the people is essential: If we desire to help give voice to the silent, advocate for the oppressed, we must approach them in communion, and cooperation through dialogue and not the implicitly required distance and detachment of esoteric technique.

(e) Theories for practice focus on the dialectical nature of human striving and interaction: The world of human experience is constructed of polarities, appositions, and tensions. The usual inclination of individuals is to control such tension through the suppression of one side of a dialectic that must be elevated to consciousness if action and movement is to be freed. For many males, as an example, one side of their potential for liberated action has been buried under the delicts of capitalism, commerce, and technology—the
organic, sensual, caring part of their being has become alien. Males, to be empowered more fully, must confront both the instrumental and affective elements of their being.

Radicalism Redux

The preceding sounds suspiciously like an outworn radical agenda, now virtually forgotten or, perhaps, thoroughly discredited. Later radicalism waned as a significant social force because it forgot its history, wallowed in excess or because it failed to formulate an agenda for positive transformation. As a profession, we cannot foist off these beliefs and principles on the rest of society but we can, individually and collectively, pursue them as we engage in the daily round of practice and citizenship. If we fail to assert and follow them then we stand as one of the legion of guardians of the status quo, as one of the minions of social control or, perhaps more likely, as one of the corps of petty bureaucrats of therapeutic tinkerers.

If we hope to enter the current epistemological debate unfolding within the profession with vigor and resolution, our ontological awareness and commitments must be heightened and made formidable. To the extent that we do that, social justice will not be denied, and we will stand as advocates for relevance before rigor, and meaning before method.

References


Advocacy/Empowerment: An Approach to Clinical Practice for Social Work

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Social Work has been imbedded in a structural and ideological contradiction throughout its history. The profession, its employing institutions, and the problems confronted by its clients are all produced by the same political economy that pays its workers and supports its schools. Ideologically, the profession has avoided the confrontation implied by its dependency upon individual defect explanatory or causal analysis frameworks that constitute a betrayal of its real constituencies. An advocacy/empowerment paradigm is offered as an alternative.

Social work has been embedded in a structural contradiction since its professional origins. The nature of this contradiction arises from the social historical fact that the profession receives both its legitimation and primary funding from the capitalist state, the same structural base that creates the poverty and abuses of its clients (Ehrenreich, 1985; Gough, 1985). The profession has been able to avoid or deny its internal contradiction through the adaptation or development of individual defect explanatory paradigms to guide its practice (Rose, 1972). Whether the guiding model has been taken from psychiatry, psychodynamic theory, ego psychology, behaviorism, or even more recent progressive psychosocial concepts, the result has been the same — systematic exclusion of the social reality of capitalist structures, ideological forms and processes shaping daily life and individual subjective experience (Zaretsky, 1973).

This paper articulates an alternative concept of clinical practice, one based upon advocacy/empowerment theory and practice principles (Rose and Black, 1985). Essential to this construct is the notion of "social being": the assumption that every person lives his/her life as social historical experience. We live within a social historical, contextual and socially constructed reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967), that shapes personal identities and social relationships. With this assumption in place, it becomes necessary to acknowledge other social historical facts.
of daily life (which cannot be elaborated here). Briefly, of primary importance is the capitalist mode of production which necessitates domination, naturalizes hierarchy, and requires competition among working and nonworking people for survival (Braverman, 1974; Gough, 1985). These structurally derived, inherent characteristics, resulting from private ownership and the necessity for social control, in turn typify the social historical forms through which capitalism and its prerequisites for human development express themselves in daily life: the workplace relationship (the free labor contract, with its inherent structured unemployment, maintenance of an industrial reserve army, required competition between workers and isolation of workers from one another and from systematic knowledge of their socially structured experience of powerlessness) thus comes to characterize relationships in other typical social forms such as the family, school, or social agency.

Within these socially legitimated forms, and their boundaries, the contours for adult identity and the beliefs about childhood are constructed (Aries, 1962). Naturalizing the social historical forms and their mandatory functional behaviors, making them appear to be inevitable, a-historical, biological, has been the task of academic disciplines responsible for theories of human development. Confinement to rationalizing theories which support the existence of an oppressive state has resulted in the limitation which people experience in expressing whatever feelings arise that are inconsistent with socially expected behaviors (determined by socially designated roles). With system rationalizing concepts of social forms and even one's own identity as the basic conceptual tools to organize perception and explain experience, we are forced to internalize a social reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) that does not function to promote our development (Liebow, 1966; Fanon, 1968; Sennett and Cobb, 1973; Rubin, 1976). Believing in the "promises" while being constricted by the realities, seeing and seeking freedom in confining legitimate social forms, countless people experience themselves as failures, as stupid or inadequate. Many frequently feel silently crazy in their presumed isolated frustration and confusion. If nothing else, the therapy explosion of recent years gives testimony to the paucity of social or emotional supports in
typical, form-defined relationships (i.e., the "natural environment") and to the ineffectiveness of their rationalizing ideologies as vehicles for self-understanding.

The advocacy/empowerment orientation to practice is an effort to combat the socially structured alienation, isolation, and poverty of substantive content available to understand ourselves and daily life. We refer to our perspective as an approach rather than a model because we believe that the practitioner must be the creative, producing force in whatever he/she does. Where models assert both a conceptual framework and establish a set of required behaviors, we will articulate only a set of foundation principles which serve as the premises for practice. This practice is itself seen as empowering because it sets the responsibility for determining what one does with the person(s) doing it rather than taking that responsibility away and turning it over to an abstract and often unknown "authority". Put another way, power arises from producing or, at the very least, participating in determining how to produce one's activity — not from consuming "proper" or "professional" behaviors and serving as the conduit for them in working with others.

A Note on Social Being

We live in a society where life is organized through explicit socially legitimated forms — work, the family, sex roles. Life is valued through the acquisition of commodities and status accumulation (worker, wife/husband, parent, etc.) which overtly or covertly is tied to individual success or failure in competition with others. As individuals, the relative structural isolation we experience is furthered in our separation from others by the power of social meanings attached to race, age, gender, ethnicity or sexual preference. These contextual factors shape our identities. They are not extraneous variables which influence our growth and development, or even complex external factors which we must confront (although we must do this as well). Rather, these social historical forces and forms, and the conceptual meaning attached to them, saturate our existence both internally and objectively. Each of us is reduced in our human potential by the structural existence of poverty, racism, sexism, etc., precisely because the existence of these factors reduces social diversity and its consequent enriching possibilities.
Restrictions, competition and control are built into our historically contoured identity which is itself a reflection of the historically allowable social relationships legitimated in our society. People individually, as well as in their functional and often reciprocal roles as components of these forms (i.e., as family members, workers, students, etc.), are evaluated successively in their performance of behaviors in which success and failure are designated status situations determined by others more powerful and with greater legitimation. We appear to succeed in our lives to the extent that we successfully internalize others' ideas of who we shall become and accumulate social roles and commodities appropriate to our designated position. (Ironically, there exists a "laissez faire"/social Darwinian assumption about subjective development, namely, that we all have the same opportunities to achieve mature adulthood, so that when this does not occur, the responsibility can be attributed either to the individual or his/her parenting.)

Others emerge continuously as the authorities who seem to actively know and steer our destiny, identity and performance. Few of us seem to deeply know how we have arrived at where we are as adults, feeling more known and acted upon than knowing and producing our own lives (Freire, 1968). We are mystified by this experience primarily because the "others" are often loved ones, family members, teachers, clergy, or other role models who have social legitimation and even intimate meaning. Legitimation and intimacy then serve as the medium through which strictures or boundaries of appropriate behavior become internalized as signposts of an individual's mature emotional development as well as of the strength of his/her familial bonds. Love and familial intimacy thus function as a double bind: caring and confining, raising through regulating, with only the positive dimension available to our consciousness. This experience, of course, arises as the developmental parallel to the normal experience of work in capitalist relations: workers, in order to survive, follow the dictates of their bosses, regarding what they do, how they do it, how they relate to one another in the course of doing their work, and in how they express and assess themselves (Terkel, 1974). Often, especially in economic hard times, they are expected to be as grateful for their jobs as they were to their families.
Social being is a concept which encompasses these understandings but is not limited to them. For, just as there exist permanent contradictions in the mode of production and social relations of capitalism (since private accumulation and social control cannot produce the bases for social development and creative fulfillment), so too do there exist contradictions in the people whose lives are socially shaped by capitalist reality. Understanding the structural basis of the contradiction is what is hidden by the prevailing individual defect paradigms and practices in the profession. The "hidden" dimension arises when these conceptual frameworks act to disguise the behavioral and emotional residue of daily life as defects within people disassociated from their contextual experience (Sennett and Cobb, 1973), or "decontextualized" from their daily lives (Rose and Black, 1985). Emotional experience is relegated to the "irrational" by rationalizing theories justifying the validity of the state and its building blocks of sex roles, the family, work, etc. In this way the behavioral dysfunctions or the emotional suffering experienced by people can never serve as critiques of the set of social relationships and structural or ideological entrapments imposed upon people as daily life requirements of mature children or adults. It is precisely in this decontextualizing practice that typical clinical models of social work inadvertently reproduce the feeling of powerlessness, the experience of oneself as inadequate, incompetent or crazy, even when adaptation to client roles may promote immediate or short-term relief and the appearance of growth.

The Principles of Advocacy/Empowerment

Implied in what has been written above is the assumption that subjectivity and individual identity stand in permanent, unseparable relation to objective social historical structures, legitimate forms, and constructions of social reality. This inherent interpenetration gives us our humanity so long as we recognize the capacity we have to become conscious of our experience and change it (Freire, 1968; Rose and Black, 1985). Prevailing practice forms deny us this opportunity precisely because they acknowledge only our individual existence while denying us
our social historical experience — or the social class and cultural foundation for our identity, our social relationships and our understanding of our experience. Even the recent and very positive developments which acknowledge that racial, ethnic, and cultural factors are relevant to a person's sense of self often ignore the larger social contextual arena which constructs and reproduces racism, sexism, etc.

This analysis gives rise to the first principle of the advocacy/empowerment approach — "Contextualization". Contextualization means acknowledging the social being of the client. It means that the old social work dictum, "Start where the client is", has two dimensions: the person as she/he presents her/himself, with the problem definition that she/he delivers, as well as the need to learn exactly how the person has arrived at that view of his/her situation. It includes learning what familial or other social supports rely upon (or, perhaps, are functionally reciprocally dependent upon) the client and his/her problem definition as it is presented.

This orientation includes the belief that clients know themselves better than we do or can in terms of their individual experience or in relation to racial, ethnic or cultural experience that differs from that of the worker. It also assumes that workers have the possibility of helping people to learn of their social historical existence and its influence in shaping their experience and perceptions of themselves as dynamic dimensions of a larger social contextual/ideologically constructed universe. Thus, clinical dialogue is formed with two elements of expertise, one belonging to each participant, each assuming the necessity of producing communication that can develop and clarify the individual's experience of her/his contextual participation. Vitally important in this process is listening to the client's presentation of self, generating elaboration of perceptions and experienced feelings, articulating support in the sense of sharing understandings of how the client would formulate problems as he/she has, externalizing the problem by indicating its social base, and assisting the client to look critically at the externalized or contextual situation. In this process, it is also necessary to recognize racial, cultural or other significant differences between workers and clients, to encourage clients to discuss
their meaning, and to inform the worker of how these vital factors enrich the complexity of the client's life.

The commitment to dialogue replaces either the typical process of problem solving or the formation of a contract between client and worker. This process also requires demystification of the treatment setting and relationship: early on, the client's understanding of the setting and his/her expectations must be elaborated along with the worker's. The task of the worker is to enter the reality experienced by the client as the client feels it, understands it, and participates in it (Freire, 1968). The internalized construction of reality that guides the client's perceptions and feelings must be elaborated and externalized with the client as the producer of the pace and extent of disclosure. Particular attention is given to racial or ethnic differences in relation to workers' expectations of clients' levels or pace of disclosure. Should the process become obstructed, the worker needs to acknowledge the obstruction and share responsibility for it: the choice to disclose or share deeply felt experience thus becomes seen not in terms of cooperative versus resistant participation by the client, but rather as a choice the client is making based upon her/his sense of trust, support for who he/she is, and a sense of risk in the relationship with the worker in comparison to the risks in relationships with meaningful others. The focus of communication thus has two dimensions: the substantive content and emotional experience being shared or obstructed and the process of dialogue between the participants, a process where the client must always be in control of where she/he is moving and at what pace. The choice to continue or remain in the same place becomes a two dimensional act. The option is mediated by the client's self-confidence, itself mediated by the person's perception and feelings about him/herself within a social network that either supports his/her social development or supports static or regressive tendencies. Since the person is socially participating in networks of social relationships which comprise major inputs into his/her identity, the issue of who benefits from movement/stagnation becomes a potential subject for externalization, critical reflection, and possible action.

Substantively, the contextualization principle suggests that the worker assist the client to express, elaborate, externalize, and
critically reflect upon the feelings and understandings she/he has about him/herself in the context of daily life. Feelings exist two dimensionally: as an intensity factor which guides understanding of the personal stakes involved in past and present social relationships as well as about one’s own human value or meaning to others; and as data from which a real political analysis can be built to develop understandings of power, legitimation, or coerced dependency as these have been part of the person's daily mystified life. Thus, rather than appearing only as a "problem", the client is urged to share aspects of daily life as it is experienced: not simply what he/she does daily (because that would support the person in thinking that she/he were simply a functional or behavioral unit), but how these activities came into being, what role the person played in selecting what he/she does and from among which possible options the activities of daily life were assumed.

Parallel to this description is the urgent need to learn about the person's feelings regarding being an adaptive (versus consciously choosing) participant in the process of her/his own development. The issue of how the client came to assume what was expected of him/her in the past and in the present requires some elaboration as well, along with what the person expected to experience from assuming different activities, roles, and responsibilities. The difference and distance between what was perceived and expected, when compared to what is being or has been experienced, constitutes the critical ground for contextualized dialogue whether the client is an ex-patient from a psychiatric hospital assessing the experience of being placed in a particular residence or an abused spouse contemplating whether to return home or a highly stressed person seeking support.

Focusing on contextualization, on bringing to consciousness both the unique experience of the individual and the social base for that individual's experience, also means that attention must be given to the structural factors which impose dependency: primarily these involve income since that is often the access route to housing, food, clothing, health care, transportation, etc. Since income and relationships with others, both family and institutions, are often interconnected, elaboration is required to
fully understand the way the client perceives his/her situation and the obligations understood to be part of daily life. The issue applies differently to people in different economic conditions, while the principle covers all possibilities. Thus, discussion of a middle class, dependent spouse’s knowledge of economic survival and her/his concept of required tolerance of continued abuse may characterize one situation while discussion of legal entitlements or income benefits may be more fitting in another.

Empowerment, already referred to in the discussion of contextualization, is the next principle. In this construction, empowerment means a process of dialogue through which the client is continuously supported to produce the range of possibility that she/he sees appropriate to his/her needs; that the client is the center for all decisions that affect her/his life. It does not mean that the client selects from a menu of services offered by the worker or agency, nor does it mean that the client dictates the responses or set of concerts determined to be valued by the worker. Because the social base of identity and experience cannot be expected to be systematically understood by the client (just as the uniqueness of the client’s experience cannot be expected to be understood fully by the worker), the worker has a responsibility to develop the dialogue as discussed above to include externalization and critical questioning about contextual experience. This point is emphasized because the worker’s responsibility is to the social development (perhaps an adequate substitute for “treatment”) of the client, a process which can only occur with adequate attention to that dimension of the person’s experience. It is not unusual for a client with previous therapy experience or with rigidly negating social networks to obstruct any discourse that is unfamiliar, an act which may require referral to a more conventional service. This is raised because that type of action can be seen as a choice made by the client as well as the choice to proceed: in this instance, neither person is asked to forsake the focus which gives each of them their sense of validity and identity.

Collectivity is a third principle. It means that the focus on the social basis of identity and experience is designed to reduce isolation and the terror of experiencing oneself as uniquely defective and stagnant. The focus on contextualization as a
hidden dimension to each person’s life begins the process of experiencing collectivity, of seeing and feeling oneself to be socially recognizable and valid. Working with people in groups, using the same principles discussed above, furthers this process while also attempting to develop horizontal types of social supports, drawing on people's potential strengths as producers of the social networks each of us needs to further our own development. Construction of horizontal interdependencies, whether focused on concrete needs such as housing and income, or on emotional supports, or both, fights against both vertical dependency and isolation. It also establishes a potential base for advocacy activities designed to enter a more overt political arena, should the individual or group decide to act in that context. The struggle requires continuous critical reflection of process factors that minimally include competition, feelings of success/failure, belonging/isolation and participation/adaptation.

The collectivity principle can be elaborated by further discussing two related components: socialization of experience and transformation. Socialization of experience is a principle which urges that people be brought together to mutually externalize and reflect upon previous or present feelings of self-worth or self-contempt and on how these feelings emerged in the course of their development within socially legitimated forms such as the family and schooling. Being able to share the mystified social experiences of growing up and accumulating internalizations of conventional ideologically structured roles and designated behaviors has been a characteristic of conscious raising groups for some time. The opportunity to share with others the emotional pain and conceptual boundaries which characterize daily life creates the emotional and conceptual plausibility necessary to change while concurrently establishing nonhierarchical networks of support for doing so. Thus the social and individual bases for transformation are set in motion: transformation becomes the other dimension of collectivity, with the purpose being movement from a position of dependency and individual deficits, through contextualization, empowerment, externalization, critical reflection, and action to a position and experience of participation and conscious involvement in interdependent networks of social support.
Social development requires transformation of both oppressive objective conditions and ideologies and their subjective entrapments. Because these different dimensions to the whole of social life are inevitably intertwined at the level of daily life experience, both must be confronted. This is the primary focus of our advocacy/empowerment orientation to practice: developing consciousness and active participation in shaping one's life through creating and shaping networks of social support and action. Indeed, as we have learned from the Women's movement, "the personal is political". Conversely, the "political" is very intimately personal as well. To transform either dimension of social reality requires encountering and confronting both in their interaction. Our hope is that this paper has contributed to a dialogue promoting that transformation.

References
Empowerment through Advocacy and Consciousness-Raising: Implications of a Structural Approach to Social Work

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Empowerment of oppressed clients requires of social workers to act as advocates and to assist clients in changing the dynamics which contribute to self-oppression or the oppression of others. The paper explores a five-stage process wherein oppressed individuals contribute to the social order that devalues them and, in the process, also participate in the oppression of others. The practice implications of a structural approach to social work committed to client empowerment in each of these stages are described.

A structural approach to social work (Moreau 1979, 1983, 1986, 1989) is presented in this paper. Its central objective is to empower clients, that is, to render them freer and more powerful vis-a-vis those who oppress and dominate them. Freedom is defined as "the power of individuals or groups to shape the conditions in which they live and to change these conditions, according to their needs and desires for self-fulfillment and self-transcendence" (Gorz, 1973). The approach rests on the assumption that one group (the dominators) in our society successfully maximizes its life chances by minimizing those of another (the dominated) (Wineman, 1984).

Objectives of a Structural Approach

The structural approach discussed here calls for two interrelated roles on the part of social workers, roles congruent with international social justice, human rights, and the profession’s Code of Ethics. The first role is to explore with clients the sociopolitical and economic forces at play in their individually experienced difficulties, in order to collectivize rather than personalize and individualize their source and solution. This role
requires workers to act as case and class brokers, as mediators and as advocates for their clients' rights.

The second role is to change client consciousness in order to reverse the process of self-disempowerment or of internalized oppression. The worker helps clients recognize and modify any ideas, values, feelings and behaviors that contribute to their own oppressive situation or to that of others. It is in this second role that this structural approach differs from Middleman and Goldberg’s structural approach to social work (1974, 1989). Unlike their assumption that “clients are seen as adequate people who accurately construe reality” (Middleman and Goldberg, 1989, p. 64), it is assumed in this approach that the social order may seriously impair a client’s capacities to accurately construe reality.

Empowerment Through Case and Class Advocacy

A structural approach to social work assumes that contemporary social, political and economic arrangements in both East and West are more or less racist, sexist, classist, ageist, handicaps and homophobic. Thus, when working with clients, a structural social worker is attentive to the economic, ideological and political strikes that may exist against them because of race, ethnicity, sex, class, age, health, religion, marital status and sexual orientation. The worker explores and tries to understand the possible relationships between, on one hand, clients’ health, feelings, ideas and actions toward themselves or others, and, on the other hand, the extent to which clients are kept inferior and powerless by their social location. A key concern is to prevent clients from unduly scapegoating themselves or others for material situations that are largely out of their personal control, to collectivize rather than to individualize their situation, and, where possible, to change their material conditions prior to working together on personal change.

