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How Voluntary Agency Networks Fared in the 1980s

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Believing that the least government is the best government, the Reagan Administration favored, in both principle and practice, the transfer of functions to and fiscal independence of the private sector. This article provides a comparative analysis of the financial status of three major types of voluntary agency networks before and near the end of the Reagan era. Focusing on national voluntary health, child welfare league, and family service agencies, proportionate and absolute revenues, sources of income, and new income generating strategies are examined within the context of philanthropic trends and the compensatory role of state and local governments.

These agency networks fared well during the Reagan era, in large part due to the coping strategies they employed, the popularity of their programs, and effective constituent advocacy. The interests of the less popular groups and causes in this society, however, have been severely challenged.

Ronald Reagan began his first term as President of the United States in January 1981 promising fundamental changes in government's role. The goal was to transfer as many functions as possible to the private (not-for-profit and for-profit) sector, including both the administration and financing of human services. Federal funds in support of human services, already reduced under previous administrations, were to be substantially curtailed. The philosophical base was clear: the best government was the least government. These principles have been adopted, in whole or part, by the Bush Administration.

Most experienced agency executives had lived through budget cutting before and had developed coping skills. But this was
the first time that cutbacks were symbolic of profound alteration in the ideological foundation of our social welfare system. The debate about who is responsible (and to what extent) for the general health and well-being of citizens and how this responsibility is to be met reverberated through government at all levels and through the private sector. Voluntary agencies were expected to do more with less. It was believed that the competition afforded through the open market would ultimately result in better, cheaper, and more efficient products and services. The limited residual public role was best managed through state and local government.

Although the protracted impact of Reaganomics must, of course, await longitudinal studies, sufficient comparative data are now available to assess the short term impact of this philosophical and operating role shift on voluntary agencies responsible for delivering human services. This article begins with an overview of the financial status of select national voluntary health and human services networks at the beginning and toward the end of the Reagan Administration. The fiscal status of health and social welfare agencies is one index of impact. The implications of these fiscal trends are then analyzed within the broader context of how the voluntary sector has adapted to the challenges of the Reagan era. Given similar environmental forces and ideology, these adaptational strategies will provide important precedents for the voluntary sector in the years to come.

Data

Since the voluntary (not-for-profit) sector is composed of many subunits, generalizations are difficult. Discussion herein is limited to some of the voluntary agencies that function nationwide and/or are the central unit of networks with local affiliates. Some have federated structures, others corporate. Comparisons of revenue sources and levels for national voluntaries between the pre and/or early years of the Reagan Administration and the most recent available fiscal year highlight changes in income patterns. Such changes are considered for member agencies of the National Health Council, the Child Welfare League of America, and Family Service America. Comparative data from
the American Association of Fund Raising Council are also included.

National Voluntary Health Agencies

Comparative financial reports were available for 16 member national voluntary health agencies (NVHAs) of the National Health Council (National Health Council [NHC], 1982; NHC, 1989). (In 1981, there were 19 NVHA members; in 1987, 34 agencies. Some 1981 member agencies discontinued their NHC affiliation by FY1987, others joined.) The National Health Council functions as spokesperson and information clearinghouse for the NVHAs (NHC, 1988).

In 1981, total income for the 16 agencies was $683,314,000. By 1987, their collective income had reached $1,101,025,000. This total revenue growth of $417,711,000 represented a 61% increase over the 1981 level (Gibelman, 1990). Among the dramatic revenue increases experienced were those of the American Diabetes Association (136%); the Epilepsy Foundation of America (140%); and the National Foundation for Ileitis and Colitis (243%). For eight agencies, total income increased by over 100% between 1981 and 1987. Fourteen of the sixteen agencies surpassed, by significant amounts, the 23.4% of inflation for that period (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, personal communication, September 12, 1988).

The revenue base of NVHAs, unlike many other types of voluntary agencies, has generally been independent of government funds (NHC, 1986). Instead, the major source of income (in both 1981 and 1987) was from public contributions (corporations, foundations, and individuals). Thus, the potential of a diminished governmental financing role was not a direct concern to these agencies. However, Reaganomics did pose a new challenge of heightened competition for private philanthropic dollars. Those voluntaries that had heretofore depended on government contracts, grants, or fees-for-service were increasingly making competing claim for corporate and foundation dollars. The decrease in federal dollars also posed a potential negative effect for clients of these agencies in relation to access and availability of needed services.
Changes in the sources of NVHA revenue suggest that the potential or realized competition for public contributions did have an impact on revenue sources. In 1981, public contributions constituted 77% ($539 million) of total income for the 19 NHC members; by 1987, the proportion of public contributions had fallen to 58%. Although public contributions rose absolutely for these agencies between 1981 and 1987, there was a significant decrease in reliance on this revenue source. In 1987, 42% of income (compared to 23% in 1981) came from "other revenues", a category which includes program service fees, publication sales, membership dues, and investments (NHC, 1989).

Child Welfare Agencies

For the over 200 United States voluntary agency members of the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), the period of comparative revenues and expenditures is 1979 and 1986 (202 agencies in 1979 and 230 in 1986). The seven year growth in revenues was at the extraordinary level of 240%—$582 million in 1986 compared to $171 million in 1979 (Malm & Maza, 1988). The CPI inflationary index during this same period was 42.8 (Information Please Almanac, 1988).

This dramatic growth in revenues occurred in several categories. In 1960, 28% of income for member agencies was from government (contracts, grants and/or fees-for-service). By 1975, government funds accounted for 57% of revenues. In 1979, there was a slight decline to 55% for the 202 child welfare and child and family members (62% if only the 121 child welfare members are included) (Malm & Maza, 1988).