The Importance of Working Conditions in Social Assessments

The worker searches for links between a client’s health, feelings, thinking and actions, and the objective place the client
occupies in the prevailing organization and division of work. In practice, this means, for example, exploring possible links between the low self-esteem that old, young or handicapped clients may experience, and the fact that they are excluded from meaningful and rewarding work while exhorted to consume and to ascribe to the work ethic. When trying to appreciate the health of clients, and their way of thinking, feeling and acting, a structural social worker pays attention to the sensory and relationship requirements, and to accessible resources involved in their work. Most jobs, especially in technologically advanced societies require splitting, rather than integrating thinking, feeling and acting (Braverman, 1974). All jobs also involve particular social relationships: one is employer or one is employee. Occupations may involve working alone or with others. A particular job may require that one compete rather than cooperate with others. The social relationships experienced at work may be carried over at home. For example, if a person has little power at work, that person may abuse the use of power in the home. Whoever has to make decisions all day at work may refuse to do so within the home. Not only family and individual psychodynamics, but also working conditions are investigated as possible central sources of stunted personal growth and development.

In practice, this investigation would involve exploring with women clients the possible links between the feelings of futility and depression which many experience, and the fact that the domestic and child rearing work they are relegated to, remains unpaid, devalued, isolated, interminable, repetitious, boring and monotonous. Workers may find a link between some women’s fears of succeeding outside the home and the possibility that they may be punished by “society” for doing so. They may find a link between some women’s fears of displeasing others and the real possibility that their economic dependence on men might be jeopardized, should they assert themselves.

Priority to Resource Provision

Key assessment questions include: Are clients in need of a resource the existence of which they are unaware of? Does the use of a needed resource create new difficulties or aggravate existing ones? or contradict the use of an equally needed
resource? Does a needed resource really exist (Pincus and Minahan, 1973)? When possible, priority is given to resource provision. Workers make needed resources known, act as mediators and advocates to reduce, or eliminate, the damage that the use of a needed resource inflicts and they work to create needed resources. When workers refer a client to a needed resource, they expose the conflictual interests of the worker, client and agency. They consider the possibility that the agency-client relationship may be either one of service as a right or one of service as a privilege, either one of service as a support or one of service as a regulation, either one of dependence of interdependence, hierarchy or equality, indoctrination or dialogue (Leonard, 1975).

It is not easy to turn a blind eye to discriminatory policies of social agencies and the State to ally oneself with clients when their interests go against the agency's. It calls for the worker to develop "functional noncapitulation strategies" (Reisch, Wenocur and Sherman, 1981). The worker must be comfortable with conflict, be ready to exercise diplomacy, and be capable of resorting to what Mispelblom (1985) has called silent or low-key practices.

The reasons for unmasking the power relations between the client, the worker and the social agency are two-fold. First, to ensure that clients do not undeservingly scapegoat themselves when they are confronted with the contradictions that most social agencies embody. Second, to bring to the fore, rather than to hide, the areas of conflict against which both worker and client will have to struggle to obtain needed services to resolve the client's problem situation.

Establishing a Dialogical Relationship

In working with clients, the worker tries to establish a relationship of dialogue with them as opposed to a relationship of vertical imposition (Freire, 1971). This is done by reducing unnecessary social distance between worker and client. Practically, this requires, among other things, sharing information and demystifying techniques and skills used to help. It means making every effort to have clients control which services are provided to them and how. Clients are also given access to their
own files and no case conferences concerning them are held without their presence.

The Limits of Intraorganizational Change

Because social work is not separate from, but an integral part of, the social, political and economic structure, there are institutional limits placed on much of the practice of agency-based social workers. In other words, there is a limit to the level and kind of questioning and actions social agencies and their funding bodies will tolerate from within. An agency-based social worker can only bite the hand that feeds and get away with it for so long before being reprimanded, if not fired. Some agencies may permit their workers to regroup clients for mutual aid and for the purposes of creating new needed resources. Some progressive agencies may even permit their workers to organize clients against unjust policies of other agencies. Few agencies however are likely to permit their workers to organize clients against their own practices. Work within agencies from a structural perspective must, therefore, be linked to related struggles for social change outside agency walls.

In practice, this means the worker needs to keep in touch with and support parallel social change movements going on outside of social agencies. In particular, the structural worker will be interested in supporting the struggles of women and gay people against sexism, of older people and children against ageism and of native peoples and others of color against racism. Social movements calling into question existing patterns of production and consumption (for example, food and housing co-ops and conservationist movements) are supported. Since collective organization is a major vehicle for the implementation of structural intervention at the institutional, political levels, a structural worker also supports and fights for the unionization of workers. In cases where the platforms of unions limit themselves to liberal reforms, the worker supports efforts to redefine their struggles to include more radical changes (Gorz 1967).

Empowerment through Consciousness-Raising about Internalized Oppression

If the structural approach promotes brokerage, mediation/negotiation and advocacy to empower clients, it also concerns
itself with the mechanisms clients develop in order to survive the oppression they experience — mechanisms that, in the end, not only support their own oppression but all too often that of others. In the structural approach, changing macro structures without, at the same time, changing individuals is considered as meaningless as changing individuals without simultaneously changing social, political and economic structures. How oppressed individuals come unwittingly to contribute to the same social order which devalues them, as well as how some contribute to the domination of others, are important questions structural workers must address. How can workers help oppressed clients, not accommodate to and comply with their own domination, but, instead, actively resist and oppose it? In what concrete ways do persons who, for one reason or another, discover they are devalued, perpetuate their own oppression? Adam (1978) provides useful insight into this question. The practice implications for social work of Adam’s theories are developed in this paper.

The Dynamics of Self-oppression

Adam explores how inferiorized people engage in dynamics of complicit self-destruction which contribute to defeatism, and, ultimately serve to perpetuate their own oppression and, that of others. Exploring and comparing the historical conditions, of three socially inferiorized groups (Blacks, Gays and Jews) and their model responses to domination, Adam develops a theory of self-hatred common to inferiorized individuals. He suggests that inferiorized people inevitably follow a common process of accommodation, compliance, and resistance in their struggle to cope with their domination. He posits that they go through five interrelated stages in the development of an oppressed consciousness: (a) Mimesis, (b) Guilt-Expiation Rituals, (c) Psychological Withdrawal, (d) Social Withdrawal, and (e) Contra- version. Understanding each of these stages sheds light on the work involved in reversing the tendency oppressed people have to disempower themselves and others in the process of coping with their own domination.
Mimesis

In the first stage of the development of an oppressed consciousness: the person who discovers himself or herself as a member of an inferiorized group is presented with a negative composite portrait which purports to define him or her. The portrait is accompanied by a range of social penalties guaranteed to produce a more difficult and insecure life than could be expected by membership in a more highly valued category... The first impulse, not surprisingly, is to move toward escape... The inferiorized person perceives an initial choice: 1) acceptance of categorization as an inferiorized member with the composite portrait of undesirable traits, or 2) rejection of or lack of recognition of self in the composite portrait, with lack of identification with the inferiorized group. This pseudo-choice locks the subject into a social conundrum, leading to one of two debilitating results and frequently, oscillation between the two: 1) guilt, self-hatred, and masochistic responses, or 2) flight from identify, denial, or "bad faith." (Adam, 1978, p. 90)

There is usually a price to pay for the person openly to accept being categorized as an inferiorized member. Most inferiorized people experience fear and many deal with it by overconforming, at least initially, to dominant norms. They hide what they really are, as they try to pass themselves off for members of the dominant group. In this stage of identification with the oppressors which Adam (1978) calls Mimesis, many may be hostile toward members of the inferiorized group to which they belong, because these persons painfully remind them of what they are.

Guilt Expiation Rituals

Unable to avoid being reminded of what they really are, even while in hiding, most inferiorized people quickly move on to a second stage. In this stage which Adam calls guilt expiation rituals, oppressed persons are typically riddled with internalized self-hatred and guilt and they engage in circular, self-destructive rituals, which serve to punish them, and ultimately reinforce the portrait they have of themselves as devalued persons.
A number of magical ideologies come into play in the mind of oppressed persons to support the vicious circle of self-hatred, guilt, setting themselves up to be masochistically punished, punishment, and resultant self-hatred. To permit hope for its alleviation, suffering, for example, may be interpreted as a personal inadequacy, because rectification of personal failure remains within the perceived competence of the individual. Suffering in some cases may be mentally defined as temporary, to be endured, because it will be compensated for in another world. In other cases, suffering is defined as a situation that makes the inferiorized persons superior to their oppressors. More commonly, suffering is defined as a fate one deserves. Mentally, the oppressed persons consciously, or more frequently unconsciously, fantasize an exchange whereby they will be free if they atone and obey the negating other.

And so, typically, oppressed persons systematically set themselves up to be devalued and be put down by others in a variety of ways. Such moves provide an illusory feeling of temporary release and freedom from the tyranny of the oppressor because the inferiorized individuals are the ones who order personally their own punishment. Considered in this way, guilt is understood as a defense, a kind of protective measure developed to cope with a fundamental lack of freedom. To use Adam's words, it is "a self-negating project aimed ultimately at self-affirmation" (Adam, 1978, p. 100).

Work can be painstaking and long with inferiorized clients in this second stage of oppressed consciousness, especially when patterned habits have set in. First, workers must seize any opportunity they can construct with the persons to enable them to replace self-hatred with self-respect and self-care. Genuine care, reassurance and support must be provided in efforts to depuil them. Considerable attention must be given to helping the client confront and reclaim repressed, disowned feelings of fear, hurt, and anger in order that these feelings may be validated and connected to their true source, that is, rechannelled outwardly instead of against oneself. Selected techniques drawn from Gestalt therapy (Perls, 1969), from Transactional Analysis (Steiner, 1974), and from Bioenergetic Analysis (Lowen, 1969) may be useful in this process. With the help of cognitive restruc-
turing (Beck, 1979) and selected psychodramatic techniques, such as Rule Reconstruction (Satir, 1968, 1971), the worker must try to challenge the magical ideologies the clients use to rationalize their passive submission to their own situation of suffering.

**Psychological Withdrawal**

Oppressed people are lead into psychological withdrawal — a third stage in the development of an oppressed consciousness — when they must deal with frequent double binds, an inordinate amount of unreliability in their lives, and when they experience repeated cognitive dissonance in the form of disjunctures between means and ends available to them. In the end, the compartmentalization of meaning structures takes its toll on their minds as they become unable to make accurate associations between themselves and their situations. In this stage, the inferiorized persons sometimes recognize, consciously or unconsciously, that it is so painful to be what they are that "they conclude they are not what they are and what they do". The resultant flight from identity, and in some extreme cases from reality, as when there is a psychotic break, only further isolates the individual from others sharing the same fate.

Work with oppressed people in this third stage depends on the extent to which they have come to survive by cutting off and divorcing themselves from reality. Minimally, it calls for the worker to help such clients find time and especially a safe place that will permit them to reconnect with reality, without having to endure further pain and humiliation. Small, community-based psychiatric facilities, which allow such persons the necessary time and proper services to rebuild their lives, without shocking, drugging or abusing them in more subtle ways, are extremely rare (Szasz, 1978). The need for the development of such facilities cannot be underscored. The work to be carried out with clients in this phase is also long and difficult. For, they must be ultimately helped to sort out who they are in relation to those who oppress them, and, helped to confront outside, as well as internalized, sources of their oppression.

**Social Withdrawal and Contraversion**

The passage to the fourth and fifth stages in the development of an oppressed consciousness — the separatists' social
withdrawal and contraversion phases — in which a new version of reality is created on the basis of the reappropriation of one's own historical condition, depends on two factors. First, people must be inferiorized on the basis of specific, shared, selected characteristics — for example, their colour. It is, in part, this sharing of a common, negative status which is visible that makes it possible for oppressed individuals to recognize their commonalities. When they separate or socially withdraw from their oppressors, they develop a sense of community among themselves, by communicating with one another, and they begin to move from a recognition of themselves as individuals to a recognition of themselves as belonging to a group.

Second, to move from positions of accommodation and compliance with one's domination (the first three phases described above) to a position of resistance, represented by the social withdrawal and contraversion phases, requires that oppressed individuals perceive alternatives to their personal situations. It is, according to Adam (1978), the witnessing of differential treatment and the variance in reactions of like-situated, oppressed others that serve to rupture hegemony and permit the perception of alternatives among subordinates. However, the more there are internal cleavages between people in the same group, the more the formation of community is complicated.

The principal role of the social worker in helping oppressed clients in these fourth and fifth separatist stages is to insure that these stages are accorded their proper time and place. If workers are the least bit uncomfortable with conflict, they may find it difficult to assist oppressed clients to separate themselves from those that dominate them. They may thus prematurely encourage oppressed groups to engage in dialogue with their oppressors without their first having had the time and opportunity to define and consolidate their own identity.

A second complementary role is to insure that, in the long run, oppressed separatist groups are not kept ghettoized by their dominators. Once oppressed groups are ghettoized and offered a place to be and to function, it is relatively easy for them to curtail their expectations and aspirations. They are more prone to accept and be grateful for concessions obtained, rather than to press for additional demands.
A Historical, Holistic Perspective

There are several difficulties with the fourth and fifth phases of the development of an oppressed consciousness as described by Adam (1978). For one thing, in reality, each form of oppression is not caused and sustained by an autonomous set of economic, political, and social factors considered to have a major effect on a sole distinct group of oppressed people. Neither, as the conventional Marxist, the radical feminist or the Black nationalist-separatist and other monist perspectives suggest, are all forms of oppression rooted in one single cause. The experiences of the 70s found many working class organizations to be racist, many Black organizations to be homophobic and lesbian and gay organizations to be classist. These experiences underscore the point that all other forms of oppression do not automatically disappear, once one organizes against one form that is alleged to be overdetermining.

The plain reality is that most people are multiply oppressed on several grounds. In real life, no one is just female or just black or just poor; women are young or old, or middle class or occasionally rich; blacks are male or female; poor people are one race or another, and so on. Real people are always more than the single categories by which they are described, defined and kept in their place (Wineman, 1984, p. 100).

Moreover, divisions based on hierarchical gradations of wealth, status and power exist, within and between inferiorized groups. The more the members of any inferiorized group, who are subject to any one oppression, conform to and emulate dominant, white, heterosexual, male, middle-aged, middle and upper class norms, within and outside their group, the more power they usually hold within their group.

In addition, gradations within a particular oppressed group frequently motivate some members with relative advantages to defend their superiority. To compensate for their experienced deficits, those who are oppressed from above are in turn often driven to oppress those below them. In other words, "the experience of either superiority or inferiority on any one continuum of oppression can induce people to seek or maintain positions of superiority on other continua of oppression" (Wineman, 1984, p. 169).
All forms of oppression are in reality interrelated, mutually reinforcing and overlapping. For example, sexism and ageism intersect in the continued low social status accorded to mothers and children, through the insignificance given to child rearing. The longevity of women forces ageism and sexism to overlap. The fact that children of poor parents are more apt to be removed from their families by the State, than children of wealthy parents, even though child mistreatment occurs across class lines, is evidence that ageism and class standing intersect. Prevailing homophobic child custody practices are proof that heterosexism and ageism intersect. The fact that Black, female-headed families, at least in Canada and in the U.S., are twice as poor as white female-headed families, suggests that sexism, racism and class standing intersect, and so on (Wineman, 1984).

While retaining their own specific features and not minimizing their differences in severity, all forms of oppression are based on an identical ethos of domination and subordination. All forms of oppression equate value, self-esteem and self-worth with superiority, privilege and domination over others rather than equality with them. No continuum of stratification can be addressed in isolation from all forms of domination. Reacting against one form of oppression and ignoring others reproduces and reinforces divisions and oppression among people.

There are several implications of this view for social work. First, in social assessments no a priori assumptions should be made about any hierarchy of different forms of domination. Only empirical investigation of a particular society and of a particular client and problem at a particular time can verify the existence or nonexistence of a hierarchy of dominations in that particular case. More often than not, rather than a hierarchy of oppressions, there will be a holistic interweaving of oppressions (Albert et al., 1986, p. 19).

Second, oppressed groups need to be helped not only to come together but also to recognize the realities that keep them divided. They must be helped to develop a critical consciousness which enables conflict among autonomous, oppressed individuals and groups to be inverted into solidarity (Wineman, 1984). This requires creating mechanisms for oppressed groups to identify with one another's struggles and, where possible, to
forge common demands and goals. In practice, this means helping members within oppressed groups reflect on how their own privileges within their respective groups potentially oppress others. It means helping members not to reproduce any form of oppression within their own ranks.

Conclusion

Objective as well as subjective factors and dynamics are involved in the perpetuation of the oppression of individuals. Hence, empowerment of oppressed clients requires that a social worker not only act as an advocate with and on their behalf but also help them identify and change the dynamics that enable them to contribute to their own situation of oppression or to that of others. The practice implications of a structural approach to social work committed to client empowerment and to the opposition of all forms of oppression, of domination and subordination were outlined. At this stage of its development, the structural approach is an ongoing working hypothesis which needs to be validated by its continual confrontation with the realities of practice. As such, it offers some hope for the time heralded commitment of social work to the person in their environment.

References

Empowerment through Advocacy and Consciousness-Raising


This article describes a proposed social justice curriculum and presents a case study of attempts to establish it in a graduate school of social work. The study is set in the context of the history of activism in social work and an analysis of societal and professional forces which may inhibit such activism. The rationale for a specialization in social justice is discussed along with the process and politics and developing the program and seeking its acceptance. The article describes specific types of resistance to a social change curriculum and possible strategies for dealing with such resistance.

Throughout its history, social work has declared a concern for social justice. This concern has often been expressed in a general way in the professional social work curriculum. Sometimes, as in the 1960s, curricular programs have demonstrated a more specific commitment to social justice and social change. Following the 1960s, a resurgence of conservatism led to a decline in social activism within social work and in curricular programs oriented toward social change. Recently, however, interest in such programs appears to be reemerging. It is therefore relevant to ask: What shape might a social justice curriculum take in the 1990s? Would its graduates be able to use their knowledge and skills in the social welfare arena? What are the politics of developing a social justice program in a school of social work? What are the forces shaping various reactions to such a curriculum?

This article addresses such questions through a description of a proposed social justice curriculum and a case study of attempts to establish it in a graduate social work program. The case study is set in the context of the history of activism in social work and a discussion of the societal and professional forces
which may inhibit such activism. The article discusses the rationale for a specialization in social justice at Western Michigan University's School of Social Work and the process and politics of developing the program and seeking its acceptance. It analyzes specific types of resistance to a social change curriculum and possible strategies for dealing with such resistance. Since the proposal is still in process, what we present here is an analysis of ongoing attempts to incorporate a social justice orientation in social work education.

Rationale for a Social Justice Specialization

A basic rationale for attention to social justice in the social work curriculum derives from the profession's historic commitment to fighting injustice and bettering the lives of the poor. Although this commitment has not always been dominant, and is at times more rhetoric than reality, it remains an ongoing thread in social work's history. Attempts to change economic, political, and social structures to provide equal access to resources appear in each decade of the profession's development. One can see this in the 1920s, for example, in the efforts of Grace Abbott of the U.S. Children's Bureau to enact maternal and child health legislation, despite resistance from powerful groups, including organized medicine. A commitment to social justice characterizes Isaac Rubinow's push for old age pensions and Florence Kelley's crusade for child labor legislation. The 1920s has been called the "seedtime of reform" in social welfare (Chambers, 1967; Costin, 1983, pp. 125-183). The 1930s brought its flowering. The best known proponents of social change and redistribution of wealth were members of the Rank and File union movement and their supporters, including psychiatric social worker Bertha Reynolds and Jewish agency administrator Harry Lurie. Even the more mainstream social workers of the period lobbied for legislative changes and social welfare programs to ensure more adequate economic provision for all citizens (Leighninger, 1987, pp. 51-75).

Social workers in the 1940s protested the nation's concentration on war preparedness at the expense of continued, adequate funding for social programs. In the 1950s, although social reform
efforts were less prominent, the newly developed National
Association of Social Workers included a Commission on Social
Policy. This Commission made recommendations in areas such
as housing, health, an public welfare to the appropriate legisla-
tive and policy-making bodies (Leighninger, 1987, pp. 111–118,
200–201). Finally, in the 1960s and 1970s, social work saw the
emergence of grass roots community organizing aimed at
empowering poor communities, as well as advocacy approaches
which sought to improve access to services for various disen-
franchised groups.

The profession thus has an ongoing social justice tradition.
This can be defined as a commitment to equal rights and to an
equitable distribution of wealth and power among all citizens.
Dennis Saleeby, in his article earlier in this issue, refers to the
pursuit of social justice as “the central ontological business of
social work.” This pursuit has carried through to social work
practice in the 1970s and 1980s. For example, Eunice Shatz, past
Executive Director of CSWE, tells of the academic vice-president
who in the early 1970s warned her that the public service curric-
ulum she was developing at a new school of social work was an
outdated one. “Eunice, the 60’s are over! Your curriculum
reflects the past, not the future.” Dr. Schatz disagreed. The new
curriculum addressed issues of empowerment, advocacy, pov-
erty, equality, and civil rights. Dr. Schatz told the vice-president:
“in Social Work, issues of equality and social justice are not
concerns that fit between the two decades of the fifties and the
seventies. They are what the profession is all about” (Social Work
Education Reporter, 1988, p. 11).

Dr. Schatz is not alone in this conviction. A survey of 60
graduate schools of social work in 1986 indicated that 37% had a
concentration or specialization in community organization,
social justice, or social development. Ten schools required all
students to take a community organization course. Fifteen
required students in the macro concentration to take such a
course. Half of the schools surveyed offered at least one course
with a social justice emphasis, such as “Social Welfare and the
Disadvantaged” or “Strategies for Social Change.”

More recently, increases in enrollments in social work grad-
uate schools have been cited by journalists and others as a
sign that social concerns are again becoming popular. Schools of Social Work at Howard University and Catholic University are experimenting with social action curricula and research centers. The newly revised bylaws of the Council on Social Work Education state one of the organization's major purposes as "stimulating the development of knowledge, practice and service effectiveness designed to promote social justice and further community and individual well being" (CSWE Bylaws, 1989, p. 1). The Council's Strategic Plan stresses that "Social justice... shall permeate all program activities," and includes concern with social justice issues as one of the functions of the Commission on Educational Policy Concerns and Standards (1989, pp. 10, 12–13).

Such moves within social work education are mirrored by changes in the profession. The National Association of Social Work has an active Social Workers for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament Committee. While clinical work remains a favored area in social work, Wakefield (1988), and Rose's work in this issue, demonstrate the relevance of a social justice orientation to clinical practice. In addition, Reisch and Wenocur (1986) note the growth of grass roots organizing activities in the past decade. While recognizing that much of this organizing is taking place outside of social work, Reisch and Wenocur note that social workers are becoming more involved in coalitions representing labor, church groups, the women's movement, etc. Such coalitions signify a shift in community organizing from a narrow politics of self-interest to concern with broad, long-term social change.

The School of Social Work at Western Michigan University

In line with social work's commitment to social change, a specialization in social justice has been proposed for graduate students in the School of Social Work at Western Michigan University. The University is located in the city of Kalamazoo, a community in southwest Michigan halfway between Chicago and Detroit. The city has a population of 90,000, within a metropolitan area of over 200,000 residents. The University has a regional focus, with students coming primarily from southwest Michigan and Indiana.
The School of Social Work has an undergraduate Bachelor of Social Work program as well as a part-time and full-time Master of Social Work (MSW) program. There are 18 faculty and 240 graduate students enrolled in the School. In addition, the School has a part-time off-campus program in Grand Rapids. Minority students constitute 10% of the graduate student body.

The MSW degree program consists of two components, the foundation for social work practice and advanced study (concentrations). All students are required to take Foundation courses (primarily in the first year) and must choose one of two concentrations, Social Treatment (ST) or Policy, Planning and Administration (PP&A). Currently, about 80% of the students elect the ST concentration.

The financial climate for public universities in Michigan is not a rosy one. While faculty lay-offs have not occurred, tight budgets have made acquisition of resources for expanding or new programs difficult.

Description of Proposed Social Justice Specialization

The proposed program is a specialization in Social Justice/Community Organization which would be an option to the concentrations in ST or PP&A. The decision to include social justice as part of the title of the specialization is based on the intent to focus the curriculum on the distribution of resources such that each individual in society has his/her basic needs met as well as the opportunity to reach his/her full potential as a human being. The program is based on the assumption that many crucial human problems such as poverty, racism, and sexism are linked and rooted in institutional structures and the socioeconomic order. Thus, it emphasizes collective, long-range solutions toward fundamental social change and adaptation of systems to human needs. It also recognizes that social workers need to help people meet their immediate needs. The courses are designed as much to develop students' critical consciousness as to learn social change strategies.

The assumptions and focus of this specialization are in agreement with Gil's arguments elsewhere in this issue. Gil critiques the "dominant" social welfare theories for assuming
that human problems are rooted primarily within individuals and for proposing individual change and adjustment to the existing system. He proposes alternative theories that recognize social structural sources of problems and view all problems as linked. He argues for a "liberating education" that focuses on developing students' critical consciousness and facilitation empowerment.

The goals of the social justice specialization are to help students: (a) develop tools for the analysis of the political, economic, and social structure of society and an understanding of how these structures lead to oppression; (b) acquire a vision of the necessary elements of a just society which will foster the provision of the basic needs of all members of that society and promote the realization of the full potential of that society's people. Emphasis is on the student developing and articulating his/her own vision; (c) develop an understanding of the power of the people to change unjust structures and develop the skills necessary for leadership in the empowerment of people to move towards a just society.

These goals are supportive of Gil's framework for "social-change-oriented practice" and Saleebey's social justice principles. The first goal of developing tools for analysis will include understanding the connections between the personal and the political, and theories and process focusing on the dialectical person/environment interchange. The second goal of acquiring a vision of a just society will include exploring various theories of social justice, alternative social systems, and reviewing the U.S. history of social change efforts. We make an assumption that is echoed by Gil that practice cannot be politically neutral, nor can it be value-neutral. Practice either challenges the status quo or supports it. Social workers should choose and openly acknowledge their political philosophy and visions for the socio-economic system. The third goal of learning about empowerment and how to empower will entail students gaining an understanding that change can come from the bottom up, developing specific social change and empowerment skills, and learning how to impart these skills to others.

We have proposed three courses based on the goals of the specialization: a theoretical "Foundations of Social Justice"
course and two community organization practice courses. Students would also have a two-semester social justice/community organization field placement. Two of the School's Foundation courses, one on social change and one on racial and cultural dynamics in social work practice, provide important background to the specialization. For example, the social change course provides students with content on Marxist conflict theory, systems theory, community analysis, history of social work's commitment to social change, ideology perspectives on social change, and change strategies such as revolution, nonviolent direct action, advocacy, political action and conscientization.

The "Foundations of Social Justice" course would present different analyses of the nature of a just society, critical aspects of the rapidly changing world context, the historical record of the U.S.' attitudes and action with regard to social justice, elements of U.S. political-economy and culture and an analysis of social movements (e.g., women, labor). The course provides some of the content Gil suggests is necessary for a social change-oriented curriculum. The authors are in agreement with Gil that social movements are necessary for fundamental social change and that social work practitioners and educators can contribute to the development of these movements. Thus, understanding social movements and what they have accomplished, as well as learning to organize movements at the local, state, and national levels are cornerstones of this social justice curriculum.

In the two proposed methods courses, community organization is interpreted broadly and is not limited to the grass roots' organizing of the 1960s. Community organization is defined as a range of short- and long-term strategies to empower people, including advocacy, consciousness raising, networking, coalition-building, community development, neighborhood organizing, lobbying, electoral politics, direct action, fund raising, community education and use of "think tanks." The first course addresses such fundamentals of organizing as the role of the organizer, context, goals, approaches to organizing at the local level, how to build and maintain an organization, work with the government and business, research, and use of the media. The second course on skills in advanced organizing places emphasis
on issue organizing rather than organizing on the basis of gender, race, age or class lines. Current examples of issue organizing will be addressed (e.g., homelessness, health care) with regard to theory, successes, failures, and alternative approaches. Current examples of the organizing approaches of advocacy groups (e.g., Children's Defense Fund, Association for Retarded Citizens); research groups/think tanks (e.g., American Enterprise Institute, Center for the Study of Poverty); lobbying/pressure groups (e.g., Bread for the World, Common Cause); and electoral groups (e.g., National Rainbow Coalition, Democratic Socialists of America) will be utilized to teach skill development. Another focus of the course is learning to organize in different arenas (e.g., human service agencies, churches, labor unions).

Various field placement opportunities were explored for the two-semester social justice field requirement. One example is Habitat for Humanity, a Christian ministry of housing that attempts to provide decent housing for people in need. Habitat would use a student to do outreach to obtain support, labor, and supplies from community groups and churches; to evaluate potential clients for housing; to develop policies; to build housing; and, do community development. Another agency would use social justice students to assist with the welfare reform coalition at the state level by facilitating the participation of local grass roots groups and low income people, making visible local concerns to legislators and policy makers to effect change, working with the media to educate the public, and doing social equity analyses of policies and the tax system. The YWCA Sexual Assault Program, a counseling and advocacy organization, might interest those students who plan to concentrate in social treatment. Students in this internship could be involved in crisis counseling, court watch for victims of sexual assault, and advocacy for change at the local and state levels.

The social justice specialization would train people for a variety of positions, including: issue-oriented community organizer; community development worker; counselor/advocate in domestic assault, sexual assault, homeless shelter, or similar programs; lobbyist; and staff member in a state or national advocacy organization. In organizations dealing with issues of discrimination and oppression, there is a need for workers who
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combine interpersonal skills, proficiency in advocacy and organizing techniques, and competence in fund raising, budget management, and grant writing. A combination of the Foundation social work curriculum, a Social Justice specialization, and course work in PP&A is a good way to meet this need.

History of the Social Justice
Specialization Proposal at Western Michigan University's School of Social Work

How easy has it been to develop and gain acceptance for a social justice specialization within the school of social work? Despite a more receptive climate within the profession, resource difficulties and ideological and philosophical differences have made creation of the new program a demanding task. This section summarizes the history of the idea for a social justice specialization and the steps taken to gain its legitimacy.

Four years ago, Western Michigan University's social work faculty generated a set of priorities for curricular change. A major mandate emerged for a "deepening of advocacy for social justice and human rights; connections between social systems, poverty, and oppression; and more content on social change." A Social Justice Task Force of five faculty members and a student was formed to work on a proposal to implement this mandate. Several of the Task Force members regularly taught courses on community organization and social change. Only one member taught in a second year concentration sequence.

The Task Force used a number of strategies to develop a social justice curriculum and to create a receptive atmosphere for its implementation. Although faculty had given high ranking to attention to social justice issues in the curriculum, some no doubt envisioned infusion rather than an autonomous program. From the beginning, Task Force members believed a discrete program was necessary to give visibility to a social justice/social change thrust and to train students in specific organizing skills.

As a first step, the Task Force met with representatives from local agencies and organizations that had a social justice orientation (such as advocacy agencies for the homeless and those with developmental disabilities, a welfare reform group, and a
community development organization). The goals of this meeting were (a) to gain external support for a social justice specialization in order to increase internal support among faculty, and (b) to discover if there were appropriate social justice field placements and job opportunities in the local community for graduates. Discussion with agency representatives confirmed the existence of potential field placements and job opportunities. It also brought home to Task Force members the importance of teaching students a wide variety of skills in addition to community organizing, including conflict management, lobbying, budgeting, and grant writing. The new social change practitioner would have to have a combination of community organizing, planning, administrative capabilities, and interpersonal skills.

The Task Force took two other steps to gain legitimacy for a social justice program and to gather ideas on how to shape such a program. One was to survey the curricula of other schools of social work to ascertain the frequency and types of social justice courses and programs. The results, reported above, gave further credence to the goal of creating a specific social justice curriculum.

The third project was the development of a Social Justice Conference. The Task Force saw this conference as meeting several goals: raising consciousness, both in the university and surrounding communities, about the need to address the pressing issues of homelessness, discrimination, unemployment, and other problems; testing the waters for regional interest in a social justice specialization in the school of social work; and gaining legitimacy for such a program among university and school colleagues and administrators. The conference was publicized among Master's and Baccalaureate social work programs, social welfare agencies, and advocacy organizations in a three-state area: Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana. Funding was solicited and received from other University departments, the school, and the President of the University. The conference featured major speakers on social activism, including Michael Harrington, and offered workshops on social issues and social change, utilizing panels of key activists, organizers, and policy experts from the local community.

Over 250 people attended the conference, a number well above expectations. Participants included a large number of
students, both from the host university and other schools in the region. The conference created an excitement about social justice issues among faculty and students in Western Michigan University's School of Social Work, and seemed to bring more credibility to the project within the larger university.

Buoyed by the conference success, the Task Force turned to creation of a specific curriculum proposal for a social justice program. From the very beginning of this process, the Task Force struggled with the question of whether to propose an essentially autonomous, methods based concentration that would parallel the existing two second year concentrations, or whether to attempt to integrate a smaller program, or specialization, within one or both of the existing concentrations. Issues of resource availability, compatibility of program goals with those of the other concentrations, and possible competition over a finite number of students made this a difficult question to resolve. In fact, the specialization/concentration debate (with its underlying resource and goal compatibility issues) has dominated program development and lack of resolution has been a major obstacle to getting a program in place. A major issue has been the difficulty in reconciling the goals of each concentration — i.e., to produce a skilled clinical practitioner or administrator/planner — with the goal of the specialization — creation of a social worker with additional community organizing skills and a focus on social change.

Within the Task Force, there was ambivalence over the specialization/concentration issue. While the group wanted a strong, "full-fledged" social justice concentration, it realized that such a program might be perceived as threatening the resources and student enrollments of the other concentrations. This issue was particularly pertinent regarding the PP&A program, which has a much smaller pool of interested students than the clinical program, and therefore conceivably has the most to lose in competition with a third concentration. Concerned about such competition and the tight budget constraints facing the school, the Task Force decided to prepare a curriculum proposal for a social justice specialization that could be integrated into the existing concentrations. An additional advantage to the integration approach was its potential for creating the multiskilled
social justice practitioner (e.g. one with capabilities in both community organizing and program planning, or community organizing and clinical practice) that the job market seemed to favor.

Accordingly, the Task Force developed a program in which students would take the specific social justice courses described earlier, in addition to enrolling in one of the concentrations. Their second year field placement would be in an agency involved in social justice activities within a policy/planning or social treatment setting. The Task Force also gathered further information on job and field placement opportunities, especially for practitioners who could combine community organizing with other skills.

Before presenting the plan at the school’s annual Spring Faculty Retreat, the Task Force met with ST and PP&A concentration faculty to receive input. While both groups saw merit in the proposal, a major concern emerged over the attempt to accommodate social justice students in the concentration-oriented field work assignments. In other words, the concentrations’ sense of accountability for producing full-fledged practitioners in ST or PP&A made them wary of “diluting” the placement experience by adding social justice tasks and assignments. Since the PP&A program is particularly oriented to the execution of classroom assignments in the field setting, its faculty were especially reluctant to change or delete some of these assignments for the social justice students. Yet without this accommodation, the social justice students would lack time for practicing community organizing skills.

The Task Force hoped that presentation of the proposed specialization at the Retreat would allow for group problem-solving of these and other issues. At the Retreat, the plan was described to the entire faculty. Faculty then met in small groups instructed by the Task Force to discuss strengths, obstacles, and ways to overcome obstacles. The major strength identified by group members was the connection between social justice themes and the social action roots of social work. Faculty were also impressed with the Task Force’s approach of seeking community feedback and support for the specialization.

The obstacles identified at the Retreat have become common themes and reactions to the social justice specialization up to
the present day. One theme is resource problems. Should the school commit resources, time, and energy to a social justice program rather than other interests, including expansion of the part-time off-campus program? Another question, already described, was whether to make the program a specialization or a concentration.

Confusion over the meaning and goals of "community organization" was an additional problem. A number of faculty identified community organizing with the local grass roots organizing and confrontational politics of the 1960s, and asked whether these were relevant in the 1980s. Some felt that existence of a special social justice program implied that the rest of the faculty were not teaching about social justice issues in their classrooms. Did the design of the specialization suggest that there was only one appropriate social justice vision or ideology? Finally, some faculty worried that the university administration would not approve the specialization because they would see it as too radical.

Beyond ideological and political concerns, the immediate stumbling blocks to acceptance of the proposal were the problem of resources and the concern of the concentrations that they preserve enough time in the curriculum to impart the necessary knowledge and skills to their graduates. A breakthrough came when a faculty member suggested that Social Justice become a first-year specialization. The first year of the school's program is a generic one, and a variety of placements are used. These include several social justice settings. Although some drawbacks to the plan were pointed out, the idea seemed a viable compromise. Faculty voted to accept the plan in progress, and the Task Force was asked to present detailed course outlines and a finalized program plan to the school Curriculum Committee the following fall.

However, the breakthrough and compromise achieved at the Retreat proved to be short-lived. Some problems quickly presented themselves in discussions among Task Force members. If the program began in the first year, could enough students be recruited? (The group had intended to recruit students from the first year class, in the same way that the concentrations do.) In addition, all of the social justice courses would not fit into the
first year, so students would be learning particular content after taking the field work course in which it could be applied.

Furthermore, the political, definitional, and resource objections raised during the Retreat reemerged in the Curriculum Committee's reactions to the finalized course proposals. Committee members debated whether the model of community organization presented in the course outlines was an appropriate one. While a concept of community organization was articulated that included advocacy and community development, a number of faculty continued to criticize the approach as outdated 1960s style grass-roots organizing. Several seemed concerned that the social justice specialization was a means for finding a place in the curriculum for "radical social work."

It also proved difficult to find space in the school's tightly structured curriculum for the social justice courses. Even with the use of the scant available elective space, some social justice students would have to take extra hours in order to complete both specialization and concentration. At one point, some faculty suggested that the school drop its one existing required social change course in order to allow space for the new specialization. (Task Force members successfully argued that this idea ran counter to the initial charge to increase attention to social justice within the curriculum.) Finally, the problem of scarce resources has continued to block efforts to create a reasonable program.

Despite two more years of proposals, committee meetings, and even some school-wide attempts to restructure the curriculum, the issues blocking implementation of a social justice program remain unresolved. Perhaps if there had been only one major area of difficulty, negotiations and problem-solving could have been more immediately fruitful. Yet the combination of political concerns, scarcity of resources, perceived competition with the existing concentrations, and a tightly structured curriculum have combined to make the development of a social justice curriculum an uphill battle.

Larger Forces Shaping the Response to a Social Justice Specialization

What are the larger forces which may be influencing the reactions to a proposed social justice specialization at Western
Michigan University? These larger forces may in fact inhibit most schools of social work from even trying to build social justice courses or programs into their curriculum. This state of affairs may be explained by Gil's description of the "conservative tendencies" to preserve the status quo which have been a part of the "public consciousness" of the United States since its inception. Saleebey speculates that this conservatism is a result of either the perceived accomplishment or failure of the liberal agenda. He argues that public morality now reflects the dominance of the marketplace. Saleebey decries the profession's "social amnesia" or individualizing of social problems.

The conservative mentality has been regarded as pervasive in social work. One explanation advanced is that social work's striving for professional status has resulted in the search for clients who could elevate its status and in a loss of commitment to social activism. Bisno (1956, pp. 14-16) suggested that the existence of "strong professional strivings for higher status" within social work may have led to efforts to attract a more prestigious class of clientele. He was afraid this would result in social work abandoning its commitment to social reform. Cloward and Epstein (1965, p. 3) also argue that the pursuit of professionalization has led social work to "disengagement from the poor." Walsh and Elling (1972) empirically demonstrated that members of public health occupational groups who were actively striving to gain higher status were more negative in their orientation toward low income clients than were members of occupations who were less active. It may be that aspiring professions are conservative because they put their energy into acquiring the status symbols of the old-line professions (e.g., private practice) (Benthurup, 1964, p. 16) and into pursuing political action that will increase their status and power (e.g., licensing, obtaining third party payment status) (Wagner and Cohen, 1978).

Another force that may be influencing the resistance to a social justice specialization is the content of social work. The dominant "psychosocial" social work theories tend to view individuals as the problem and to focus on personal solutions rather than structural change. This psychosocial approach views the environment as "social networks rather than social order" (Galper, 1975, p. 122) and, thus, takes the social order as a given.
There are theorists who view social work theory and practice as inherently conservative (see Heraud, 1973; Galper, 1975; Wagner and Cohen, 1978; Wilding, 1982). Casework, the dominant social work method, is often regarded as the conservative, social control emphasis of the profession (Rein, 1970, pp. 20-21).

Up until the 1960s, the primary objectives of community organization were fund-raising, planning, and coordination of services. Even though community organizing became more reform-oriented in the 1960s, community organizers are still criticized for doing "sociotherapy" to make people feel better rather than to bring about social change (Rein, 1970; Galper, 1975). Nevertheless, community organization has been the one method in social work most directly identified with the effort to engage in social reform.

The social justice specialization may be encountering resistance because it would teach students alternative theories and methods to resist the social control function of social work and engage in social change. It challenges the conservative, apolitical bias of social work. As Gil notes in this volume, "universities, and, especially professional schools, tend to prepare students for 'successful' adaptation to established ways of life and for assumption of appropriate roles and positions, rather than for critical consciousness..."

Another possible conservatizing force influencing social work education is the notion of the professional as an expert technician. The professional norm of functional specificity has been associated with fostering a preoccupation with technique at the expense of social reform. Galper (1975, pp. 91-92) argued that a consequence of this norm is that the client is not viewed as a whole person and is seen only in terms of the problem he or she has; solutions to the problem are seen as the techniques of the profession rather than requiring structural social change. The result is that expertise is substituted for political action.