In 1986, total revenues from government for all 238 member agencies, most of whom were now exclusively child welfare agencies, was 59%. Thus, depending on the 1979 base of comparison (child welfare agencies only or child and family agencies and child welfare agencies combined), there was a slight increase in government funding (55 to 59%) between 1979 and 1986 or a slight decline (62 to 59%). On a percentage basis from 1975 to 1986, some stabilization of governmental support had occurred (Malm & Maza, 1988).

In absolute dollars, the increase in government funding was substantial. For example, median revenues from government by
agency was $453,000 in 1989 and $1,032,000 in 1986, an increase of 128%. About two-thirds of income from payments for service on a case-by-case basis (Malm & Maza, 1988).

The United Way is the second largest source of income for CWLA member agencies. In 1960, it contributed 23.6% of total income; in 1975, 11.8%; in 1979, 9.0% to all 202 members and 16% to the child welfare agency subcategory. In 1986, total United Way contributions to CWLA agencies was 10.4%.

These proportions, however, do not present a complete picture. In 1979, United Way support to these voluntaries was $17 million. In 1986, the figure was $58 million, representing a seven year 240% growth in support from this source, another extraordinary development. It grew even faster than support from government.

Family Service Agencies

A third set of data reflect the experiences of family service agencies affiliated with Family Service America (FSA). Although not evidencing the exciting growth of the CWLA agencies, the 290 FSA member agencies in the United States and Canada also more than held their own against inflation. For the United States affiliates, the level of growth was 23% between 1982 and 1986, in contrast to a four year inflation rate of 13%. In respect to governmental support, the proportion of total budget in 1979 was 34%, in 1982, 30%, and 1986, 37% (Family Service America, [FSA], 1988). The losses in the early years of Reaganomics were more than offset by 1986.

The cumulative data for three types of national voluntary agencies suggest that their predicted revenue shortfalls were not only avoided, but that they have reached a new level of financial health. The changes in income base are indicative of skillful and resourceful financial management within the changing philanthropic environment. Comparatively, these agencies did very well, indeed. An operating ratio study conducted by the American Society of Association Executives found that, of 708 responding voluntary agencies of all types, average income rose 25% in three years (Association Trends, 1989). An examination of several means chosen to survive in this hostile environment
Sources of Support

Corporations

Given the Reagan emphasis on voluntary giving, corporations would be a logical source of new or expanded financial assistance for nonprofit health and human services agencies. Available data on corporate giving suggest that expectations were overly optimistic and that a "bottoming out" has occurred.

Some voluntaries, particularly those with "well connected" boards of directors, had begun to tap into corporate contributions long before Reaganomics, notably the national voluntary health agencies. Others, which relied heavily on contracts and grants from government and/or the United Way, began to work actively to gain credibility with and access to corporations. For the newcomers, competition was already stiff and many lacked the sophistication and experience to be effective contenders.

According to the Conference Board, a business-research organization that annually reports on charitable giving by companies, the charitable donations budgets of nearly half of the companies that donate ten or more million dollars a year had been cut, in 1986, by amounts ranging from 2 to 78% (Bailey, 1987). One result has been a narrowing of the focus of corporate giving and an increased concern that immediate and measurable benefits in terms of recognized public needs and corporate interests be shown. Nonprofits are increasingly being asked by corporate sponsors to demonstrate how gifts to them will positively impact on the corporate bottom line or be of direct assistance to the company's employees. Much of the burden of proof is placed on the voluntary agencies to show the connection between philanthropic support and corporate benefit.

Indeed, the statistics confirm these negative changes in corporate giving. In both 1986 and 1987, an estimated $4.5 billion was donated by businesses. After 15 years of increases in corporate giving, 1985 marked a leveling of growth maintained into 1987 (Weber, 1988). In 1988, corporate giving accounted for 4.5% of total philanthropic contributions, down from the previous years as a percent of the total, up slightly in absolute dollars
and held constant when controlled for inflation (Teltsch, 1989). Declines are forecast for ensuing years (Simpson, 1987).

Because corporate giving is tied to the state of the economy, it is not a totally predictable or a stable source of voluntary agency support. Reductions in corporate charitable gifts have been attributed to company mergers, acquisitions, and "restructurings" of U.S. corporations (Behr, 1988). The need of these corporations to cope with their own fiscal problems—an increase in debt level for nonfinancial corporations of 41% between 1981 and 1986; heavy borrowing; cutbacks in budget and staff; concern with maintaining or increasing profits; and growth in corporate size and centralization—is believed responsible for the reduction in charitable giving. Nathan Weber, vice president of the American Association of Fund Raising Counsel, describes it as a "...new lean and mean approach to giving by business executives...a relative loosening of the ethos of corporate social responsibility" (Teltsch, 1989, p. A16).

Foundations

At the same time that corporate giving was expected to rise, it was predicted that average grants from foundations would decline, an outgrowth of heightened applicant competition. The stock market collapse of October 1987 was also expected to take its toll.

In defiance of the forecasts, foundation giving reached a level of $6.1 billion in 1988, an increase of 4.2% over 1987 and an increase of 131% since 1980. For 1988, foundation giving accounted for 5.9% of total philanthropic contributions (Teltsch, 1989). Only six of the top 40 largest private foundations decreased their level of giving between 1986 and 1987, when the impact of the stock market would have been most severely felt, and only two of the six cuts were of a significant amount (Chronicle, 1988).