It may be that resistance to a social justice specialization stems from concern that it is not professional and not in the domain of social work, and therefore, will hurt the credibility of social work in the marketplace. During the 1960s, there were professional job opportunities for community organizers (e.g., community mental health, settlement houses) and the numbers
of students in social work schools who concentrated in community organization grew dramatically. In the 1970s, the number of these jobs declined. Today there are employment opportunities in community organization, but many are outside of traditional social work settings, are not well paid, and do not require an M.S.W. degree. People are being trained as community organizers primarily in institutes not affiliated with professional social work schools (Reisch and Wenocur, 1986).

In an era of shrinking resources, there are market pressures on social work to distinguish itself as having a unique and systematized knowledge and scientifically based methodology. Casework and clinical social work are the dominant social work commodities being sold. This may be because casework is regarded as "the most highly professionalized method of social work practice" (Kadushin, 1959). Community organization may be regarded as hurtful to the professionalization of social work because of the difficulty in distinguishing "between the political and reform activities of community organizers and the broader arena of politics outside of social work" and between "the full-time, paid organizers efforts of social workers from the part-time, voluntary efforts of their colleagues in the same spheres of activity" (Reisch and Wenocur, 1986, p. 71).

A final factor that may account for community organization not gaining acceptance as a specialization is that in a time of budget cuts in higher education it has to compete for resources with other programs in schools of social work. At WMU, it must compete with the ST and PP&A concentrations. There are limited resources available in the university just as there is a scarcity of resources available for human well-being during this conservative era. The competition for resources reinforces the status quo and community organization loses out as a luxury that cannot be afforded.

Conclusion

The Task Force remains in the process of problem-solving in order to gain acceptance of a social justice specialization. Although we have not yet established a program, we have had successes along the way, such as an effective Social Justice Conference, protection of the existing course on social change,
and approval for a new required course on Race and Culture in Social Work Practice (an idea suggested by our survey of the curricula of other schools of social work).

Attempts to introduce a social justice program have made us aware of ideological differences, competing demands for resources, competition for students, and varying conceptions of social justice. As we continue to work on the project, we will try to meet more often and brainstorm in small groups with faculty who have questions about the proposal. We will also pursue outside funding. While keeping in mind the political realities discussed earlier, we will attempt to use a "win-win" strategy, based on the following assumptions: "all needs are legitimate," "resources can be generated," and "it is possible to learn to trust ourselves and others" (Gerstein, 1986, pp. 12-21).

It is important to work for expansion of social justice content in the curriculum. Such content renews social work's commitment to its own heritage. It provides social work students with options for careers in, or a practice emphasis on social justice. It has potential for fostering the successful participation of social workers in the social arena to develop a progressive human services agenda.

Endnotes
1. This survey was carried out in Winter 1988 by the Social Justice Task Force of the School of Social Work, Western Michigan University.
2. See Stephen M. Rose and Bruce L. Black, Advocacy and empowerment: Mental health care in the community, Boston, MA: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985 for a fuller discussion of a clinical social work shaped by a radical perspective, with particular attention to the role of case manager/advocate in the mental health system.
3. The specialization was labeled Social Justice/Community Organization because the primary methodology to be taught is community organization. We will continue to refer to it here as the social justice specialization.

References


The New Christian Right, Social Policy 
and the Welfare State

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While the campaigns of the New Christian Right on abortion, affirmative action, school prayer and other issues have been well documented, little is known about the movement's attitude towards state welfare programs. Identifying three distinctive sources of fundamentalist antipathy to the welfare state, this paper seeks to draw attention to interesting although unconventional ideas about social welfare that should be recognized and understood by scholars concerned with the study of social policy.

During the last decade, conservative evangelical Protestants have attracted widespread attention because of their vigorous political activism. They have campaigned energetically on abortion, the Equal Rights Amendment, school prayer and the suppression of pornography and homosexuality, and have adopted a conservative position on economic politics, international relations and other secular matters.

Known collectively as the New Christian Right, these groups are comprised of conservative Protestant evangelicals, fundamentalists, pentecostals and others who support social traditionalism, endorse religious values through legislative authority, and seek the eradication of permissiveness, secularism and social liberalism. Guth (1983, p. 31) reports that the term 'New Christian Right' gained currency in the early 1980s to refer to "a loose and poorly articulated collection of approximately a dozen TV evangelists, renegade mainline clergymen, nascent lobbies, an ill-defined constituency, and numerous coordinating committees" which had coalesced to form a coherent political movement with a clear agenda. Linked to a similar expression, 'the New Right', which connotes the ideological derivation of the Reagan (and Thatcher) administration's political platform (King, 1987; Levitas, 1986), the term has retained its utility even though its meaning remains imprecise. Equally imprecise is the term
'fundamentalist' which is often used synonymously with 'New Christian Right' although strictly speaking it refers to any spiritual persuasion which subscribes to a literal interpretation of religious teaching, favors simple, basic truths rather than complex theological arguments, and accepts the inerrancy of the scriptures.

The New Christian Right has used various tactics to influence the political process including well orchestrated media campaigns, direct lobbying, the public endorsement of legislative and presidential candidates, and even civil disobedience. Although media reports have exaggerated the movement's electoral strength, various studies (Liebman 1983; Latus 1983; Reichley 1987) have shown that significant voter support was mobilized in support of its agenda. In the 1988 presidential campaign, the movement made an ultimate bid for power by nominating a popular television evangelist, Rev. Pat Robertson, for the nation's highest office. Although Robertson was unsuccessful, he attracted a degree of popular support which is indicative for significant electoral potential.

More recently, the fundamentalist right has attracted considerable but unwelcome media attention resulting from revelations of financial and sexual scandals. These events have undoubtedly harmed the movement's political chances. But religious conservatives have proved to be resilient in the past, and in spite of a loss of impetus, a resurgence of fundamentalist political activism is likely. Indeed, as recent developments in the abortion struggle demonstrate, the movement's capacity for activism has not been diminished.

The activities the New Christian Right have been documented by scholarly investigators. In addition to several critical accounts which have declared their antagonism to the movement's position (Jorstad, 1981; Kater, 1982; Conway and Siegelman, 1982), more dispassionate studies which have investigated its political strength, theological and moral orientation and social significance have also appeared (Liebman and Wuthnow, 1983; Jorstad, 1987; Neuhaus and Cromartie, 1987; Bruce, 1988). This research has resulted in the accumulation of a substantive body of knowledge about a popular movement of contemporary significance.
In spite of this literature, very little is known about the New Christian Right’s attitude to state welfare programs. While journalistic and other popular accounts have referred to the movement’s opposition to the welfare state, no systematic analyses of its position have been published. For example, Jorstad’s (1981) list of the major issues on which the New Christian Right has campaigned, includes opposition to social security, health insurance, the minimum wage, industrial regulation, statutory social services and other programs which are at the core of the welfare state ideal. But he offers no reasons for this antipathy, or analysis of the bases of the movement’s objection to state welfare.

In view of the paucity of social policy research on the subject, this paper seeks to examine the New Christian Right’s attitude towards state welfare programs. It identifies three major approaches to the question which draw on different historical, ideological and theological premises, and which comprise different sources of fundamentalist antipathy to the welfare state. By increasing awareness of these views, it hopes to inform and to elucidate what are interesting although unconventional beliefs about the role of the state in social welfare.

Historical Roots of the New Christian Right

While fundamentalist political engagement attracted considerable public attention during the 1980s, the Reagan era experienced the flowering rather than the beginning of conservative evangelical activism. Indeed, Protestant groups have been involved in politics ever since the Puritans and other religious dissidents first colonized the North Eastern coastal zones of the continent in the 17th century. But while these early settlers were traditionalist and often authoritarian, many of their 19th century descendents adopted a reformist stance crusading against slavery, and seeking to promote industrial and social welfare. Revivalism spawned a plethora of voluntary societies during the early part of the 19th century which were concerned not only with evangelism but with the promotion of public education, charity and reform. Christian reformers were at the forefront of the struggle for racial equality during Reconstruction and, constituting themselves as the Social Gospel movement, they
campaigned on behalf of industrial workers, slum dwellers and the poor (White and Hopkins, 1976; Marsden, 1984).

But, traditionalist factions within the evangelical movement rejected the progressivism of the Social Gospel and were increasingly disturbed by the growing theological revisionism of the mainstream denominations. The acceptance of scientific findings, the growth of religious pluralism (largely through European immigration), and the rapid increase in urbanization had facilitated the questioning of prevailing teachings. Biblical inerrancy, the literalism of the scriptures, and established theological doctrines (such as the virgin birth, the Second Coming and the concept of original sin) were skeptically debated to the chagrin of conservative Christians who challenged the "New Theology" with vigor. The publication of a series of tracts entitled *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* by conservative Christians in the early decades of this century provided the movement with a name (Russell, 1976), and gave fresh impetus to what Reichley (1987) has dubbed the antimodernist revolt. This development was followed by the creation in 1919 of the World Christian Fundamentalist Association, the publication in the same year of the amplified *Scofield Reference Bible*, which, with its dogmatic annotations was widely used in evangelical circles. The fundamentalist revolt also produced a schism within the Protestant denominations, resulting in the creation of new evangelical seminaries and the affirmation of orthodox teaching by traditionalist scholars such as Machen, who left Princeton in the 1920s after denouncing the liberal trend within Presbyterianism as 'unchristian' (Machen, 1923).

Conservative fundamentalist groups also mobilized in support of prohibition and prosecuted the celebrated Scopes "Monkey" trial of 1925 (Russell, 1976). In the 1930s, some fundamentalist evangelists virulently denounced Roosevelt's New Deal as communist inspired and antiscriptural. However, these crusades did not succeed in securing control of the mainstream denominations, or in imposing the fundamentalist social agenda on the nation. Despondent, fundamentalists retreated, creating a multiplicity of nondenominational splinter churches, and adopting a separatist stance which drew consolation from their pre-millenialist belief in the imminence of the Second Coming.
The Cold War provided the movement with a new cause which enhanced its political chances. Successfully adopting the new medium of radio, fundamentalist evangelists such as Carl McIntire, Billy James Hargis and Edgar Bundy exploited popular anticommunist sentiment, and gained widespread public attention through their support of McCarthy's witch hunts. The McCarthy era also advanced the career of the young Billy Graham who subsequently brought a degree of respectability to fundamentalist activism by his successful cultivation of several American presidents.

While anticommunism was the dominant theme of fundamentalist politics in the 1950s, it was eventually replaced in the movement's demonology by the notion of secular humanism which, with its connotation of rationalism, scientism, social progressivism and toleration, is today regarded by many fundamentalists as the scourge of Christian America. LaHaye (1980, 1982) has, for example, successfully dramatized the threat of secular humanism, blaming humanistic beliefs for the decline in moral standards (as revealed in the pervasiveness of abortion, pornography, sexual permissiveness and the condoning of homosexuality), the weakening of the traditional family and its values, the increase in cynicism and hedonism among the young and other social ills. Since secular humanism is regarded by religious conservatives as the official doctrine of the modern state, and the favored value system of the liberal political, intellectual and corporate establishment, the restoration of traditional morality requires the mass mobilization of fundamentalist Christians and their allies in support of a determined bid for political power.

Armed with these ideas, organizations such as Moral Majority, Christian Voice, and Religious Roundtable entered the political arena in the 1970s and, as was noted previously, their dexterous application of modern electoral techniques mobilized significant support for Reagan's presidential bid. A driving influence was the commitment to extend the evangelical impulse beyond the goal of personal salvation to the promotion of societal piety and, in some cases, the advocacy of a return to earlier social arrangements when, it was argued, society was governed by religious precepts. Televangelist Jerry Falwell
(1980, p. 29) frequently made this claim, noting that "... our Founding Fathers established America's laws and precepts upon the principles recorded in the laws of God, including the Ten Commandments." Winthrop's sermons have been quoted by fundamentalist theologians such as Francis Schaeffer (1981) to substantiate the argument that America was not only established as a result of a sacred covenant between God and the Pilgrim Fathers, but that the "City upon the Hill" was essentially theocratic in character.

These notions were compatible with Reagan's political platform and he successfully enlisted the support of leading evangelists and fundamentalist political action groups who mobilized voters and substantial sums of money on his behalf (Jorstad, 1981; Latus, 1983; Gottfried and Fleming, 1988). Although Reagan described himself as a born-again Christian, he was not, in fact, the New Christian Right's first choice. But his ideology was appealing, successfully combining economic libertarianism with conservative social traditionalism and a strident patriotism. His populist style successfully exploited anxieties around issues of race, welfare, communism, and moral permissiveness. It also became evident that Reagan commanded popular support, and beginning with Christian Voice, most of the fundamentalist political organizations committed themselves to his campaign.

But, inspite of their links with the president and their determination to influence the political process, the New Christian Right did not implement its agenda during the 1980s. Although the movement mounted successful crusades against some prominent liberal politicians, and continued its activism on abortion, Christian education, pornography and other issues, the optimism which accompanied Reagan's initial electoral successes dissipated. Pat Robertson's bid for the presidency in 1988 was an attempt to revive fundamentalist activism, and although unsuccessful, was symbolic of the movement's resolve to impose its social vision on American society. This vision extols traditional values, the virtue of the family and local community, statutory sanction over moral behavior, capitalist economic ideals, and a rigorous antiwelfarism rooted in a traditional antagonism to state intervention in social affairs.
As was noted earlier, the New Christian Right has taken positions on a variety of social policy issues including family life, public morality, affirmative action, and education. Numerous arguments have been formulated in support of its stance but generally, its approach is inspired by an antipathy to modernism and 'liberal' tendencies in civil society. Deeply conservative, the movement has opposed progressivist social changes which contradict folkways that are believed to be inspired by scriptural teaching.

Drawing on these traditionalist beliefs, several fundamentalist leaders have expressed their opposition to governmental welfare programs, and some have characterized the welfare state as antiscriptural. But while the movement’s antiwelfarist attitude has been noted by some writers (Jorstad, 1981, 1987), no analysis of the historical, theological and ideological basis of its antipathy to state welfare has been published. Indeed, relatively little has much been published on the subject by fundamentalist writers themselves.

At least three distinct attitudes can be discerned in the limited corpus of fundamentalist writings on social welfare issues. These are derived from a combination of ideological, theological and popular beliefs influenced by the unique historical conditions in which the nation was founded and in which it evolved. Although characterized by a generalized antipathy to statism, fundamentalist objections to the welfare state reveal a complex and contradictory attitude. This is exemplified by the movement’s espousal of economic libertarianism, but its advocacy of extensive statutory control over private morality, and proclivity for political authoritarianism and social control. In their synthesis of theology and secular motifs, these beliefs constitute an interesting set of ideas about the welfare state which should be recognized and understood by scholars concerned with social policy questions.

In spite of their popularity, Roosevelt’s New Deal programs of the 1930s drew heavy criticism from leading fundamentalist
evangelists such as Gerald Winrod, William "Chief" Pelley and Gerald L. K. Smith who argued that the New Deal was communist in inspiration and thus anti-Christian. As Clabaugh (1974) pointed out, the anti-New Deal preachers were intensely nationalistic, espousing a view of American society which extolled individualistic values and reflected a traditional dislike of government. Combining theological considerations with a recurrent antistatist theme in American culture, they formulated an objection to the New Deal that has found expression in the teachings of subsequent Christian right evangelists who have opposed the welfare state.

As the popularity of Roosevelt's programs increased, the anti-New Deal preachers, and Pelley in particular, became even more militant. Clabaugh (1974) reports that Pelley was impressed by European fascism, and emulating Nazi rituals he founded a quasimilitaristic organization which became virulently nationalistic, antisocialist and antisemitic. But with the coming of the Second World War, the movement lost all credibility and collapsed.

However, the populist anticommunism of the anti-New Dealers survived the Second World War to be resurrected in the 1950s by McIntire, Hargis and other fundamentalist preachers whose evangelism was characterized by an energetic patriotism that claimed divine inspiration for the American founding. Extolling individualism and the capitalist ethic as scripturally ordained, they vigorously opposed state intervention in social affairs.

Both McIntire and Hargis expounded the view that America was established by sacred design and that the nation was, in the imagery of Winthrop, intended to be a shining light to the world. Hargis noted that God had historically elected nations to serve his will, and that the task had passed from Israel to Britain and finally to America. As the New Israel, America was the "'the freest of the free nations, the loveliest of all homelands and the most wonderful country in history'" (Clabaugh, 1974, p. 130). McIntire argued that the nation's origins and subsequent historical development reflected its commitment to Christian values, and that its prosperity derived from the fact that Americans had kept the covenant. However, by questioning the scriptures, and
by adopting alien beliefs, Americans had begun to deviate from their sacred mission, and it was for this reason that war, economic hardship and other ills had been visited upon the people. In addition, communism was being used as a tool of Satan to undermine the nation’s purpose. Urging a return to national piety, McIntire combined religious and patriotic themes, and by uniting what Clabaugh (1974, p. 84) described as “the fundamentalism of the cross with the fundamentalism of the flag”, he successfully mobilized evangelical opinion in support of McCarthy’s anticommunist crusade.

The rise of McCarthyism catapulted McIntire to national prominence. A long-standing critic of the social progressivism of the mainstream liberal churches, McIntire claimed that social activism derived from the Social Gospel was communist inspired, and that liberal clergy who supported these activities were collaborationists. The McCarthy committee delighted in these revelations, and soon McIntire and other conservative evangelists were denouncing liberal clergyman, and campaigning through the media against the social progressivism and revisionist theology of liberal protestantism.

After McCarthy’s fall, McIntire and Hargis became successful radio evangelists, and their writings inspired subsequent fundamentalist leaders such as Jerry Falwell, who has also opposed the idea of the welfare state (Fowler, 1982). Falwell (1980) argues that America’s commitment to individualist values, hard work, and the acquisition of property and wealth is divinely inspired. Free enterprise is thus consistent with the Christian life and with biblical teaching which holds that the state has no function except safeguarding “the lives, the liberties and the property of citizens” (1980, p. 69). But, he notes, that since the New Deal, the state has transgressed its prescribed role by adopting interventionist economic policies and establishing a variety of social welfare programs. This development is not only economically disastrous but antiscriptural since the Bible teaches that “individuals should be free to build their lives without interference from government” (1980, p. 69). In addition, state social programs should be condemned since they seek to modify God’s purpose: “the divine providence on which our forefathers relied, has been supplanted by the providence of the all-powerful state” (p. 70).
In this interpretation, state welfare programs are regarded as anti-Christian because they are inconsistent with traditional American individualist values which became institutionalized not because of an accident of history, or because of particular sociology realities on the frontier, but because of divine inspiration. Since, as McIntire (1946) argued, it is God who is the "author of liberty" and "whose thoughts are the ideology of freedom and democracy" (p. xvi), the American capitalist ethic and its antistatism is a reflection of God's purpose. The welfare state is contrary to Christian belief because it negates scriptural teachings that "support our American system of freedom, private enterprise, individual initiative, personal responsibility, competition and what we call the capitalist system" (1946, p. 26).

Voluntarism, the Church and the Role of the State

While McIntire and Hargis claimed scriptural authority for their antiwarfarist position, their ideas owed more to popular cultural beliefs than to scriptural teaching. Another source of fundamentalist opposition to the welfare state, which is explicitly theological in character, comes from the late Carl Henry (1960), a leading evangelical theologian. Henry's critique of the welfare state begins by making a distinction between the respective functions of the state and church. Although he acknowledges that Caesar is ultimately under God's authority, the state has clearly defined responsibilities which differ substantively from those of the church. The state's primary function, he argues, is the maintenance of law and order, the dispensation of justice and the preservation of human rights. The church's function, on the other hand, is within the realm of love "... of mercy, of undeserved favor, of charity" (1960, p. 23).

Through the centuries, the church has fulfilled its ordained commitment to compassion, mercy and love, but in more recent times, the distinction between the respective functions of the state and the church has become blurred. By campaigning for the extension of state intervention in social affairs, the Social Gospel facilitated the abrogation of the church's mission, and in the 1930s, by endorsing the New Deal, the church abandoned its commitment to voluntary welfare. The view that industrial
society created new problems which could only be dealt with by the state, and that the Great Depression required massive state intervention, may have been plausible but it had three unfortunate consequences. (a) It engendered the theologically erroneous belief that state involvement in welfare infuses government with a moral and even spiritual dimension. Although the state may have a responsibility for welfare in times of national emergency, the idea that welfare is a moral dimension of government is unscriptural. The state may act with humanitarian motives but it can never act as an agent of God’s love and mercy. (b) State welfarism has resulted in the expropriation of what was traditionally a religious responsibility. Christian support for the welfare state, and the payment of taxes to fund state welfare services diminishes the Christian ideal of giving as an act of love. It has also diminished the church’s responsibility for welfare. To make matters worse, the church has become increasingly dependent on the state to operate its own welfare programs and this has weakened its autonomy. (c) The growth of state welfare has rendered the church impotent. The church is already left with little more than a token responsibility for voluntary service. As the state extends its scope, “the churches will have to console themselves mainly as centers of private devotion” (Henry, 1960, p. 23).

Henry’s arguments have had considerable appeal and were resurrected with some force in the early days of the Reagan administration when some evangelical leaders argued that state responsibility for welfare should be transferred to the churches. Jorstad (1987) reports that Reagan made a reference to the issue in a speech in 1981, quoting Billy Graham’s proposal that if each church in the country assumed responsibility for ten needy people, public welfare services could be eliminated. But, although this raised the expectations of conservative Christian leaders, Jorstad notes that “As it would turn out over the next years before Campaign ‘84, the President made no further reference in specific terms to that suggestion” (p. 119).

Although state responsibility for welfare was not transferred to the churches, the New Christian Right has supported substantial budgetary reductions in Federal social spending. Fundamentalist writer Tom McCabe (1981) welcome Reagan’s
proposed welfare cuts of the early 1980s which sought to reduce social expenditures by as much as $35 billion. Although many Christians were appalled by the president’s budget proposals, and fearful of their consequences for those in need, McCabe argued that the cuts should be welcomed for giving the church an opportunity to reassert its traditional welfare ministry. As he put it: “Never in recent history has the church literally been handed such an opportunity to affect society. Instead of chastising Reagan’s “heartlessness”, the church needs to begin preparing and planning for the “imminent ramifications of the budget reductions” (p. 42). The benefits to the church, he argued, are considerable. By assuming its proper role, the church will fulfill God’s commandments, reap the blessings which result from giving, demonstrate the power of love and compassion to society, and perfect the welfare system. There is no doubt, he claims, that local church effort, carefully administered by the deacons, will rectify the inefficiencies of current welfare bureaucracies. Fraud and abuse will be eliminated, and needy recipients will receive care, love and spiritual attention, which is more than the state can provide with cash handouts.

Christian Reconstructionism,
the Ungodly State and Biblical Law

Christian reconstructionism is a branch of the American fundamentalist movement that has not attracted much public attention but which has, nevertheless, gained increasing support in evangelical circles in recent years. Accepting the view that the founding fathers had entered into a sacred covenant with God, and that America is indeed the New Israel, the reconstructionists extend this idea by advocating the transformation of the country into a theocracy based on scriptural precepts derived entirely from old testament law.

In their espousal of theonomy, the reconstructionists differ from earlier fundamentalists such as McIntire and Hargis whose view of the political foundations of the New Israel synthesize scriptural teaching, secular philosophies, and a romantic conception of traditional American values. While their imagery is homespun, the reconstructionists evoke archaic themes, and appear to have more in common with Iranian clerics than contemporary American televangelists.
The writings of Rousas John Rushdoony, the movement's founder and leading exponent, offers a critique of the welfare state which is derived from a wider critique of the modern secular state, and particularly of the notion of the separation of church and state. Rushdoony (1986) argues that it is a terrible sin to accept the proposition that the religious and secular domains should be separated since this amounts to the toleration of humanism as a competing religion espoused by the state, and thus in the dethronement of God and the rule of His law over humankind. And by condoning the coexistence of secular humanism and Christianity, the mainstream liberal Church has permitted the ungodly state to propagate its religion through the institutions of government. Education, the courts, welfare services and other state agencies today not only reflect humanistic doctrine but implement its teachings. In addition, the ungodly state has been allowed to “define itself in messianic terms as man’s savior” (1986, p. 32) and to this end it has replaced divinely ordained institutions with humanistic institutions. For example, instead of seeking to discover and follow God’s will, the state has established centralized planning to create its own future. Instead of endorsing scripturally mandated institutions for the care of the needy, the state has established public welfare services to provide for citizens. Rushdoony calls on the Church to challenge the state’s claim to sovereignty and to proclaim the sovereignty of God’s law and its “absolute and total jurisdiction over every area of life and thought” (1986, p. 3). Institutions based on humanistic conceptions must be swept away and practices derived from scriptural precepts must be implemented. As an ungodly humanistic institution, the welfare state must be replaced with biblical sanctioned institutions that meet social need.

Rushdoony’s major work, The Institutes of Biblical Law (1973), offers a detailed account of the scriptural basis for a reconstructed society and reveals how social problems currently dealt with by the modern welfare state will be addressed. The basic institution of welfare will be the poor tithe which is prescribed by the scriptures and has been practiced since the time of Abraham. Although civil governments had previously recognized the importance of the tithe, and had enacted legislation
requiring the payment of tithes to the church, these laws were gradually repealed under the guise of freeing citizens from an oppressive tax. But instead of reducing the burden of taxation, the expropriation of the welfare function by the state has facilitated the extension of state power, and the imposition of a heavier tax burden on the people. The reintroduction of the tithe will reduce the enormous costs of state welfare, foster Christian responsibility for the needy and have the purpose “of the strengthening of godly society” (1973, p. 55). Another advantage of the tithe is that it will create a more efficient system of welfare; since it prohibits the giving of aid to “subsidize evil, sloth or apostasy” it will abolish the problem of abuse which characterizes state welfare. Tithing also encourages sound habits of providence because tithers have to plan and budget their income to insure that they meet the requirements of the law. Finally, tithing has a positive political function since “it releases society from this dependence on the state... and places the basic control of society with the tithing people of God” (1973, p. 55).

The biblical institution of gleaning should also be reintroduced since it is mandated by biblical law and serves as an effective mechanism for helping the poor. Rushdoony points out that like tithing, gleaning was widely practiced in the United States until this century and that many farmers supported needy families as their permanent gleaners. Although it may be argued that gleaning is an agrarian institution, unsuited to the welfare needs of an urban, industrial society, Rushdoony suggests that needy people could collect discarded industrial materials and products from factories, repair them and sell them in order to make a living. Unfortunately, he notes (1973, p. 249): “the rise of welfarism has limited the growth of urban gleaning, but its potentialities are very real and deserving of greater development.”

Rushdoony also advocates the reintroduction of the practice of bondservice which was instituted for “improvident Israelites” who, beset by debt and adversity, sold themselves into labor until the next sabbatical year at which time they were freed. The practice also applied to those who defaulted on the payment of loans, permitting debtors to redeem themselves
through honest service and repair their reputation. Rushdoony argues that biblical law governing the institution of bondservice "is both humane and unsentimental." Unlike the welfare state which permits the claimant to be free but dependent, bond-service encourages responsibility by denying freedom while facilitating rehabilitation and ultimate self-reliance.

Biblical injunctions against the maltreatment of the poor, the oppression of servants and workers, and the protection of widows, orphans and the elderly will also be reintroduced. These measures are intended to inculcate compassionate attitudes and to prevent the exploitation of the weak and needy. Although public punishments are not prescribed for transgressions of these precepts, their association with sinful behavior induces both a sense of personal shame and public humiliation. On the other hand, Rushdoony points out that certain social problems which are tolerated and often condoned by the modern welfare state can be dealt with effectively through public retribution. In the reconstructed theocratic society, the death penalty will be widely used to control deviant behavior. As he notes, the death penalty is specified in the scriptures for adultery, incest, murder, homosexuality, rape, kidnaping, cursing or striking a parent, blasphemy and for persistent juvenile delinquency (1973, p. 77). Although many will oppose the introduction of the death penalty for young offenders, Rushdoony argues that it is badly needed in some cities, such as Los Angeles, where delinquency is rapidly gaining the upperhand. As he put it: "The failure of the law to execute the incorrigible and professional criminal is creating a major social crisis and leading increasingly to anarchy" (1973, p. 191).

Rushdoony's reconstructionist vision requires the abolition of the welfare state and the redirection of state intervention to the task of enforcing biblical welfare laws. Instead of functioning as a service provider, the state will uphold biblical welfare injunctions through the force of punitive sanction, as it did in earlier times when failure to attend church or to tithe was punishable. And, as has been shown, the power of the state will also be used to deal with pressing social problems through the imposition of retributive punishments on incorrigible children, adulterous women, homosexuals, criminals and others who
transgress the moral prescriptions of an ancient and bygone society.

Conclusion: Understanding
The New Christian Right

This paper has sought to document the New Christian Right's attitude towards the welfare state. It has done so primarily to enhance understanding of an approach to social welfare which has not been previously investigated by social policy researchers. The three positions documented earlier comprise an interesting body of thought which is being advocated by a popular movement of political consequence and which should, therefore, be recognized and understood. Although it is true that the New Christian Right's influence has waned, it should not be underestimated. Millions of conservative, religious Americans, who have electoral potential, subscribe to the movement's teachings and are persuaded by its position on state welfare. To dismiss the movement's objections to the welfare state as irrelevant would be myopic and naive.

An understanding of the fundamentalist approach to state welfare also has normative implications. Advocates of state welfare, who dominate scholarly research in the field, have phrased their defense of welfarism primarily in response to libertarian tenets ignoring other antiwelfarist positions. Obviously, ignorance of these positions precludes an informed and effective refutation. If fundamentalist objections to the welfare state are to be countered, they must first be documented and comprehended. In addition, there is a need to understand opposing positions, such as those advocated by the New Christian Right, so that dialogue may be possible. This is particularly important in view of the growing prevalence of sectarian schools of social work which teach and undertake research in the social policy field. In addition, there are religiously committed social workers who will feel sympathy for the fundamentalist approach. Mutual appreciation of different positions is desirable, and is predicated on a proper understanding of the arguments.

An understanding of the New Christian Right's position also has implications for analytical inquiry. As has been shown, fundamentalist objections to state welfare are derived from three
New Christian Right

approaches which draw variously on historical, ideological and theological premises. While some of these sources of antipathy to state welfare will be familiar to social policy investigators, others will be novel and unconventional. The use of scriptural references as a theoretical basis for social welfare provision is unusual in a field which has been dominated by secular, social science ideas (Mishra, 1977; Forder, Caslin, Ponton and Walklate, 1984). As such it illustrates the need for a wider vision that encapsulates phenomena beyond the conventional ambit of social policy research. Since academic research into social policy has been primarily based on established western social and political theories, the analysis of unconventional conceptual approaches opens the subject to new realms of speculative endeavor. Excursions into these realms will, in turn, facilitate new generalizations that will sharpen its analytical significance.

References

The Demise of the Catastrophic Coverage Act: A Reflection of the Inability of Congress to Respond to Changing Needs of the Elderly and their Families

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This paper considers the recent demise of the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988 in the context of the needs of the elderly and their families. Although the surtax imposed on middle and upper income elderly was the ostensible reason for the anger this Act generated among the elderly, other factors related to the concerns and needs of the elderly and of their families also prevented it from being supported. This article discusses the characteristics of the Catastrophic Coverage Act as a continuation of the historical bias of Medicare in favor of acute medical care and as an effort by Congress to restrain federal health care costs. Despite shifting socio-demographic realities which have increased the burden for many families of the elderly, the Catastrophic Act did little to meet their needs. The implications for future legislation to address these problems are also discussed.

The passage of the Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988 (P.L. 100–360) represented the first major expansion of the Medicare program since its inception in 1965. Although it overwhelmingly passed the Congress, only 16 months later, in the fall of 1989, it was repealed by just as great a proportion of legislators as had passed it. Under the program, extended hospital and physician care would have been paid for in full by Medicare after an annual deductible, and other changes would have extended coverage of home health care, skilled nursing care, and outpatient prescription drugs. While this legislation represented a substantial improvement in Medicare coverage, especially for those with serious disability and acute illness, it failed to garner support among a majority of elderly. Ostensibly, the reason was the high surtax imposed on middle and upper income elderly...
which would have increased annually up to a maximum of $2100 for a couple in 1993. However, other factors related to the concerns and needs of the elderly and of their families also prevented this legislation from being supported by the elderly whom it was supposed to help.

The purpose of this article is to consider the passage and ultimate demise of the Catastrophic Coverage Act against the backdrop of changes which have occurred in our social and demographic structure in recent years. The characteristics of the Act are shown to be rooted in historically determined characteristics of Medicare and in a political decision-making process which prevented Congress from redirecting the program towards present-day needs of the elderly and their families. The article also considers prospects for future legislation and recommendations for action.

The Social and Demographic Context
of Health Care for the Elderly

While policy debates focus on the extensive public expenditures for care for the elderly, in fact, most care is provided by family members. Eighty percent of functionally disabled elderly in the U.S. are cared for in the community rather than in nursing homes and three fourths of these are cared for solely by family members and friends (Doty, 1986).

Due to the aging of our population and the increase in chronic illness, an increasing number of people will find themselves in a caregiving role: whereas only 4% of the population in 1900 was over 64, in 1980 that proportion was 11.0%, and it is projected to be 11.7% in the year 2000 (Moroney, 1986). People 65 and older are hospitalized twice as often as the population as a whole and they tend to have chronic illnesses such as arthritis, hypertension, orthopedic impairments, and heart disease, which require constant, long-term and expensive care (U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, 1986). Because of advances in medical treatment and technology, the prevalence of chronic illness relative to acute illness has dramatically increased in recent years, especially among the older population (Gruenberg, 1977). Also of significance is the projected dramatic increase in the old-old population, those 85 or older, who have the
highest rate of institutionalization (23.5% compared with 1.4% of those 65–69 (Doty, 1986) and of such debilitating illnesses as Alzheimer's disease (22% of people 80 or older compared with 2% of those in the 65–70 age group (Brody, Lawton, and Leibowitz, 1984)).

Not only are the numbers of elderly in need growing, the costs of care are increasingly being born by the elderly themselves despite the "universal" coverage under Medicare. According to a report by the House Select Committee on Aging, out-of-pocket costs for health care services in 1986 amounted to 15% of the income of the elderly. For the first time this amounts to more than the amount which led to the creation of Medicare in 1965 (Congressional Quarterly, May 31, 1986, p. 1228). This is due to increases both in copayments by the elderly under the Medicare program and to what Medicare does not cover. In 1984, for example, 42% of out-of-pocket expenses for health care by the elderly went for nursing home care, which is covered by Medicare only when skilled nursing care is needed and then requires a copayment for days 21 through 100, compared with 6% for hospitals and 21% for physicians (U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, 1986, chart 11).

The health care costs considered in these figures do not include costs for home care and housekeeping which are not provided by medical personnel. These are covered, if at all, by Medicaid available only for the poor, by federal Older Americans Act dollars, or by limited and highly variable state funding. Only a small amount of federal funding is available for home care services under the Older Americans Act, a drop in the bucket compared with Medicare: in FY 1988, $1.6 billion were allocated for the broad range of social services provider under the Older Americans Act, of which $25 million was targeting specifically for home care services. (This compares with more than $70 billion budgeted in the Medicare program.) Home care services under this program reaches only those with the most severe needs and for only a few hours per week, and the disjointed funding through separate administrative structures produces a fragmented system which lacks the continuity of care advocated by S. J. Brody (1987).

Family members typically provide a significant amount of nonmedical care for the ill or frail elderly including personal
care, household cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, managing finances, arranging for services, shopping, and transportation (E. M. Brody, 1986). While family caregivers provide care out of love and a sense of family obligation, fulfilling these tasks frequently consumes a great deal of time, takes a tremendous toll in stress, and hampers the ability of caregivers to fulfill commitments to other family members and/or to a paid job. Many researchers have documented the impact of caregiving, such as stress (Cantor, 1983; Chenoweth and Spencer, 1986), fatigue and limited time for relaxation (George and Gwyther, 1986) and loss of productivity in paid employment (Gibbeau, Anastas, and Larson, 1986).

Changes in family structure and conditions have also affected the social environment in which family caregiving takes place today. While contact between the elderly and their children has remained relatively constant over the past few decades (Shanas and Sussman, 1981), many more middle-aged people today having living parents. In 1980, 40% of all people in their late 50s had a surviving parent (Schaie and Willis, 1986).

Traditionally, care for the elderly took place within extended families and/or close-knit communities. Women remained in the household providing needed care for ill or disabled family members. Today, family caregivers are still generally women (Stone, Cafferata, and Sangl, 1987), but there is a much smaller ratio of women aged 45-54 to elderly and particularly of single women, who have historically been the most likely caregivers for aging parents (Moroney, 1986). Furthermore, women are increasingly employed and unavailable on a full-time basis to provide family care. In 1980, 60% of women, aged 45–64 were in the paid labor force (Schaie and Willis, 1986), and it is projected that between 1980 and 1995, two-thirds of the growth in the labor force will be women (Fullerton, 1987).

When family members provide care for elderly relatives, it often affects their ability to sustain their job. In a recent survey of informal caregivers, Stone, Cafferata, and Sangl (1987) found that of employed caregivers, 21% worked fewer hours in order to provide care, 29.4% had rearranged their work schedules, and 18.6% took time off from work without pay. This survey also found that twice as many daughters (11.6%) as sons (5.0%) had
quit their jobs to become a caregiver (Stone, Cafferata and Sangl, 1987), supporting the contention of Osterbusch, Keigher, Miller, and Linsk (1987) that family caregiving can have a negative impact on women's goals for career mobility and gender justice. The negative impact of caregiving is especially critical among working class families, in which women are employed out of economic necessity.

Ungerson (1983) points out that the fact that women are generally carers is socially constructed, both by the realities of the labor market and by government policy. The state can make a critical difference for women and other family caregivers and for the elderly through the establishment of an adequate health and home care service system with which caregivers can share the responsibilities and tasks of assisting disabled family members. Moroney (1986) recommends a program of support for family caregivers in which family and the state share responsibility for care for the elderly. The kinds of services that can support family caregivers include care attendants, homemakers, housekeeping services, respite care, adult daycare, counseling and referral support for caregivers, alternative housing arrangements, and direct financial aid for purchasing needed supplies and services. At a hearing in 1987 before the Subcommittee on Health of the House Ways and Means Committee, S. J. Brody (1987) recommended a coordinated system which embraces medical, social and residential arrangements and integrates both formal and informal care. Such an integrated system has the potential to make available to the elderly the full range of needed services in a timely manner and with a maximum of support for family caregivers.

It is against this backdrop of need, social and demographic reality, and recommendations for service arrangements that the recent Medicare amendments should be evaluated.

The History behind the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988

The signing of the catastrophic care bill in July, 1988, represented the culmination of 18 months of legislative work. Overwhelmingly approved in both houses, it was lauded as a
significant achievement by legislators of diverse political persuasions. While the changes represented significant improvement in coverage for acute illness catastrophes, the "progress" represented by the catastrophic legislation was tempered by losses in Medicare coverage over the previous eight years.

Under the Reagan Administration's philosophy of privatizing social programs and with Federal budget deficit reduction as the driving force behind budget considerations, the Medicare program took a beating like no other federal program. Since Medicare is the second largest federal domestic program after social security and with the concerns about uncontrolled health care costs generally, many legislators viewed Medicare as a comparatively easy target for making sizable cuts in the federal budget. As a major tax program, the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee have primary jurisdiction over it. While the Senate and House Committees on Aging have responsibility for social service programs for the elderly and have explored a broader range of social and health needs of the elderly, the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Committees have focused their attention on Medicare as a health program, and, during the 1980s, have used it as a means for achieving their main objective, that of cutting the federal deficit.

The 1982 tax bill, for example, cut projected Medicare spending by 9% (Congressional Quarterly, March 5, 1983, p. 456). The enactment in 1983 of the prospective payment system, in which hospitals were paid on the basis of set prices for illnesses, or "diagnosis-related groups", was thought by legislators to be a mechanism to increase efficiency and to save Medicare funds.

In 1985, the passage of Public Law 99-177, the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings plan for reducing the federal deficit put additional pressure on Congress to cut Medicare expenditures. Under this plan, if Congress could not produce annual budgets within strictly limited deficits, automatic across-the-board cuts would go into effect. In this context, the debate over changes in Medicare between 1985 and 1987 took place entirely within the context of the deficit reduction effort. As the Congressional Quarterly reported on August 10, 1985, "A centerpiece of congressional deficit-reduction efforts has been proposals to cut spending for Medicare." (p. 1594).
Catastrophic Coverage Act

Catastrophic Health Care

Thus, the climate in which the Catastrophic Health Care amendments were considered was predominated by concern about the federal deficit. The original idea for catastrophic health care came from President Reagan. Although the President's own Secretary of Health and Human Services understood that the major health-related financial catastrophe was not acute care in a hospital but long-term services at home or in a nursing facility (Congressional Quarterly, May 31, 1986, p. 1227), the President was apparently seeking a way to restrain federal spending for the elderly. During the debates on the Catastrophic legislation, a number of alternatives were considered for extending Medicare to provide better support for care in the home, but these proposals were resisted by Reagan and other conservatives as being too costly. Against Reagan's threat of veto, the Catastrophic Coverage Act did extend coverage under Medicare for home health services from two to three weeks to six weeks for those who required daily intermittent skilled nursing care, eliminated the requirement that the patient be hospitalized for at least three days prior to receiving care in a skilled nursing facility, and provided limited respite support for family caregivers.