Trends in Giving

The combined charitable giving of individuals, foundations, corporations, and estates was, at $104.3 billion, higher in 1988 than ever before and $10.6 billion more than 1987 levels (Teltsch,
Of the total donated in 1988, individuals provided $86.7 billion, 83% of the total through direct contributions to charities of their choice or through United Way, Combined Federal Campaign, or other employment-based contributory programs. Seen in perspective, 1988 charitable gifts exceeded Federal expenditures for nonmilitary goods and services and was almost equal to the total dividends paid by corporations to stockholders (Teltsch, 1989). The level of private giving has matched the direct revenue losses of federal revenue experienced by nonprofit organizations. Trend data suggest that, by 1986, the gains in private giving more than offset federal budget cuts and that, into 1989, nonprofits will be able to exceed their 1980 spending levels (Salamon & Abramson, 1988). Salamon and Abramson (1988) caution, however, that the growth in private giving may not be directed to the types of organizations that lost the most federal support, e.g., those in the social services, advocacy, employment and training, and community development.

**Government Support**

Despite the impressive record of charitable giving, government still represents a major source of funding for voluntary agencies. And since federal social service appropriations have been reduced, the government funds came from elsewhere. State governments were the primary source.

Between FY 1982 and FY 1988, federal support to voluntary organizations decreased by an estimated cumulative total of $26.7 billion. Adjusted for inflation, the value of federal support to voluntary organizations as of FY 1989 is 22% below what it was in FY 1980 (Salamon & Abramson, 1988).

Despite federal cuts, the United Way of America (1988), reporting on its agencies for 1987, found government to be the largest single source of income (42%) for its member agencies. A study comparing public social service expenditures in New Hampshire, Connecticut and Massachusetts for FY 1981 and FY 1987 found that all three states experienced substantial spending increases (Smith & Stone, 1988). FY 1987 spending levels were up 60% in Massachusetts, 58% in Connecticut, and 25% in New Hampshire. In general, these funds were allocated to the purchase of services from not-for-profits. In FY 1987, 70%
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of the budget of the Massachusetts' Department of Social Services was earmarked for contracting for services (Smith & Stone, 1988). In New Jersey, in contrast, for FY 1989, only 30% was used for contracting out, but still represented over $100 million (William Waldman, personal communication, May 12, 1989). Clearly, state agencies have, at least through 1988, partially compensated for federal cuts through higher state appropriations, a sizable proportion of which are allocated for purchase of service from not-for-profits.

Coping Strategies

Profit-Nonprofit Ventures

A growing number of voluntary health and human service agencies have successfully developed mutually beneficial linkages with corporations looking to market their products. Entitled "cause-related marketing", examples include advertising or coupon campaigns in which a product is linked with a voluntary cause, such as the Arthritis Foundation, Children's Hospital, or Boys Town. For each coupon cashed in, the nonprofit receives a percentage, usually up to $100,000. Significant dollars are raised for the charity and corporate sponsors experience positive public relations as well as increased product sales.

Cause-related marketing has received mixed reviews from observers. Some fear that it will become a substitute for direct philanthropic contributions and/or that it will replace corporate community involvement in issues such as education that are not of immediate business concern. Others fear that not-for-profits may "sell out" to corporations, losing sight of their mission (Goldberg, 1987). The less popular causes may also be eliminated from the competition. Others view cause-related marketing as an opportunity to promote new corporate revenues (Jellinghaus, 1987). The linking of corporate giving and marketing suggests that corporate philanthropy is increasingly viewed as a business investment.

Use of Corporate Models

The application of corporate business models to the management of most voluntaries is another strategy that has been
adopted to ensure organizational viability. Not-for-profits, for example, have been moving toward corporate board structures and titles. Executive directors are becoming executive vice presidents or chief executive officers. Voluntary boards may elect chairpersons rather than presidents. The difference is not just semantic; the intent is to identify with and use for-profit operating styles. Indeed, entrepreneurial styles and approaches are coming to be viewed as essential (Flaherty, 1986; Drucker, 1989).

The case of the United States Service Organization (USO) is instructive. In 1986, the USO carried a $1.5 million debt. A major cause of the problem was the reduction in United Way contributions to the USO; in 1988, the United Way was contributing less than one-third of its 1980 level (Chandler, 1988). Dissolution or a quick financial fix were the only options.

By the end of 1987, the USO had paid off its debts and had close to a $1 million surplus. The turnabout was attributed to the imposition of "hard-headed" business management policies and an aggressive fund raising plan targeted at major corporations. All Board members were expected to give to or secure funds for the organization. To increase its appeal to corporate donors, the USO projected its image as that of patriotism and pop culture and sold commercial sponsorships for its celebrity tours (Chandler, 1988).

In 1987, the USO received more than $1 million in donations and free services from major corporations. Although the USO has been charged with excessive commercialism, its successes were real and typical of the strategies some not-for-profits have implemented (Chandler, 1988).

Diversifying Revenues

Diversification of revenue sources has become an important means to ensure some degree of balance and independence. National health agencies have been particularly successful in diversifying. In FY 1986, for example, the American Diabetes Association (ADA), received 18% of its revenue from literature and materials subscriptions and sales, 29% from contributions, 8% from bequests, 11% from membership dues and program service fees, 14% from federated campaigns, 15% from special events, with the remainder coming from "miscellaneous"
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sources. Less than one percent of ADA's income came from government fees or grants (American Diabetes Association, 1987).

The eighteen percent of ADA income from the publications and other sales is an example of the growing tendency to institute fees-for-services. It is one of the few income generating activities over which managers have control (Demone & Gibelman, 1984). In service rendering agencies, such as community mental health centers or family service agencies, one means of enhancing revenues is to be more vigorous in fee collection, charge higher fees and/or secure third-party payments. In turn, more and more services are classified as health to meet vendor-ship requirements. Among all United Way affiliates reporting for 1987, 18.7% of their income came from fees and dues (United Way of America, 1988). Agencies are now selling pamphlets and newsletters that were earlier distributed free of charge. Mailing lists have a price tag on them. Books purchased from publishers at substantial bulk discounts are sold individually at market prices. The trend for voluntaries to offer constituents tangible items that can be marketed and sold is likely to increase.

Many not-for-profit hospitals and some social service agencies have established free-standing for-profit subsidiaries in activities with earnings potential. Fees-for-services, profit making activities, and free standing subsidiaries, however, are not without their risks. Some consumers may be priced out of the market, with the service system unable to accommodate to the uninsured or low-income individuals. New Jersey's not-for-profit drug treatment system is moving to a two tiered structure; immediate services to those financially able to pay and waiting lists of up to several months for clients lacking resources.

Profit-making activities by not-for-profits have already led to tensions with the business sector, as highlighted in the recent report *Unfair Competition? The Challenge to Charitable Tax Exemption* (Wellford & Gallagher, 1988). Congress is considering changes in the taxation of unrelated business income based on criticisms that the Internal Revenue Service has been too permissive in classifying income-producing activities as unrelated. Cause-related marketing has been cited as one example of income that should be subject to tax (Touche, Ross & Company, 1986).
Using Resources to Secure Resources

Many charity organizations have put more resources into "getting" to encourage charitable giving. Many not-for-profit health and human services agencies have increasingly recognized the need to employ specialist fund raisers. Although the data suggest that the emphasis on fund raising has produced successful dollar outcomes, the possible goal displacement implications have not been carefully examined. It may well be that many organizations have diverted resources, time, and effort to procuring funds, with clarity of organizational mission and program integrity being the losers.

Strength Through Unity

Not-for-profits often compete with each other for private contributions and government grants and contracts. Competition, however, can become secondary when there is an external, common threat demanding unified action. Reaganomics was perceived as one such unifying threat (Brieland, 1982). Collective action was oriented to two issues: fighting government budget cuts or at least "holding the line" and promoting charitable giving in principle. In 1986, members of Independent Sector initiated a comprehensive campaign to promote giving and volunteering. This nationwide campaign, entitled "Daring Goals for a Caring Society" aims to build public commitment to private philanthropy and personal community service and to strengthen the programs and services provided by voluntary, nonprofit agencies. The specific goal is to double the level of giving and increase volunteering by 50% by 1991 (Independent Sector, 1986).

Brian O'Connell, president of Independent Sector, noted that this is the first time that there are "specific standards of what individuals' should be giving and a model by which people can evaluate their own voluntary efforts" (As quoted in Bailey, 1986, p. 29). The concept that such giving should become normative may have important long-run implications. It was made clear by spokespersons for Independent Sector, however, that the emphasis on individual and private philanthropy should not be construed as a way to diminish government's basic role and responsibility (Bailey, 1986).
The not-for-profits have also gathered strength by joining together as advocates and lobbyists. Not since the 1960s has there been a rallying point for the whole of the health and human services community. The American Hospital Association and its state affiliates have become formidable voices for their industry. Community mental health programs have similarly organized and now coalitions of agencies representing a broad spectrum of health and human services interests and spanning public, profit, and not-for-profit agency types have developed in many states. One result is a broadening and strengthening of the social welfare constituency. Government and voluntary agencies may represent different sides in contract negotiations, but they hold a common interest in maintaining government funding levels and can be powerful political allies.

Achievements in Context

Taken on face value, available data suggest that a significant number of national voluntary agency networks have successfully held or expanded their revenue generating capabilities during the 1980s. Although it can be ascertained that these agencies have compensated for sizable reductions in federal funds, it is less clear that they have been able to expand their service delivery capability to offset a decreased public service role. The relatively positive preliminary findings about the stability and growth of not-for-profits are also specific to the matters studied. There are contrary trends elsewhere.

Politics is an important variable. Elimination or cuts in government-funded programs were selective, with the more popular and visible programs, including those with political bases, in a stronger position. The Democrat controlled Congress, with the backing of public interest groups and concerned professionals, was successful in selectively holding the line. Local, and especially state governments were vigorous in their efforts to compensate for federal losses.

Widespread top administrative support for certain types of programs added immeasurably to the level of public attention they received. Nancy Reagan's championing of drug abuse, for example, helped to maintain interest in and funding for this social problem, even though the focus has largely been on
interdiction rather than treatment. The emphasis on family, too, may have contributed to support of CWLA and FSA agencies. Alcoholism, on the other hand, has been caught in a new wave of neo-temperance, with challenges to disease-based theories and emphasis on alcohol problems and law enforcement.

Given the importance of political influence, the fate of voluntary agencies representing the less vocal, popular, or influential interests—the poor, homeless, and abused—remains a strong concern. The government's role in protecting and enforcing the interests of certain groups in our society (i.e., women, minorities, the poor) has been challenged by the Reagan Administration. In an attempt to drastically reduce domestic spending, some federal health and social welfare programs were eliminated, including general revenue sharing (with some human services impact) and public health service hospitals (exclusively human services). Between 1980 and 1987, urban and community development programs were cut nearly in half. Eligibility requirements for food stamps and other entitlements for the poor were tightened and Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare rules were modified toward the goal of cost containment (Blustein & Kenworthy, 1988). There is little evidence to suggest that voluntary agencies have initiated programs in these areas to compensate for services previously provided directly by government.