While these were important changes, it should be noted that coverage was limited to those who required skilled nursing care and the Act did not broaden the criteria with respect to the condition of the patient. In the spring of 1987, Senator Bill Bradley introduced S 1076, which would have extended home health care to 60 days for Medicare beneficiaries under the broader definition that their condition restricted them from leaving home without support and would have allowed for coverage of nonskilled care such as meal preparation and bathing.

The strongest push for an alternative, however, came from Representative Claude Pepper (D-Fla.), chairman of the Aging Subcommittee on Health and Long Term Care. Although his committee did not have jurisdiction over Medicare, he challenged and maneuvered to force a floor vote in the House on an expansion of Medicare to cover long-term care for chronically ill or disabled, to be paid for by removing the ceiling on the amount of income subject to payroll taxes for Medicare.
Representative Dan Rostenkowski, D-Ill., chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, bitterly fought Pepper’s interference in the deliberations over Medicare. Despite Pepper’s lack of success in convincing Congress to endorse his proposal, legislators nonetheless demonstrated an acute awareness of the merit of his efforts. On June 8, 1988, Representative Pepper was given a resounding ovation just before a motion to consider the bill on the floor of the House was defeated (Congressional Quarterly, June 11, 1988, p. 1605).

How the Characteristics of the Catastrophic Coverage Act Limit Help for the Elderly and their Families

While the Catastrophic health care amendments would have made some modest improvements in home and chronic care, they represented, first and foremost, a strategy to contain costs. Rather than redirecting the Medicare program towards the concerns and needs of the elderly and their families, the amendments were grounded in the continuation of historical assumptions and characteristics of Medicare.

(a) The use of community and home care as a cost-saving device. Early in the 1980s, legislators began to consider home care as a less costly alternative to institutional care. In 1981, Congress approved the Medicaid waiver program in which states could target Medicaid funds to individuals at risk of institutionalization and provide home care services as long as costs remained below the cost of institutional care. In 1985, Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) introduced S 1181 which would have authorized block grants to states for home health services for elderly who would otherwise have to be institutionalized (Congressional Quarterly, November 23, 1985, p. 2436). By design, such approaches provide minimal help for individuals who are caring for someone at home and wish to continue to do so. According to one estimate, less than 2% of home care patients are institution-bound (Pilisuk and Parks, 1988).

There has also been a lack of support for home-based care for patients discharged from hospitals earlier as a result of the prospective payment system implemented in 1983. In the first year of its operation, the average hospital stay was reduced from
Between 1983 and 1986, there was a 37% increase in the number of patients discharged to home care and a reported increase in the severity of illness in patients served by home health agencies (Senate Special Committee on Aging, 1988, p. 11). While there has been an increased demand for home health reimbursement under both Medicare and Medicaid during this period, there has also been an increase of 133% in denials by the Department of Health and Human Services for requests for payment of home health care services due to restrictive interpretations of eligibility (U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, 1988, p. 11). While the Catastrophic Act extended the number of days that could be covered it did not broaden the criteria for eligibility or the kinds of services that could be provided.

Additionally, the costs considered in Congressional debates have been projected expenditures out of federal coffers, rather than all costs including those to state governments, for private sources of care, or nonmonetized costs to the family (such as stress, loss of employment, illness resulting from caregiving, etc.). As long as costs are evaluated from the perspective of cost-containment, these additional costs will not even be considered.

Beyond the issue of cost-containment, policy analysts have raised concerns about whether it is appropriate to evaluate long-term care solely from the perspective of cost-effectiveness. Weissert (1985) offers a number of reasons why it is difficult to make community care programs cost-effective. In addition to the fact that there is a large pool of home care users who are not immediately at risk of institutionalization, there is limited evidence that community care reduces admissions to nursing homes or hospitals, community care programs have not been found to be as inexpensive as some had hoped, and limited health status improvement from home care programs has been demonstrated.

Weissert (1985) argues that long-term care should be accepted as a legitimate need in its own right and should not be evaluated solely as a cost-saving mechanism. He also points out that there is inadequate knowledge of the effect of home care programs on family caregivers. It is important to note that many studies of cost-effectiveness have not adequately documented
the total costs and benefits of community care alternatives, especially in terms of costs to family members.

(b) The adherence to a medical model for coverage under the Medicare program despite the fact that gerontologists have long advocated an integrated social and medical program (for example, see S. J. Brody, 1974). This has historically meant that hospitalization was necessary before services in a nursing home would be covered by Medicare, that home care services were available on a short-term basis and were geared to individuals with an acute health episode rather than a chronic condition, and that social services were unavailable under Medicare. The Catastrophic Coverage Act made a modest step toward eliminating some of these barriers to the coverage of chronic care but it essentially held tight to its identity as an acute care program.

The alternative approach to expanding Medicare proposed by Senator Bill Bradley (D-N.J.), S 1076, in which home health care would be extended over a longer period of time and a broader range of services would be covered would have allowed for services to supplement or substitute for care provided by family members. Legislators know that to consider coverage of nonmedical tasks through Medicare opens a Pandora’s box of demand. By limiting services to medical care and even more restrictively to acute—and primarily institutional care—the Medicare program has successfully avoided the “risk” of substituting for care provided by family members. Catastrophic medical coverage offered the means to set a strict boundary around the types of services covered.

(c) Limiting eligibility to low-income elderly through the mechanism of means-testing. The Medicare program has been a broad-based social entitlement program, available to virtually all elderly individuals, and with an across-the-board fee structure. In recent years, there have been attempts to introduce means-testing into the Medicare program. It was rumored in 1982, for example, that President Reagan was considering recommending that Medicare be limited only to those with financial need (Congressional Quarterly, September 25, 1982, p. 2403).

While support remains strong for maintaining Medicare as a social entitlement program, legislators have utilized a means-testing approach in health care for the elderly by allowing Medi-
caid, the federal-state health-care program for the poor, to be the primary source of federal support for long-term care. Thus, federal support for home health care and for nursing home care has been limited to the poor. (While Medicare covered 2.1% of nursing home care in 1984, Medicaid covered approximately 42% of nursing home bills (U.S. Special Committee on Aging, 1986, p. 28). Some legislators have expressed the position that Medicaid is an inappropriate source for coverage of care for the elderly of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health (Congressional Quarterly, May 11, 1985), but to date they have been unsuccessful in shifting coverage to Medicare.

One of the positive features on the Catastrophic Coverage Act was the liberalization on the “spend down” provision whereby spouses of individuals who need nursing home care must either pay for the care themselves or “spend down” their assets in order for their spouse to qualify for nursing home coverage under Medicaid. Under the new provisions of the Act, the at-home spouse could retain at least $786 per month plus $12,000 in assets (in addition to the couple’s home). While this provision was tremendously important in reducing the impoverishment of the spouses of nursing home patients, it continued the essential character of federal support for nursing home care through a means-tested approach.

(d) An either-or system with respect to families and public care. Medicare reductions in hospital and medical services in the years prior to passage of the Catastrophic Coverage Act, without corresponding increases in support for community care, have resulted in a greater burden on families. Glazer (1988) has described this increased burden on families as a work transfer from paid employees, both medical and nonmedical, in institutions to unpaid domestic labor, primarily of women. Under recent Medicare revisions, this work transfer occurs in two ways. First, without adequate support for medical or personal care, families are left to purchase care in the market or to take over such care themselves. This includes such activities as bathing, assisting with toileting, giving medications and other medical procedures. Second, whenever a patient is transferred from an institution to a home care situation, nonmedical tasks, such as food shopping, meal preparation, and housekeeping are
taken up either by the patient herself or by family members. These activities are provided as a matter of course in an institution but are ineligible for Medicare coverage in the home.

While families have a strong commitment to their disabled parents and other elderly relatives (Shanas and Sussman, 1981, E. M. Brody, 1981), they have identified the need for support from formal services, especially in difficult caregiving situations (Horowitz, 1983, Lave, 1985). Except for the limited respite care provision, which restricts respite care to caregivers who live with the care recipient and provides a maximum of three hours of care per day, Medicare has failed to move towards a partnership with family members. Those tasks, which were formerly provided by the institutions in which beneficiaries were cared for, and support for family caregivers have not even been discussed in the debates on Medicare.

(e) The increased privatization of services. Consumers themselves pay over half of nursing home expenses and much of home care costs. Proponents of privatization argue that increased competition in the "free market" results in increased efficiency and stimulates the availability of services. But the health care system is strongly influenced by the vast amount of public funding injected into it. Health care institutions offer services based on their profitability and what is reimbursable under public and private insurance. A report to the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging (1986) identified inadequate home care services as "one of the most serious problems in the existing long-term care system." (p. 35) This shortage is surely linked to the inadequate public funding of home care and its acute care bias.

While options are being developed in the private sector for those who can afford to pay for them, as S. J. Brody (1987) points out, it is the government which must make such options available to those who cannot afford private arrangements. Working class families who are ineligible for means-tested services and unable to afford private services face the difficult challenge of piecing together formal and informal care arrangements. It is these families, where women are working primarily out of economic need, who must face the greatest burden of providing care for aging family members, without adequate options for substitute or supplementary care.
Conclusions

Medicare is unique in the United States in providing universal federal support for health care without regard for income. However, during the 1980s coverage under Medicare has eroded while needs have increased. For eight years prior to the passage of the Catastrophic Coverage Act, the Medicare program was squeezed dry in the midst of federal preoccupation with reducing federal spending. As a result, elders pay a higher proportion of their income for health care than they did in 1965 before Medicare began, hospital patients are discharged earlier and in poorer health than they were previously, and family caregivers receive a minimum of support as they struggle to provide home care for loved ones.

The Catastrophic legislation represented an attempt, though a misguided one, to respond to these deficits of the system of care for the elderly, but it failed to rectify the consequences of these earlier changes in Medicare or to respond to changes in the social and demographic structure of our society.

The anger of the elderly over the surtax must be understood in light of the lack of perceived benefits from the Act. The surtax represented the most significant departure from the basic tenets of the Medicare program by introducing differential payments according to income. A large proportion of elderly, especially middle-income elderly, failed to see sufficient benefit to them from this extra tax. While many older people do fear the financial consequences of a major illness, many have addressed this problem through supplemental insurance policies. For many elderly, the fear of long-term incapacity requiring extensive support in the home or in a nursing home is just as strong as the fear of financial ruin from acute illness. The Catastrophic Coverage Act did little to address this concern.

It is not only the elderly who are concerned about Congress's inability to resolve these problems. Family members, especially women, have been the foundation for community health care systems. Despite the record levels of employment of women and the increased numbers of elderly, who, because of increased longevity, are more frequently burdened with chronic disability, the Federal government has failed to develop programs which support and ease the burden for families. The
impact on families is a major "hidden" cost of the retrenchment of the Medicare program during the 1980s and of the lack of an adequate long-term care system.

Although embarrassment over the Catastrophic Coverage Act fiasco has made Congress shy of taking action any time soon, there will be public pressure in the coming months to deal with these issues. How they are worked out can, in part, be forecast by our observations of the past eight years. The preoccupation at the Federal level with the budget deficit, the locus of responsibility for Medicare within the Congressional committee structure, and the historical dimensions of Medicare constrain the prospects for more enlightened policies within the framework of Medicare.

Unless the philosophy and context of health policymaking for the elderly are changed, the problem of providing adequate health and home care support will continue to be unresolved. Segregated as it is within the Congressional committee structure from other Congressional responsibilities for the elderly and with its identification as a tax program, it is unlikely that there will be a significant shift in the direction of Medicare policy. Any changes will be, at best, incremental. The implications of this political reality are: first, there will be pressure to continue long-term care as a means-tested rather than as a social entitlement program. Second, budget deficit reduction will continue to drive Medicare policy. This means that criteria to ensure that the costs to the Federal government remain below costs previously borne at the federal level will continue in force. Costs to family members will receive low priority and programs to address caregivers' needs will receive minimal attention. Third, it is likely that the issue of filial responsibility will be at the forefront of the debate in the coming months as Congress seeks ways to avoid further programmatic commitments.

Cost-containment is a legitimate policy concern, but it should not be the sole criterion for policy development. An alternative scenario to that just described would be the development of long-term care outside of the Medicare system, maintaining Medicare as an acute care program. Weissert (1985) suggests that a federal long-term care program separate from Medicare should be developed. With the current focus on cost-
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containment, it is unlikely that any major new social program will be created. However, the frustration experienced by legislators, senior advocates, and the elderly themselves over the demise of the Catastrophic Coverage Act may add energy to efforts to develop national goals and programs for long-term care rather than attempting further revision of the Medicare program.

Another alternative would be the development of a program directed toward the needs of family members who provide care. Pilisuk and Parks (1988) suggest the need for a national caregivers policy “that complements the caregiving of family members with adequate services and one that does not punish them financially for illness or disability or for the decision to provide needed care in the home.” (p. 439) Since women are most affected by this issue and will increasingly be so as the baby boom generation moves into the caregiving years, one might expect women’s organizations to be advocating for such a policy. To date, however, women’s groups have been noticeably absent from the debate on health care programs for the elderly. This may be due to the lack of recognition of the extent to which social and health policy for the elderly affects women. It may also stem from the fractionated process by which public policies are made.

The consequences of the passage and ultimate demise of the Catastrophic health care amendments can either be tragic in preventing any effective policymaking in the near future to address the health care concerns of the elderly, or they can move policy in a more positive direction. We can either view the Catastrophic Act as a failed effort, representing the inability of our Congressional decision-making process to respond to the needs of the elderly, or we can view the withdrawal of it as an enlightened recognition that the historical tenets of Medicare with respect to long-term and community care are no longer appropriate to our present needs. Which of these interpretations of the policymaking process surrounding the Catastrophic Coverage Act will influence policymaking in the coming months is not clear.

It is to be hoped that Congress will reevaluate its approach to services for the elderly. The demise of the Catastrophic Cov-
verage Act should signal the need to cease responding on an ad hoc basis. Now, as the policymakers regroup, would be a logical time to pull together a coordinated effort to refashion policy in a way which responds to the demographic and social realities of present-day society.

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Foucault and Giddins emphasise the power of the modern "Administrative State", arguing that we now have at our disposal an enormous bureaucratic machinery for processing and controlling various problematical human behaviours. Australian data on fraud of the social welfare system are examined to throw light on Foucault's and Giddens' views. Figures relating to prosecution for fraud of both the Unemployment and Supporting Parents Benefits system in the last six years throw some doubt on the concept of a vastly powerful "Administrative State apparatus." Certainly a massive state bureaucracy has been established to apprehend cheats, yet the data show consistently that prosecution for welfare fraud is running at a low level despite the diligent efforts of a virtual army of fraud inspectors. If 'pacification' or 'disciplining' of the underclasses actually is occurring, it probably is not happening—at least, not at the levels implied by Foucault and Giddens—through the social welfare arm of the modern Administrative State.

Several influential writers, notably Foucault and Giddens, have developed an important and interesting 'thesis' about social problems in the modern Administrative State. They argue that it is a distinctive characteristic of our time that we have at our disposal, now more than ever before, the means of controlling persons exhibiting various problematical behaviours.

For Foucault, the aim of modern 'disciplinary technologies' (as he puts it) is to produce a 'docile body that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved' (1979, p. 136). The wider purpose of this growth of disciplinary technologies is said to be the normalisation of so-called 'anomalies in the social body'. Foucault's views are echoed and reinforced by Giddens in his recent examination of the growth of an enormous state adminis-
trative capacity within the context of what he calls a process of 'internal pacification' (Giddens, 1985, pp. 172–197).

What Foucault and Giddens have to say seems particularly relevant to the modern social problem of fraud of the social welfare system. The welfare system is only part of the Administrative State but it is an important part. Welfare expenditures in the modern state typically run at around twenty to twenty-five percent of Gross Domestic Product. Although to some extent popular interest in welfare fraud waxes and wanes, in the long term outraged public opinion—fuelled by mass media campaigns and pronouncements by politicians—has secured a massive state administrative response to fraud. The precise targets vary from place to place. In England it is 'scroungers' and the 'work shy', in America 'welfare chislers', and in Australia 'dole bludgers' and 'welfare mums' (Feagin, 1975; Murray, 1984; Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985; Windschuttle, 1980; George and Wilding, 1984).

The administrative response has been remarkably similar across such apparently diverse countries as the United States of America, England, and Australia. Typically it has taken the form of the establishment of fraud squads—for example, 'Specialist Claims Control Units' (England) and 'Benefit Control Units' and 'Review Teams' (Australia)—to supplement the large numbers of full-time investigative staff, whose main duties include the detection of fraudulent activity and the prosecution of welfare cheats (Feagin, 1975; Field, 1977; 1979; Deacon, 1978; 1981; Bradbury, 1988). A clear sense of the rationale behind this arm of the 'Administrative State' may be gathered from the Australian Government's own description of its Benefit Control Units. In language of just the sort referred to by Foucault and Giddens, these administrative structures are responsible, it is claimed:

for introducing and maintaining preventative and detection procedures and establishing the incidence of fraud and incorrect payment in respect of all benefits and pensions... identifying the causes of incorrect payments, evaluating existing departmental procedures and systems and developing systems and policies to ensure that correct payments are made to those persons entitled to receive them. (Hansard, 6 November, 1979, p. 2569)
To some extent, then, it appears that an administrative apparatus for surveillance has been established, and in terms familiar to Foucault and Giddens.

However, even if an administrative apparatus for surveillance and control has been set up, how successful is it? Is welfare fraud widespread and, if so, just how effective are the Benefit Control Units and the numerous inspectors in detecting and prosecuting cheats? In asking those questions there is no claim to be testing the ideas of Foucault and Giddens in a strict sense. Neither scholar has written directly about social security or fraud of the benefit system. Nonetheless, the policing of welfare fraud occurs within the state apparatus. In that sense the ideas of Foucault and Giddens provide a valuable theoretical structure to understand the problem of welfare fraud, a topic usually treated in an undertheorised, purely statistical way.¹

In an earlier study, conviction rates for fraud of the Australian Unemployment Benefits system were analysed for a four year period, 1974-75 to 1977-78 (Pemberton, 1980). That study revealed a low level of abuse, significantly less than one percent of annual claims for benefits, a figure consistent with the results of other social science research in England and Australia (Field, 1977; 1979; Deacon, 1978; 1981). The data presented here cover six years of fraud (1980-81 to 1985-86) of the two benefits about which there have been the most allegations of abuse, the Unemployment and Supporting Parents Benefits. The information presented here is derived from an answer in the Australian House of Representatives by the Minister for Social Security, to a question in Parliament (Hansard, No. 20, 1986, pp. 4040-4043). All the data in the tables are from this source.²


How widespread, then, is fraud of the welfare system? The figures in Table 1 provide a consistent picture. Considering the number of convictions and the rate of conviction compared to the number registered for benefits at the end of each financial year, it is reasonable to argue that welfare fraud is generally at a low level in Australia, at least as far as Unemployment and Supporting Parents Benefits are concerned.³
Table 1
Welfare Fraud Convictions (as a percentage of beneficiaries registered at the end of each financial year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Unemployment Benefit</th>
<th>Supporting Parents Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convictions</td>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>160748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>188423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>250309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>286091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>1222</td>
<td>314500(e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>390664(e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>1007</td>
<td>635002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>1240</td>
<td>561400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td>1494</td>
<td>569761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>1494</td>
<td>569761</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking first at Unemployment Benefits for the six year period (1980-81 to 1985-86), convictions for fraud range from a low of 1,007 (1982-83) to the highest, 1,514 (in 1984-85), an average of 1,270 per year for the period. In the last year for which information is available (1985-86), 1,494 persons were successfully prosecuted. Furthermore, when expressed as a percentage of those on Unemployment Benefits at the end of the financial year, the rate of conviction for fraud is only .26 of one percent in 1985-86.

An interesting comparison can be made of these six years with the period 1974-75 to 1977-78. Even though the actual numbers convicted are higher now than for any time in the earlier period, there simply is no sign of an epidemic of "dole
fraud’’ in recent years. The latest figure is only marginally higher than the rate for 1977–78—.26 and .20 respectively of one percent of all persons registered for ‘‘dole’’ at the end of the year.

Convictions for fraud of the Supporting Parents Benefit system run along similar lines, although the numbers involved are even smaller. While the actual numbers convicted rose over the past six years—from 146 (1980–81) to 325 (1985–96)—when these figures are expressed as a percentage of those on the benefit at the conclusion of the financial year, there is no significant increase in abuse. The most recent figure is .19 of one percent of persons registered for Supporting parents Benefits at the end of the year (1985–86).