The homeless, the underclass, the growing number of poverty-level female-headed households, the underemployed, are additional examples of people with problems whose advocates were not successful in breaching the Reagan Administration policies. Appropriations for the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-77) have repeatedly fallen significantly below authorized levels and in FY 1988, no new funds at all were appropriated (Gibelman, 1989). Those organizations offering legal assistance and advocacy, job training and employment services all suffered. Housing starts for those with low income declined substantially. In general, the agencies studied here provide more traditional and mainstream services and thus were not largely affected by targeted cuts (with the possible exception of loss of special contracts to serve specific populations-in-need).
Voluntary Agency

Some local and national health and social services agencies went out of business during the 1980s; they did not or could not adapt. The National Conference on Social Welfare was dissolved after a history of more than one hundred years. Many voluntaries remain on the edge of financial insolvency. Eighteen of New Jersey's 23 health maintenance organizations operated at a loss for the first nine months of 1988. Cost controls in a volatile environment are increasingly impacting on the health industry.

Conclusions

There can be no doubt that Reaganomics has had a profound affect on the voluntary health and human services. Selected networks of voluntary agencies have, however, coped well in the Reagan era. They have sought and found a formidable arsenal of income generating strategies. The new reliance on diversified sources of income and the redefinition of voluntary organizations as a special form of business (but a business nevertheless) should provide important precedents for the future.

The voluntary sector is not static; it responds to changes in the economy, government, and social need. Nor does it speak with one voice. New agencies, offering specialized services such as AIDS counseling, have come into existence, in part because government funds are available for evolving, new priority-designated programs. More profit-making organizations have entered the health and human services arena, in some cases displacing, in others augmenting not-for-profits, and creating a new type of competitor. Some not-for-profits have adopted entrepreneurial sidelines to support their primary objectives. A possible outcome is an accelerated blurring of some of the characteristics of not-for-profits and for-profits, just as, earlier, we witnessed a blurring between government and the voluntary sector.

The scenario continues to change, with evolving challenges to not-for-profits. Now voluntaries have to worry about Bushonomics and state revenue shortfalls. Some of the concern is related to the extraordinary federal budget deficit and some to uncertainty. In the post-Reagan era, however, there is opportunity to look for new approaches and solutions.
Privatization (which, in the United States, favors the transfer of service management, delivery, and, to the extent possible, financing to the private sector, but still includes some financing and monitoring roles for government) will be the dominant theme. Private participation will be increasingly required and fund raising will expand, although positive results may now be more difficult to obtain. Certainly the current bleak fiscal picture for most of the industrial states does not stimulate great optimism, although the recovery of California and Connecticut are instructive. Compensating for these financial complications is the strengthened relationship between the public and private human services and their enhanced political skills. They are becoming impressive advocates and will not be shunted aside easily.

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Voluntary Agency

This paper addresses adolescent drinking from a perspective very similar to Sutherland’s differential association theory. Drinking occurs when positive perceptions of drinking outweigh or outnumber negative ones. Our research focuses on images of drinking communicated by rationalized sources organized specifically to shape perceptions of drinking. We call these organizations “agencies” and assess their impact on perceptions of drinking. It is our contention that the political economic context of the United States in which these agencies function is such that positive images of drinking outnumber and outweigh negative ones, and that this is an important factor contributing to adolescent drinking.

Adolescent drinking, and the problems associated with it, have been a source of public concern for many years. Although alcohol consumption in the U.S. is declining, adolescent drinking patterns have remained remarkably stable (Ray and Ksir, 1987, p. 10) despite numerous prevention efforts, and this is causing justifiable concern. The question is, why are adolescents drinking the same when everyone else is drinking less?

Some fifty years ago, Edwin H. Sutherland developed the differential association theory and revolutionized thinking about criminal and deviant behavior. The novel aspect of his theory was that criminal and deviant behavior was learned in a process of association just like any normal behavior. Thus Sutherland shifted the focus of analysis away from the individual to the social structure of association or social context. This was unique in that most previous explanations viewed deviant behavior as pathological and located the causes within the person. Sutherland’s approach, in contrast, focused on the social context as the crucial variable, not the constitution of the
individual. It was a truly sociological approach that stimulated criminologists to broaden their analysis and examine the nature of society.

We suggest that a similar change in focus is appropriate for understanding adolescent drinking in the United States. Informed by Sutherland's theory, the basic hypothesis of this paper is: drinking occurs when positive perceptions of drinking outweigh or outnumber negative ones. Certainly adolescent drinking is more complicated than this hypothesis suggests, and we are aware that factors other than those of the agencies discussed here influence decisions to drink. Let us make clear from the start that we are not suggesting that communications generated by either agencies of promotion or agencies of prevention directly and immediately cause or determine behavior. Decisions about drinking are much more complex than this and we hope to illuminate some of this complexity.

This paper examines the social context of adolescent drinking which we believe has not been adequately understood. It is a preliminary consideration which aims to bring the social context more sharply into focus. We have utilized Sutherland's theory because it facilitates framing adolescent drinking within the larger societal context and serves as a point of departure for examining the political economy of drinking. We suggest that an understanding of this structural context will provide a foundation to (a) explain why current prevention efforts have apparently had little impact on adolescent drinking, and (b) assess current public policy efforts, especially the goals and models that frame prevention efforts, and the financial resources for these efforts.