Combining the conviction figures for both types of benefit simply emphasises the trend. Fraud is low and shows little sign of a dramatic increase. Less than two thousand are convicted each year out of more than one and a half million who register for either Unemployment or Supporting Parents Benefits at some time during the year (although this figure actually includes some persons already on the benefit at the start of the year). Nor is fraud becoming more common: the most recent figures (for 1984–85 and 1985–86) are very similar to the figures for the first two years of the six year period.

Calculating the Cost of Welfare Fraud

All discussions about the alleged costs of fraud need to be balanced by information on the significant savings made by welfare states due to the failure of many persons to take up the benefits to which they are entitled. Those who complain about fraud usually conveniently forget those sums saved by non-take-up of benefit entitlements (George and Wilding, 1984; Jones, 1983). Indeed, much of the popular rhetoric about welfare fraud expresses angry concerns about the real and imagined cost of such fraud. But for all of the expressed concern, how much does welfare fraud actually cost the taxpayer? It is vital to make some estimate of the problem in relation to the enormous administrative machinery set up to police fraud in the modern state.

The details of estimates of the cost of fraud appear in Table 2. Turning first to the average amount defrauded per (convicted)
case in each year, this does not seem particularly high. Nor is there any sign of a significant increase in the amounts of money defrauded over the past six years. In 1980–81 the average amount for each was $1,125 for Unemployment Benefit fraud and $3,310 for the Supporting Parents Benefit. By 1985–86 the figures are still only $3,709 and $7,876 respectively. Moreover, when the necessary adjustment is made for annual inflation the

Table 2
The Cost of Fraud (Australian Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Average Amount Per Case</th>
<th>Adjusted Average Cost</th>
<th>Annual Cost of Fraud (estimated)</th>
<th>Adjusted Annual Cost</th>
<th>Cost of Fraud (est) as a Percentage of Total Expenditure on that Benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980–81</td>
<td>1125</td>
<td>1125</td>
<td>1374750</td>
<td>1374750</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981–82</td>
<td>1483</td>
<td>1336</td>
<td>1690620</td>
<td>1623081</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982–83</td>
<td>1613</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>1624291</td>
<td>1309912</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983–84</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1414</td>
<td>2368400</td>
<td>1754370</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984–85</td>
<td>2541</td>
<td>1752</td>
<td>3847074</td>
<td>2653154</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985–86</td>
<td>3709</td>
<td>2393</td>
<td>5541246</td>
<td>3574997</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Parent Benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980–81</td>
<td>3310</td>
<td>3310</td>
<td>483260</td>
<td>483260</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981–82</td>
<td>4609</td>
<td>4152</td>
<td>1000153</td>
<td>901038</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982–83</td>
<td>4944</td>
<td>3987</td>
<td>1122288</td>
<td>905070</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983–84</td>
<td>5778</td>
<td>4280</td>
<td>1600506</td>
<td>1185560</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984–85</td>
<td>6828</td>
<td>4708</td>
<td>2212272</td>
<td>1525704</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985–86</td>
<td>7876</td>
<td>5081</td>
<td>2559700</td>
<td>1651419</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

figures show that the average amounts per case have not risen significantly. Note that the average amount defrauded is higher for the Supporting Parents Benefit than for Unemployment Benefits. This may simply reflect the higher cash value of the former
benefit over the latter, although actual values depend on variations in the beneficiaries' ages and family size. Although no official statistics are available for the total cost of fraud annually, this may be estimated by multiplying the average cost per conviction by the number convicted in that year. Thus it can be calculated that for 1985–86, apprehended Unemployment Benefit fraud cost around $5.5 million and $2.5 million in relation to Supporting Parents Benefit. There is no indication of startling increases in the cost of fraud in the last six years: in 1980–81 the (estimated) total was about $1.8 million rising to $8 million in the final year for which information is available. Again, when these figures are converted to constant prices to account for inflation, the general trend remains.

A comparison of the (estimated) total amount defrauded per year with the total annual expenditure on each benefit tells a similar story. For 1985–86 the estimated cost is .17 of one percent of total expenditure on Unemployment Benefits (.13 in 1980–81) and .2 of one per cent for Supporting Parents Benefit (.11 in 1980–81). Combining the value of fraud of both kinds of benefit, the figures are .13 of one percent in 1980–87) and .18 in 1985–86. Clearly there has been little growth in the cost of fraud related to the total expenditure on those benefits; the overall cost of fraud remains relatively constant.

Some further appreciation of the cost of fraud may be gained from Table 3, where the estimated annual cost is considered in relation to the numbers on each benefit. The estimated real value of fraud of Supporting Parents Benefits per recipient has doubled from $4.00 to $9.00 over the six years, while for Unemployment Benefits the increase has been slower, to $6.00 defrauded per year for every beneficiary from the same base figure.

An interesting implication follows from the data on the average cost of fraud per convicted case. Because the sums involved are so low—particularly in the case of Unemployment Benefits, averaging less than $2,000 per conviction until 1983–84—doubts naturally arise about the existence, or at least about the regular application of, an administrative threshold below which it is said to be not worth the time and effort to prosecute. And our confidence increases that the conviction figures may account for substantially all of the welfare fraud that occurs.
Rather than being merely the tip of an iceberg—where what remains undetected is a large number of mostly petty amounts each barely worth prosecuting, but adding up to a sizeable

Table 3
The Cost of Fraud in Relation to Numbers on Benefits (Australian Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Unemployment Benefits</th>
<th>Supporting Parents Benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Beneficiaries at End of Year</td>
<td>Adjusted Annual Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980–81</td>
<td>314500</td>
<td>1374750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981–82</td>
<td>390664</td>
<td>1523081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982–83</td>
<td>635002</td>
<td>1309912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983–84</td>
<td>584506</td>
<td>1754370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984–85</td>
<td>561400</td>
<td>2653154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985–86</td>
<td>569761</td>
<td>3574997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sum—the fraud conviction data should accurately represent the extent of welfare abuse caught in an efficient Administrative State net. Certainly the low average cost per convicted case over the last six years offers little support for the proposition that only big fish get caught while the more numerous small fry escape through a gap in the net caused by an administrative threshold (below which it is just not worth taking the formal steps of prosecution).

However, the value of overpayments must now be brought into the calculation of costs. Indeed the overpayment figures do give more cause for concern than the amounts involved directly in conviction for fraud. Overpayment is, of course, a blanket term. It covers both clerical oversight and the improper receipt of money to which the beneficiary is not entitled. Typically the former includes inevitable administrative errors, while the latter includes both genuine and deliberate failure to declare changed benefit status, as well as deliberate fiddling such as not declaring income earned while receiving a benefit. By contrast, the use of multiple, false identities and addresses to claim several benefits—perhaps the public stereotype of abuse—is more likely to attract fraud charges than to be dealt with as overpayment, particularly if it is protracted or involves large sums of money.
But it is important not to equate the overpayment figures directly with small time fraud—although some, perhaps even much of it, may be. Nonetheless, the amounts involved per year in overpayments, even after substantial sums are recovered by the government, give rise to some disquiet (Table 4).

Table 4
Overpayment: Unemployment and Supporting Parents Benefits (Australian dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Unemployment Benefits*</th>
<th>Supporting Parents Benefit*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amount Debited</td>
<td>Amount Credited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980–81</td>
<td>8.22</td>
<td>6.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981–82</td>
<td>9.60</td>
<td>6.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982–83</td>
<td>17.09</td>
<td>9.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983–84</td>
<td>27.02</td>
<td>16.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984–85</td>
<td>26.60</td>
<td>18.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985–86</td>
<td>32.45</td>
<td>25.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*millions of dollars

As a percentage of total annual expenditure on Unemployment and Supporting Parents Benefits in 1985–86, overpayment (amount debited) amounted to around 1.10%, to which both kinds of benefit contributed in about equal proportions (1.03 and 1.26% respectively). This represents an increase, albeit a modest one, on the 1980–81 figures of .82% in relation to Unemployment Benefits and .87% for Supporting Parents Benefits.

The actual sums involved are quite considerable. In 1985–86, $32.45 million was debited as overpayment in relation to Unemployment Benefits, while the figure was nearly $16 million for Supporting Parents Benefits—a total of around $48 million. Yet
it is also the case that substantial amounts were actually recovered; nearly $26 million of the Unemployment Benefit overpayment ($32 million) and nearly $8 million of the Supporting Parents Benefit overpayment ($16 million) was actually paid back to the government. So some $34 million was recovered of the $48 million total overpaid in the first place. Nevertheless, these are significant sums of money when it is realised that an enormous administrative effort is required to locate missing money and to recover it. This administrative burden must, in an important sense, be added to the actual identified costs of overpayment and fraud.

The 'Administrative State' Apparatus for the Apprehension of Welfare Fraud

We can now look more closely at the claims of Foucault and Giddens about the growth of administrative power and an apparently increased capacity for surveillance of the population. There is no doubt that concern about welfare fraud has given rise to an administrative response characterised by increased surveillance and higher penalties. Like their counterparts in other Welfare States, successive Australian governments have declared their commitment to eradicating inefficiency and fraud in welfare services. In an important sense, however, the successful pursuit of abuse is dependent upon the number and disposition of staff engaged in investigative work. Table 5 gives the details of staff numbers in relation to their salary costs and conviction rates. A useful distinction is drawn between two different kinds of personnel working on the apprehension of fraud.

On the one hand there are the Field Officers, normally engaged in a variety of welfare tasks, but also for whom a significant part of their work 'is concerned with cases of incorrect payment and a proportion of this relates to fraud' (Hansard, No. 20 1986, pp. 4040–4043). Their numbers have risen over the past six years, from 375 (1980–81) to 559 (1985–86). On the other hand, there are some specialist staff positions, located in the Benefit Control Units, established to deal primarily with overpayment and fraud (Hansard, 6 November, 1979). The Benefit Control Units show similar signs of steady development with
staff numbers more than doubling from 114, in 1980–81, to 237 in 1985–86.

Table 5
Field Staff: Salary Costs (Australian Dollars), Conviction Rates and Beneficiaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Field Staff Numbers</th>
<th>Field Staff Salary Costs (millions)</th>
<th>Benefit Control Unit Staff Numbers</th>
<th>Benefit Control Unit Salary Costs (millions)</th>
<th>Total (Field plus Benefit Control Staff) Numbers</th>
<th>Total (Field plus Benefit Control Staff) Salary Costs (millions)</th>
<th>Average Prosecutions per Year</th>
<th>Total Field Staff as a percentage of Total Beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980–81</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981–82</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>8.44</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982–83</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>7.07</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>11.51</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983–84</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>14.11</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984–85</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>11.28</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>16.88</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985–86</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>11.56</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>17.69</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For both types of staff, then, the numbers have grown consistently, indicating a clear, unswerving government commitment to the elimination of waste and fraud. These staff numbers amount to a formidable administrative machinery, backed up by the kind of modern electronic data processing facilities that Giddens referred to in his account of developments in the Administrative State. Clearly then, the facilities for surveillance and control have been established and, what is striking, in terms similar to Foucault’s and Giddens’ analyses of Administrative State power.

It is worth looking briefly at some of the costs involved in setting up such ‘disciplinary technologies’. Where staff numbers have increased, so too has their salary bill. For Field Officers the salary costs have risen from $4.85 million in 1980–81 (375 officers) to $11.56 million in 1985–86 (559). Salary costs for the Benefit Control Units also rose, from $1.84 million in 1980–81
(114 staff) to $6.3 million by 1985-86 (237). This salary bill for investigative work, along with other, unspecified legal and administrative costs (Hansard No. 20, 1986 pp. 4040-4043), may quite properly be added to the total costs of overpayment and fraud each year.

So the administrative machinery is there. But how effective are the inspectors? It is one thing to set up structures of surveillance, but we should not automatically assume they fulfill their purpose. It is interesting to look at the annual conviction rate for each of the six years (1980-81 to 1985-86) produced by the administrative apparatus (Table 5). Although it is to some extent arbitrary to divide total annual convictions by the number of investigative staff (both Field Officers and Benefit Control Unit personnel), such a calculation provides two valuable insights. First, the average annual rate of conviction is quite low, 2.33 per officer for the past six years and second, these figures are remarkably consistent over the whole period, 1980-81 to 1985-86. The average for 1985-86 (2.28) is close to the figure for 1980-81 (2.79). Indeed at no time over the past six years is the annual conviction rate more than 3 per officer. This provides some further evidence—along with the consistently low annual levels of conviction and the low rate of conviction compared to the number of beneficiaries—that fraud is not particularly common. The clear and reasonable inference is that the average conviction rate per investigator is consistently low because fraud itself is low.

However, despite such evidence, many observers remain convinced that welfare fraud occurs on a massive scale. Some try to negate these figures by invoking stereotypes of lazy civil servants. In their opinion the field staff do not try hard enough. On this view welfare fraud is in epidemic proportions, but the conviction rate is low because investigation is not pursued diligently.

In fact, quite the opposite is probably true. There are some grounds for believing that field staff are kept extremely busy, working constantly under severe pressure. In this regard it is interesting to compare the ratio of field staff to total beneficiaries, as an indicator of their potential work loads (Table 5). As can be seen, field staff are spread pretty thinly. The ratio is
consistently unfavourable, approximately one field officer for every one thousand Unemployment and Supporting Parents beneficiaries. It must also be remembered that inspectoral duties involve policing the recipients of other benefits and pensions (e.g., Old Age Pensions). But not only are potential case loads high. The reality of this aspect of the ‘Administrative State’ apparatus is that the full range of inspectoral work in relation to overpayment of all kinds is onerous and time consuming—as field officers confirm in informal interviews. For example, each case of overpayment generates a lot of paperwork; this is particularly so in relation to investigations leading to prosecution for fraud.

It can probably safely be assumed, then, that the work load of field staff is heavy. So, it is quite likely that even though they are kept busy investigating overpayment, they nevertheless only rarely encounter serious cases of fraud—defined in terms of the wilful intent to defraud and by the large amount of money involved. On this view the actual instances of blatant, serious abuse are rare, and thus the low conviction rates mirror that fact faithfully. However, it surely must be conceded that if field staff are busy with overpayment investigations and other welfare duties, it could easily happen that a great deal of serious fraud is missed simply because they are so preoccupied. That is, fraud may be common but the field staff are too absorbed in other matters to be able to complete any more than about two prosecutions each year. Or, it may be that minor swindling is quite common, but that under such heavy work pressures the rational field investigator, to avoid being overwhelmed, adopts a decision rule to prosecute only the most blatant cases or those where large sums of money are involved.

So we have two quite different possibilities about the apparatus of surveillance in the welfare system, both consistent with the facts of overworked field staff and low rates of prosecution. On the one hand, there is the possibility that while the staff are busy with all kinds of overpayment, and petty fiddling is common, the actual cases of genuine, serious fraud are few and far between. On the other hand, it could be that the field staff are so busy with all of their duties, including and especially with relatively minor overpayment, they only have time to identify
and apprehend a few of the many serious abuses of the system. At present the available data do not permit us to settle the issue one way or another. However, it should be remembered that the average amount involved in prosecutions is consistently low, which suggests that inspectors are probably not just focusing on 'big game'. It is now clear that research based on official statistics will need to be supplemented by participant observation studies to look more closely at the 'practical reasoning' and work practices of field staff in situ (Anderson, 1977; Beck, 1967). The overall trends are important, but we also need to see how field decisions actually are made to prosecute or to deal with a problem in some other way, such as offering conditions for the return of money overpaid in return for not prosecuting. First hand observational data will be necessary to supplement the official statistics, if we are to tackle these crucial questions about administrative surveillance of welfare recipients. One must concede, however, that as field officers personally report being swamped by the sheer volume of work—and this is entirely consistent with the low ratio of inspectors to beneficiaries—then it is highly likely that some fraud, though precisely just how much it is hard to say, will slip through any investigative net set up by the 'Administrative State'.

Welfare Fraud in the 'Administrative State'

From the official statistics examined here on fraud of the Australian welfare system, the followers of the ideas of Foucault and Giddens may need to modify their views about 'disciplinary technologies' in the modern 'Administrative State'. Certainly there are good grounds for claiming that there has been the establishment of an apparatus for surveillance and control of a 'problem population', what might be called an 'underclass' on welfare. That much is clear from the data examined here on investigative staff and Benefit Control Units. But while much surveillance apparently does take place, it is less clear—from the data on overpayment and the low rates of conviction for welfare fraud—whether much actual 'disciplining' or 'pacification' is involved there. The setting up of an extensive administrative apparatus is no guarantee of its effectiveness. Indeed, in Austra-
Pacification

The actual numbers 'caught' in the system are quite low compared to the cost and amount of effort expended to apprehend cheats. This point has not gone unnoticed by other writers on the role of the state, some of whom argue that we tend to overemphasise the activities of bureaucrats and their alleged impact on our attitudes and behaviour. Raeff, writing about the so-called 'well ordered police state', argues that:

While it may be true that many ordinances were not actually implemented and many regulations more often breached than obeyed, they do, nevertheless, provide evidence of the efforts made by rulers and administrators to move their societies in specific ways and directions, to shape their population, economics, and cultural life according to set standards and norms. In the long run, in spite of resistance and failures there did emerge an active, productive, efficient, and rationalistic style of economic and cultural behaviour, and in this development the constant prodding and structuring by administrative action played a significant, or rather an essential and seminal role (1984, p. 44).

Raeff's focus is on the effect of state policing to 'civilise the lower orders', from the sixteenth century onwards. Yet the terms are strikingly similar to the debate about administrative action to reinforce proper attitudes towards work among the working class today (Windschutte, 1980). However, as several scholars have reminded us, it is easy to make too much of these arguments (Scribner, 1987; van Krieken, 1989). So 'what might appear to be a "well-ordered police state" seen from above and from the outside often turns out to be much less ordered and rational once one examines its day-to-day operation and observes its reliance on consent often withheld as well as the sheer ineffectiveness of much of the absolutist state's interventions' (van Krieken, 1989, pp. 13-14). The data presented here, on fraud in the Australian welfare system, provide interesting insights into the working of the modern Administrative State. It seems that at least as far as the study of welfare fraud is concerned, the onus is on those who insist that large scale 'discipline' and 'pacification' has taken place, to look again.6
References


Notes

1 The data examined in this paper are confined to only two of the many cash benefits available in the Australian system, but the two about which there has been most adverse publicity about fraud. There is no attempt to deal in a precise way with the thorny conceptual and methodological difficulties
Pacification

involved in defining and measuring 'fraud'. Commenting on the complexity of the issues, Bradbury notes that: 'At one extreme there are those who use false identities to receive multiple benefits, or receive benefits while employed in full-time jobs. At the other are those long-term unemployed who may have stopped looking for work in frustration. In between there are 'over-payment cases', where people are not prompt in notifying the Department of Social Security when they find work, and cases of people not declaring income received from part-time work or other sources while on benefit' (Bradbury, 1988, p. 2).

2 The difficulties of obtaining adequate data on welfare fraud are well known and have been discussed elsewhere (Windschuttle, 1980; Field, 1977, 1979; Pemberton, 1980). One particular problem needs to be mentioned briefly in passing, the question of an administrative threshold or 'cut-off' point in relation to decisions about whether or not to prosecute. Although governments are loath to admit it, a welfare bureaucracy may need to operate with a lower limit or 'cut-off' point (e.g., Aust. $2000), below which it simply is not worth undertaking the costly formalities of prosecution. If such a cut-off point exists, in spite of government denial, then of course the official conviction figures may underestimate the actual incidence of fraud, especially the incidence of petty fiddling. Nonetheless, as several researchers have pointed out, conviction rates are probably still the best indicator of fraud available (Field, 1977, 1979; Windschuttle, 1980). However, fraud is not the only way that welfare payments go astray. Data on prosecutions are always usefully supplemented by information on 'overpayment'—a government statistic that includes money lost through both small-time fiddling by beneficiaries and clerical errors and oversights by officers of the Department of Social Security.

3 Two qualifications should be noted in passing. Firstly, that the conviction data do not allow us to distinguish precisely between 'convictions' and 'persons convicted'. Secondly, in Table 1 successful convictions are expressed as a proportion of beneficiaries registered at the end of each year. Depending on the time taken to secure a successful conviction, fraud may actually relate sometimes to the number of beneficiaries in previous years, rather than to the numbers in which the conviction is obtained. For instance, Unemployment Benefit convictions fell between 1981-82 and 1982-83, despite a substantial increase in the number of beneficiaries. Convictions rise markedly in the following year, indicating the possibility, at times, of a one year delay before convictions are obtained.

4 To account for the effects of inflation it is necessary to recalculate the figures using an (official) Implicit Price Deflator (Australian National Accounts: National Income and Expenditure, 1984-85); that is, to divide the current price value by its corresponding constant price value.

5 Although both kinds of staff are involved in the apprehension of abuse, those in the Benefit Control Units are primarily, even solely, working in that role, whereas the Field Officers generally are involved in a variety of welfare tasks. Furthermore, details of staff numbers in the Benefit Control Units do not permit us to ascertain whether different grades of staff are included and, if so, whether all the persons included in the total carry out investigative work only
or whether some are there in a purely clerical capacity. Nonetheless, the computation of an average conviction rate based on a combined conviction rate from both kinds of staff does enable us to make useful comparisons over the six years.