Adolescents, like other people, have numerous associations which shape their perceptions and definition of reality. Peer groups, family, and schools, for example, are all crucial associations that influence a given adolescent's definition of reality and drinking. Increasingly, however, perceptions of drinking are generated from more rationalized sources that are organized specifically to shape perceptions of drinking. We call these organizations "agencies," and in this essay assess their impact on perceptions of drinking. Specifically, we analyze how "agencies of promotion" and "agencies of prevention" communicate
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their respective messages about drinking. The theoretical focus inspired by Sutherland calls attention to the fact that definitions of drinking represent a contested terrain where agencies of promotion and prevention compete for acceptance of their definitions of drinking.

For purposes here we consider alcohol advertising (liquor, wine, and beer) as an agency of promotion, and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) as an agency of prevention. Although these agencies may not associate directly or face-to-face with their clients (e.g., advertisers employ the mass media to communicate their messages, NIAAA contracts with states for prevention services), they are legitimately considered associations because they influence perceptions of reality. We turn now to a consideration of what and how these agencies communicate about drinking.

Alcoholic Beverage Advertising as an Agency of Promotion

In this section we consider alcoholic beverage advertising as an agency promoting consumption of alcoholic beverages and examine the communication strategies and economic resources used to promote drinking. In speaking of alcoholic beverages advertising as an agency of promotion what we are referring to is the intersecting interests of the mass media, alcoholic beverage advertisers/producers, and advertising agencies that converge to function as a formal agency. Although there are many factors that influence an individual's decision to drink or not to drink, we contend that messages communicated by the mass media play a significant role in promoting consumption of alcoholic beverages — especially among adolescents. Our task in this section is to explain how alcoholic beverage advertising communicates messages that promote drinking and then examine the economic resources that support these messages.

From the economic standpoint of alcoholic beverage producers they compete with one another for market shares for their respective products or brands. Their success or failure is often measured by this and they spend considerable amounts of time and money hiring advertising agencies to communicate messages that create "product identities" that differentiate one
brand from another and motivate consumers not to just ask for a "light," but a "Bud Light." Thus there is very serious competition in the alcoholic beverage industry; competition between producers of wine, beer and liquor, and competition between specific brands of beer, wine and liquor. Indeed, advertising is one of the major weapons of market competition between producers of alcoholic beverages.

Although these various producers of alcoholic beverages compete with each other, it is essential to recognize that they all have one thing in common — an interest in communicating favorable images of alcohol consumption. Thus to assess adequately the cultural impact of alcoholic beverage advertising we must examine the aggregate effect of all alcohol advertising. We must see beyond the immediately apparent diversity of images and winnow out the common features. Only then can we adequately assess their impact. In short, although advertisers justifiably focus on market share and brand identity, those concerned with cultural effects and public policy must take a broader view and look at alcoholic beverage advertising messages as a totality.

A substantial literature exists that explains in detail the strategies and techniques of modern advertising (e.g., see Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1986; Schudson, 1984; Dyer, 1982). Content analysis (e.g., Andren, Ericsson, Ohlsson, and Tannsjo, 1978), semiotics (e.g., Williamson, 1978; Barthes, 1972), and immanent critique (e.g., Harms, 1987) have all been employed successfully to reveal the intricacies of advertising communications. Space considerations do not permit a prolonged excursion into this vast literature. Instead we summarized from this literature and present a brief sketch of the basic strategies and techniques of alcohol beverage advertising.

The common denominator of alcohol beverage advertising is image; successful advertisements must communicate a favorable image of the product. To communicate these images advertisers use "persuasive" communication techniques. Since alcohol beverage advertising is dominated by the persuasive form of mass communication, an explanation of this form will reveal the strategies and techniques of agencies of promotion.
A central feature of persuasive (alcohol) advertising is that it addresses irrational, emotional cognitive faculties and communicates images that spontaneously evoke feelings from consumers that are then linked to and associated with the product (Harms, 1985, pp. 64-103). Persuasive forms of communication address the nonvolitional capability of the human mind to make associations between things in the environment. In an important sense then, this type of "emotionally conditioning advertising" is very similar to behaviorist conditioning (Reed and Coalson, 1977).

Perhaps the most crucial task in creating a persuasive advertisement is the selection of a symbol which can evoke feelings from the targeted audience. Such symbols can be people, places, songs, almost anything providing they resonate with the targeted groups' experiences and evoke the desired feelings that will become associated with the product. The great majority of advertisements for beer, wine, and liquor attempt to communicate images that link persons, products and feelings of well-being.

In this type of advertisement very little objective product information is communicated to consumers. Instead, carefully constructed happy images are communicated that serve as stimuli to evoke favorable, subjective responses from audiences. There is no logical or rational foundation for the associations generated by this type of communication. Such communications and associations cannot be assessed against claims of truth and falsity. Truth and accuracy — criteria of federal regulations — are not relevant to persuasive advertisements that work via psychological associations made by the consumers. Advertisers using persuasive communication techniques are not attempting to make objective statements about their products, but rather to promote subjective associations by the targeted audience.

Another important key to persuasive alcoholic beverage advertising is that the advertisements are not designed to be taken seriously or examined logically/critically. Advertisements are designed to address consumers’ emotional, subconscious ability to make psychological associations between persons, products and images of well-being. They are designed to work without
the conscious participation or awareness of audiences. This explains why such advertisements are repeated so often. Because consumers are not consciously paying attention repetition is necessary for the associations to "sink in."