6 I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr. Robert Tickner (MHR Sutherland in the Australian Parliament); Robert van Krieken and Stuart Rees (Department of Social Work and Social Policy, The University of Sydney); and several staff members of the Commonwealth Department of Social Security, in particular "Waterspout" and "Confidentially Connie".
Detecting and Reporting Child Abuse: A Function of the Human Service Delivery System

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This paper reports the results of a regression analysis performed on 48,499 reports of known or suspected child abuse submitted from 1974 through 1983 to the Colorado Department of Social Services Central Child Abuse Registry. Enrollments in human service programs, combined with events which precipitate enrollee use of services, and the presence of human service professionals and institutions are strongly related to the number of abuse cases reported.

In 1962, Dr. C. Henry Kempe and physician colleagues (Kempe, Silverman, Steele, Droegemueller, and Silver, 1962) at the University of Colorado School of Medicine published a paper reporting the results of a nationwide study of child abuse cases. Since that time, understanding of and interest in child abuse has improved, protection programs have been developed and implemented and professionals from a variety of disciplines have been trained to serve victims of abuse.

While abuse and neglect of children have been known for centuries, Dr. Kempe’s publication galvanized states and communities to recognize the problem and do something about it. Colorado, and subsequently all other states, passed legislation in the early 1960s that established child protective services administered by departments of social services. The Colorado legislation mandated that professionals who work with children must report knowledge or suspicion of abuse or neglect to the Colorado State Registry for Child Protection. Later, penalties and civil liability suits reinforced the reporting requirement.

Rates of reported cases of abuse have been shown to differ significantly geographically (Kempe and Helfer, 1972; Cohen and Sussman, 1975). It was hypothesized that the rate of abuse reported for counties in the State of Colorado is associated with the number of residents who are enrolled in health and human
service programs and with events which bring residents into contact with mandated reporters.

Methods

Rates are frequently employed in assessing the health status of a population and the quality of services provided to that population. Rates are statements of statistical probability which are the underlying measures of the frequency of event occurrence in a specified population. Measures of morbidity used in epidemiology and public health exemplify useful applications of rates. All of these rates belong to two broad categories. Whereas incidence rates measure the occurrence of new cases of a disease condition during a time period, prevalence rates depict the number of cases in a specified population at one point in time (Mausner and Bahn, 1974). The rates described here for child abuse connote incidence. But, reportable incidence is surely a function of prevalence. That is to say, undoubtedly an adult who regularly abuses a child is more at risk to be reported than one who abuses a child rarely. Reported incidence is, therefore, a function of prevalence and a single report of abuse may represent a history of inhumane treatment during a victim’s childhood.

There are three elements which comprise any rate. For a rate of incidence, they are: (a) the number of episodes of the disease/occurrences of an event in a specified population (this is the numerator: reported cases of child abuse for the purposes of this examination); (b) a period of exposure (10 years for this study); and (c) the population exposed to contracting the disease (the denominator: 100,000s of children under 18 years of age in the year 1980).

When persons capable of contracting the disease are included in the denominator, it can be appropriately designated the population-at-risk and the rate of incidence that is calculated provides valuable insight concerning the epidemiology of the disease (MacMahon, Pugh, and Ipsen, 1960). Determination of the population-at-risk poses little difficulty when the denominator consists of the residents of a geographical unit, state, county, community, etc., for which number and characteristics are known. County was the unit of analysis for this investigation.
Rates are of three fundamental types: (a) crude, (b) specified, and (c) standardized. Crude rates require less information to compute than do the other types and, therefore, in spite of their known inadequacies, still enjoy wide utilization. Due to lack of information pertaining to the traits of either the victim or the perpetrator of abuse, conventional rate standardization and computation of attribute specific rates were not done. Rates reported here are crude ones.

Registers are frequently employed in the public health field to assist in the determination of incidence and prevalence of conditions. Registered populations can constitute either the numerator or denominator of a calculated rate. When the registered population is used as the numerator, the general population or a subset of the general population (in this case the pediatric population) usually comprises the corresponding denominator. For example, by dividing the number of registered patients receiving care from end stage renal disease facilities in this country by U.S. Census estimates/projections of the American population, the prevalence rate of renal disease in the United States can be approximated. The approximation is a close one for two compelling reasons. First, the suffering and functional impairment caused by the disease dictate that the afflicted seek professional care. And, second, federally established protocols for payment for dialysis and transplant services virtually preclude any American's receipt of care on a regular basis outside this country. Thus, the number of recipients of certified dialysis services can justifiably be used as a proxy measure for planning and evaluating services and epidemiological studies.

In the preceding example, registered persons occupied the numerator of a rate which enjoys substantial public and professional confidence. But other formulations, such as that for the incidence of child abuse, are controversial. Not all cases are brought to the attention of helping professionals, and of those which are, not all are reported. But this is no different from the situation for most acute disease conditions in this country. Of those conditions which result in some limitation of activity on the part of the afflicted, about 45% are medically unattended (National Center for Health Statistics, 1983). Thus, frustration associated with efforts to measure incidence of event occurrence
are not unique to the study of child abuse. In addition, the hypothesis cited at the outset is better tested through the use of the index of reported cases of child abuse than the more emphasized one of actual abuse.

Data used in these analysis were extracted from official records of the following federal and state agencies. The U.S. Bureau of the Census is the provider of data on the population under 18 years of age from the 1980 Summary Tape File #1 and the percent of persons and families below poverty level from 1980 Summary Tape File #3A. Information obtained from the Colorado Department of Social Services included reported cases of child abuse (the Colorado State Registry for Child Protection), households enrolled in Medicaid, persons receiving food stamps, number of AFDC cases, and persons receiving adult protective services (Annual Report, 1981). From the 1980 Annual Report of the Colorado Department of Institutions-Division of Mental Health the number of juvenile commitments and mental health centers was extracted. The sources for percent illegitimate births and general acute short-stay hospitals were the 1980 Annual Report from the Office of Vital Records and the Health Facilities Directory for 1980, both produced by the Colorado Department of Health. The Colorado Board of Medical Examiners provided data for the number of physicians and primary care physicians from its 1980 Licensure Records.

Although certain reports from which data were drawn were released in 1981, all of the above information is applicable to 1980. Child abuse registry data pertain to the period 1974–1975. While the year 1980 is slightly beyond the midpoint of the ten year period under study, it coincides with the conduct of the decennial census and availability of other important information. Any other year chosen would have been dependent upon the accuracy of estimates of actual population through the process of intercensal adjustment.

Results

There were 48,499 reports of child abuse submitted to the Colorado Department of Social Services for inclusion in the registry during the first ten years of its existence. The number of reported cases has risen in linear fashion from 866 in 1974 to
9,268 in 1983. Similar growth has been observed in other states (Nelson, Dainauski, and Kilmer, 1980). This represents about an eleven-fold increase in only one decade.

Table 1


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>769.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std Dev</td>
<td>1840.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>10709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>48499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.95 c.i.</td>
<td>306.2 to 1233.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std Err</td>
<td>231.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The disparity in number of cases reported by county is apparent from consideration of the standard deviation in Table 1, which is about 2.5 times the mean. But in view of the range in county populations the corresponding pediatric populations, the population-at-risk, this observation was expected. However, the variance in rates depicted in Table 2 below are not as easily explained.

Table 2

Reported Cases of Child Abuse per 100,000 Children Under 18 Years of Age in Counties in the State of Colorado: 1974–1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2280.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>1951.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std Dev</td>
<td>1318.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>361.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>6440.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.95 c.i.</td>
<td>1948.7 to 2612.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std Err</td>
<td>166.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 95 percent confidence interval is modest in relation to the measures of central tendency versus that derived for actual number of cases in relation to the mean and median; the size of the interval for the latter was larger than the associated mean and more than 9 times the median (see Table 1).
Several variables were correlated with the rate of reported cases of abuse to test the study hypothesis. Their correlation coefficients are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid program enrollees</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household on food stamps</td>
<td>.327</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFDC cases</td>
<td>.350</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General acute short-stay hospitals</td>
<td>.377</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health centers</td>
<td>.363</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians</td>
<td>.293</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary care physicians</td>
<td>.298</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult protective service cases</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile commitments</td>
<td>.332</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent illegitimate birth</td>
<td>.311</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The variables from top to bottom respectively represent (a) participation in social service programs, (b) health and mental health facilities, (c) health personnel, (d) related events attended by health/social service professionals. All reflect public exposure to professionals required to report child abuse. Most correlations were moderate in strength, but usually statistically significant.

Multiple regression was performed using all of the above variables in the equation and rate of reported abuse as the dependent variable. Just under one-quarter of the variance was explained (Multiple R = .498, Multiple R Square = .248). Although R is statistically significant, the standard error of the estimate (577.8) is large. While moderately strong relationships have been established, they do not afford the analyst general power to explain or predict rates of reported abuse for all 63 counties.

But instability of rates for the state's most sparsely populated counties is understandable. One county accounted for only 5 cases during the 10-year period examined. More than one-fourth of all counties (16 of the 63) averaged 3 or fewer reported cases.
incidents per year, and the median was less than 10 cases annually per county. The effect of inclusion of counties, mostly rural, that are not densely populated is well illustrated by applying the previously used regression equation to Colorado's most populated regions.

Of the state's 63 counties, only 10 have county populations of 50,000 or more. Nine of these are part of standardized metropolitan statistical areas, and the other is pending designation. None of the other 53 counties is inhabited by as many as 30,000 persons nor is there a single community of at least 15,000 residents. There is a logical basis, therefore, for rural versus urban classification of Colorado counties.

Just as the population of Colorado is heavily concentrated in these ten counties, so too are public health and social service resources. Little is sacrificed by restricting our primary focus to these areas because 42,388 of the 48,499 cases reported from 1974 through 1983 (87.4%—about 7 of every 8 incidents in Colorado) occurred within the ten counties.

Table 4

Pearson R for Correlation with Rate of Reported Abuse Within the 10 Most Populated Colorado Counties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid program enrollees</td>
<td>.518</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households on food stamps</td>
<td>.518</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFDC cases</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td>.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General acute short-stay hospitals</td>
<td>.530</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health centers</td>
<td>.508</td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td>.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary care physicians</td>
<td>.466</td>
<td>.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult protective service cases</td>
<td>.322</td>
<td>.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile commitments</td>
<td>.437</td>
<td>.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent illegitimate births</td>
<td>.585</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that the correlation of each item with rate of reported abuse is considerably higher than that obtained when analyzing all 63 counties. The most profound increase can be observed for illegitimacy of birth. Adolescent pregnancy has become a major problem in urban Colorado. Immature, usually
indigent, adolescent mothers are unprepared for either pregnancy or parenthood. Tragic abuse often results. But several programs to address the related need have been in operation for some time under the direction of health and social service professionals. It should be noted that the statistical significance of the coefficients, although the coefficients are without exception higher than for the more general analysis, have declined. This is a function of the fact that only 10 counties were included in the examination. None of the variables incorporated into the formula explain less than 10% of the variance in rate of reported abuse.

Regression on rate of reported abuse, entering variables stepwise in descending order of strength of correlation, was performed. Virtually all of the variance was explained (Multiple R = .983, Multiple R Square = .966) using only 8 of the 10 variables (included in the earlier regression. The F-to-enter and tolerance level were insufficient for inclusion of primary care physicians and adult protective services cases. The number of primary care physicians was approximately one-third the total number of physicians for each of the counties, and there is no evidence that other medical specialists are either more or less likely to report abuse than a family physician. Adult protective service cases was found to have the weakest relationship to number of reported cases of child abuse of the ten variables listed in Table 4. The correlations attained with the B variables was significant at the .00001 level, and the standard error of the estimate was 237.3 reported cases per 100,000 children. The relationship was homoscedastic and the regression equation remarkably predictive. Even at the extremes of the range of values of rate of reported cases, predictiveness is apparent. For the county recording the highest rate of 4,674.3 per 100,000, a rate of 4,788.9 was estimated. A rate of 1,359.1 was estimated for the county with the lowest rate (1,289.5 per 100,000 children)—discrepancies of just 2.5% and 5.4% respectively.

Discussion

The School Health Nurse Program of the Colorado Department of Health offers the most graphic direct illustration of the effect of a presence of trained professionals on rates of reported
Child Abuse

child abuse. Of 186 school districts in the state, just 9 are without nursing services. Their rate of elementary school children per 100,000 who are evaluated for abuse is 135.5 vs. 812.5 per 100,000 for districts served by licensed nurses \((t=4.20, p=.001)\). The presence of nursing resources clearly has a tangible impact. Nurses perform screening for vision, hearing, and dental problems, scoliosis and height and weight deviation. They also do throat cultures, TB skin testing, and general physical exams. There were 786,249 diagnostic procedures conducted during the 1987-1988 school year with elementary school children. Virtually all kindergarten and grade school children have contact with school health nurses; 84.4% \((248, 114)\) are screened for vision problems alone. Full physical examinations were performed for 13,622 elementary school children.

School health nursing provides a practical demonstration of the effect of contact with mandated reporters of abuse and revelations of child maltreatment. The absence of these professionals is associated with districts in which abuse is apparently not being recognized. School health nurses participate in extensive formal child abuse training sponsored by the Colorado Department of Health.

For children younger than school age, the Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment Program (EPSDT) serves a child protection function in much the same way that the Colorado School Health Nurse Program does for elementary and secondary school students. In addition to providing preventive health care, EPSDT personnel arrange for developmental evaluations. Unlike the School Health Nurse Program, EPSDT eligibility is determined by means testing. Children in families that quality for Aid to Dependent Children (AFDC) are categorically EPSDT eligible.

There is also a meaningful physician role in this scenario. In school year 1987-1988, 41,246 elementary school student referrals were made to physicians by school health nurses for the purpose of more complete examination for various kinds of health problems indicated by nurse testing and screening of students. Physicians are widely respected in the child protection field for their ability to objectively evaluate evidence of abuse. Their examination of a child increases the probability of
discovery of maltreatment. And the results of a doctor’s examination are considered especially credible in a court of law. This explains the effort that has been made in the last decade to insure inclusion of physicians among the membership of multidisciplinary child protection teams (Krugman, 1987; Schmitt, Grosz, and Carroll, 1976).

Another aspect of participation in human service programs tends to magnify this physician role. Because Medicaid program participants receive medical service at no personal or family cost, they are more likely to follow through on referrals to physicians. A recent evaluation of the Colorado Primary Care Physician Program found that Medicaid patients, whose care was subsidized by the state and federal governments, visit a physician’s office even more frequently than do affluent Americans of the same sex and similar in age (Colorado Department of Social Services, 1989).

One administrative rather than clinical aspect of the Colorado Medicaid program might further explain its strong direct relationship to child abuse reporting. For the purposes of fee collection, Medicaid physicians are required to submit claims to the Department of Social Services, the custodial agency with responsibility for maintenance of the state child abuse registry. Failure to accurately annotate the diagnosis for which treatment was rendered in accordance with the Ninth Revision of the International Code of Disease Association constitutes a violation of state law in addition to the failure to report a suspected case of abuse. Thus, personal risk accrues to the Medicaid physician who simply encloses his/her observations in a confidential medical record of the patient.

It is not the routine administrative process of certifying individuals and/or families eligible for Medicaid benefits that accounts for the relationship between the number of program enrollees and the rate of reported child maltreatment. This bureaucratic task does not present the eligibility technician with a meaningful opportunity to observe abuses. But visitation to physicians at a rate which, as earlier noted, exceeds that for the general population follows the act of certification. The professional skill of physicians in the detection of abuse was previously discussed. But neither is the mere presence of a physician in a
particular community the crucial factor. Rather, the combination of the Medicaid coverage for the health care of an individual or family that would otherwise not have sufficient financial resources to purchase needed medical services and the presence of a physician willing to accept Medicaid patients into his/her caseload influences the rate of reported cases of child maltreatment. Families in which child abuse is occurring come increasingly under the scrutiny of a professional skilled in detection, in a setting which permits thorough clinical investigation of the possibility of maltreatment.

Unlike the general population, Medicaid program participants often do not have a regular source of medical care other than the emergency room of a general hospital. Forensic experts can be consulted in these facilities and the availability there of technologically advanced equipment not typically found in the physician’s office also facilitates the diagnosis of abuse just as it does the diagnosis of most disease conditions. Distance is an obstacle to access to a hospital for a relatively small proportion of Coloradoans, primarily those who reside in remote and sparsely settled rural communities.

The same general principles which apply to physical health professionals and institutions also apply to the mental health field. The expense of care provided by private practitioners prohibits their utilization by many individuals. Indeed, a major purpose of the community mental health center movement of the 1960s was to improve access to mental health services for economically disadvantaged Americans (Richman, 1985). It is not surprising that during the course of individual and group counseling, particularly that dealing with family violence, child mistreatment is discovered. Many homes in which child abuse occurs are also characterized by violence between spouses (Cazenave and Straus, 1979). Of households in which child abuse was reported during the period 1978 through 1985 in Colorado, spouse abuse was found in 14% (Colorado Department of Social Services, 1986). But of the many deviant behaviors which may surface in therapy, child abuse and/or neglect are the acts which the therapist is required by law to report. The mental health center environment which is marked by candid
communication between the clinician and patient is understandable conducive to the disclosure of child maltreatment by either the victim or perpetrator.

Unmarried adolescent mothers from impoverished households present a wider range of personal and family problems than perhaps any other category of the needy. They and their offspring typically qualify as recipients of a large number of human service programs. Adolescent mothers may be both victims of abuse, normally sexual abuse, and perpetrators who physically abuse their babies (Smith and Kunjukrishnan, 1985).

Juvenile delinquency is often committed by runaway youths who have fled a household in which family violence occurs (Janus, Burgess, and McCormack, 1987). They frequently report that they have been mistreated to law enforcement or social service authorities when apprehended. Thus, their behavior is both the "cause" of child abuse reports and the effect of that abuse.

Certain of the independent variables employed in this analysis must be seen at least in part as proxy measures of other more genuinely explanatory variables. It has been noted that the administrative task of Medicaid enrollment does not afford a valuable opportunity to ascertain the presence of abuse, but it does lead to intense, prolonged contacts with physicians skilled in the detection of child maltreatment. By the same token, certification of eligibility to receive food stamps is perfunctory. But those found eligible will frequently qualify for Medicaid and a variety of other government subsidized programs which also employ means testing. Qualification for a myriad of health and social services at no cost to the recipient is not mutually exclusive. Providers of the services of some programs have a better opportunity to detect abuse than providers in other programs. More detailed examination using individual recipients rather than counties as the unit of analysis is required to discern more fully the respective contributions of participation in different programs to rates of reported abuse.

In conjunction with testing hypotheses, it is seldom possible to rule out rival hypotheses. The social service variables used in this analysis suggest the possibility of a relationship between low socioeconomic status and the rate of reported abuse. Three
social service program enrollments have been examined: Medicaid, AFDC and food stamps. Common to all three is the eligibility criterion of disadvantaged financial status. A variety of ability-to-pay scales are used in physicians' offices, general hospitals, and mental health centers, but some relation of assets and income to federally established poverty level guidelines are considered for applicants to Medicaid, the food stamp program, and AFDC. Thus, it is important to examine the possibility that economic status is the real underlying causal variable; either because persons deprived of many of the niceties enjoyed by most members of society are more abusive of children than others in the general population, or the poor are simply more often reported for this misdeed than are others. Thus, two additional variables were correlated with rate of reported abuse. The Pearson Correlation computed from reported abuse with the percent of persons below poverty level for the county was -.03, the only variable with an inverse relationship to abuse. A more refined measure, percent of all families with children under 18 years of age and below the poverty level, was found to be almost completely without correlation to rate of reported abuse (R=.01). It has long been a frustration of helping professionals in Colorado that many individuals eligible for receipt of benefits and services through various programs (especially those of the Women, Infants, and Children’s Nutrition Program of the Department of Health) do not avail themselves of the opportunity. A comprehensive study of impoverished families in the Denver Metropolitan Area recently revealed that the number of people and families receiving public assistance and participating in various social service programs was much smaller than the number eligible (Piton Foundation, 1987). It is contact with professionals rather than financial status that is associated with the rates of reported abuse.

Conclusions

High rates of reported child maltreatment are associated with families who come under prolonged or intense scrutiny by human service professionals who are skilled in the detection of abuse and mandated by law to report suspected or known cases. Professionals in these programs serve at the pleasure of federal and state legislators. Their continued service is subject to
annual reappraisal by these governing bodies. In this time of fiscal austerity and legislative reluctance to support human service programs, there is cause to ponder a hidden cost associated with reducing the availability of helping professionals. Major reconfiguration of the human service delivery system could curtail capacity to identify victims of abuse and delay or deny them the services they require.
References


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