To fully comprehend the impact of alcoholic beverage advertising we must view it in the aggregate and as a form of social experience that is designed to affect consumers' tacit cultural knowledge. In short, exposure to persuasive alcoholic beverage communications must be viewed as a social experience on which the cultural meaning of alcohol consumption is based. This cultural meaning takes us right back to images that are the core of alcoholic beverage advertising; images that link alcoholic beverages with favorable attributes such as masculinity, purity, health, excitement, bonhomie, etc.

It is clear that persuasive alcohol beverage advertising is designed to affect consumers' subconscious, tacit cultural "knowledge" about the meaning of drinking. Furthermore, although advertisers are at pains to differentiate their products, they all communicate favorable images and meanings of alcohol consumption. They are, after all attempting to promote their products. The result of these efforts, however, is a one-sided portrayal of drinking. Absent from the images communicated are negative aspects of drinking and the social environment in which it takes place.

Although the images and scenes communicated by alcoholic beverage advertising make no explicit claims to truth or accuracy, the associations between persons, products and images of well-being are enhanced by the ever increasing sophistication of image creating technology and techniques which make the images appear real, i.e., as accurate representations of social experiences.

We suggest that alcoholic beverage advertising communicates images that function as "social experiences" on which the cultural assumptions about the meaning of drinking are based, and that motives for drinking involve these favorable feelings and assumptions. The overall impact of alcoholic beverage advertising in the aggregate is to create or contribute to a favorable disposition toward drinking alcohol. In this way alcoholic beverage advertising fits very neatly within Sutherland's theory.
Of course alcohol beverage advertising is only one "social experience" on which knowledge and assumptions about drinking are based. Many other factors are involved; personal experience, peers, educational and religious learning, family patterns of use, etc. Without denying these other sources of knowledge, we need to consider the magnitude of these mass communicated images and social experiences. In short, we need to assess what resources alcoholic beverage advertisers have to promote favorable images of drinking.

Resources for Alcoholic Beverage Advertising

One way to assess the resources for promoting alcohol consumption is to examine the dollars spent by beer, wine, and liquor advertisers. The Broadcast Advertisers Report and Leading National Advertisers (BAR/LNA) Multi-Media Service monitors the spending of national advertisers in seven major media (magazines, newspaper supplements, outdoor billboards, network TV, spot TV, network radio, and cable TV networks) and provides a very conservative estimate of dollars spent advertising alcoholic beverages. This is a conservative estimate because not all media are monitored, and because production costs are not included. Production costs involve payments for filming crews, actors, props, etc., and is no small amount. According to Advertising Age, in 1988 the average production cost for a national TV spot was $178,000. At any rate, BAR/LNA figures represent only that amount spent buying space/time for advertisements and is a very conservative estimate of total advertising spending.

BAR/LNA Multi-Media Service Class/Brand Year-to-Date Publication for Jan.-Dec. 1987 reports that beer advertisers spent $684,500,100, while wine advertisers spent $211,588,500, and liquor advertisers $224,053,600. Altogether, these advertisers spent $1,120,142,200 to promote their products.

Thus, in 1987, agencies of promotion spent over one billion dollars to communicate favorable images of alcohol consumption. In terms of spending for particular brands, we can examine media spending for major brands of beer, wine and liquor, Budweiser spent $99,994,400, Bartles & James Premium Wine Coolers $33,508,100, and Dewars Blended Scotch Whisky $8,360,000.
As the above figures reveal, beer advertising is the major type of alcohol beverage advertising. It is also noteworthy that beer advertisers rely predominately on the medium of television — the most "persuasive" medium of mass communication — to communicate their favorable images of alcohol consumption. Budweiser, for example, spent 86% of its total media budget on Network, Spot, and Cable TV. Clearly, alcoholic beverage advertisers have considerable resources for communicating favorable images of drinking, and a significant number of these images are communicated via television, a medium attended to by adolescents.

Agencies Of Prevention

In this section we consider the goals and types of prevention programs funded under the auspices of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) which was created in 1971 to coordinate and provide funding for treatment and prevention programs. Under the NIAAA’s first director, Morris Chafetz, M.D., the philosophy was that many of the problems with alcoholic beverages in the U.S. resulted from a lack of “normative guidance on acceptable drinking patterns and customs” (O'Gorman, 1988, p. 299). Chafetz’s primary concern was America’s young people. He believed that “teenagers [should] be introduced to alcohol under adult guidance, by their parents and teachers, to remove the ‘forbidden fruit’ attraction of alcohol” (O'Gorman, 1988, p. 299). However, the support for the NIAAA’s initial “responsible drinking” theme eventually eroded because of the experiences of people whose lives had been seriously harmed through alcohol consumption. As a result, today there is consensus at the federal level that the best way to combat negative alcohol use is to encourage abstinence. Consequently, the primary objective of agencies of prevention is the elimination of alcohol use by people under the age of twenty one, i.e., they promote an abstinence model.

There are two methods used to prevent adolescent drinking. The first method utilizes mass media campaigns to educate youths on the social and health risks involved in drinking and alternative means for coping with those risks. These mass media campaigns employ many of the techniques used by agencies of
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promotion and have had positive results related to increasing awareness, knowledge and attitudes when the message have been specifically targeted to specific problems such as drinking and driving while pregnant. Sponsored by such organizations as the National Safety Council, NIAAA and other concerned groups, these type of messages appear sporadically on television, radio, and in magazines. More often than not, these campaigns use negative or scare tactics to combat the positive images communicated by agencies of promotion. Current research indicates that these mass communication campaigns are limited in their ability to change behavior (McGuire, 1985).

The "hands-on" approach is the second and most frequently used method by agencies to prevent alcohol consumption by adolescents. Most often, the "hands-on" method occurs within community based prevention programs that are funded by federal agencies such as the NIAAA, but planned and carried out within the context of the school. There are three types of school prevention programs that are intended to eliminate or reduce alcohol consumption: cognitive, decision making, and values clarification. Cognitive programs communicate information to adolescents about the quantity of alcohol in various types of beverages, the effects of alcohol on physical and emotional functioning, the amount of time necessary for the body to metabolize alcohol, and other "facts" about alcohol. Decision making programs communicate ways or methods for making responsible life choices such as knowing how to say no to alcohol, how to respond to peer pressure, how to deal with stress in the family and cope with changes in adolescence itself. Values clarification programs provide adolescents with the means for self-examination of value systems, role expectations, and life priorities.

These locally based programs are prevention initiatives that use a defined community or school as the setting for alcohol prevention communications. In general, these community based programs are very labor intensive and require the ongoing participation of many people to obtain the desired impact. Many times they necessitate the successful coordination and endorsement of numerous diverse groups in the community who often have other conflicting priorities. These groups consistently include politicians from city councils, county commissions, and
school boards, as well as representatives from the business community. Teachers, administrators, students and their parents are also involved. Finally, citizen groups such as Parents for a Drug Free Youth, Mother Against Drunk Driving, and Removing Intoxicated Drivers are regular participants in these locally based programs. Given the diversity of these participants it is not surprising that locally based programs consistently have problems achieving consensus on program content, finding acceptable meeting times, and maintaining motivation. Despite the high cost in energy and expenditure relative to the number of adolescents involved, many communities around the country have implemented locally based, "hands-on" prevention programs.

Assessment of prevention programs consistently reveals that success is directly related to the base of participation. The broader the base of participation from members of the community the more impact these programs have on adolescents. As already noted, this requires intensive efforts on the part of trained personnel to bring these disparate groups together on a consistent basis. In the last ten years significant strides have been made by community groups to implement broad-based local programs of prevention.

An example of this "hands-on" approach is the Missouri Institute for Prevention Services (MIPS), which is typical of the school and community based prevention models previously described. It is administered and implemented throughout the state by dedicated and hard working professionals, community volunteers, and students. Nevertheless, as is true of many prevention efforts, the resources to mount the programming to personally reach large number of adolescents in an ongoing consistent fashion have been insufficient. In 1987, MIPS trained 462 students, compared with 45 in 1980, to return to their communities and implement prevention projects. While this number is impressive, it still represents only a tiny sample of the population-at-risk.

Resources for Alcohol Prevention Efforts

Virtually all states and localities around the country have begun prevention and education programs that parallel the types of prevention efforts already described. As noted, these
Adolescent Drinking programs require a labor intensive orientation and well integrated plans to accomplish the stated goals. Unfortunately, the financial resources supporting these programs is suspect. For example, in 1985, the federal government committed $1.2 billion for alcohol and drug abuse services. However, only $158 million (12%) was earmarked for prevention and education projects. Most of the funds were allocated to treatment and rehabilitation programs. Many states have followed this pattern and allocated the majority of their resources for treatment and little or none to education and prevention.

Another factor complication the allocation of resources for agencies of prevention is the tendency to combine alcohol with all other drug or substance abuse programs. While there is certainly logic in combining efforts, drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, crack, PCP, and heroin are generally highlighted as the greater menace to adolescents and thus diminish the focus on adolescent drinking. Recent federal initiatives and the "war on drugs" are clearly indicative of this trend.

There is no question that drugs other than alcohol present a serious danger to the youth of America. But the fact remains that they pale in comparison to the problems alcohol creates. The current organization of agencies of prevention then is such that prevention efforts are not consistently focused, nor persistently pursued.

Evaluation of the Agencies of Promotion and Prevention

The debate regarding the effect of alcohol advertising on overall consumption has persisted for years. An excellent summary of that debate was recently compiled by Smart (1988). In his article Smart reviewed four empirical areas of concern: (a) the effect of banning advertising on consumption; (b) the econometric factors related to sales of alcohol; (c) the experimental manipulation of advertising and observed consumption; and (d) the exposure to advertising as it related to reported consumption. For purposes of this paper only the last two are considered.

In the experimental manipulation of advertising and observed consumption, most of the study designs follow a similar model. They create an artificial, usually party atmosphere, present a differential number of commercials to experimental
control groups, and then measure alcohol consumption. According to Smart (1988, p. 321), the best controlled of these studies (Sobel et al., 1986; Kohn and Smart, 1987) "show no overall effect of alcohol advertising on alcohol consumption." He also noted that "none of these studies is ideal methodologically" (1988, p. 321). Clearly, the research does not support the notion that there is a direct causal relationship between viewing a commercial or series of commercials and increased alcohol consumption.

On the other hand, the research on the exposure to advertising as it relates to alcohol consumption is much more volatile, political, and polarized. The debate on this controversy was fueled in 1978 when four federal agencies solicited competitive bids to perform a large scale scientific analysis of this issue. Ultimately, a team of researchers from Michigan State University headed by Charles Atkin and Martin Block was selected. Atkin and Block (1984, p. 165) concluded that the survey evidence demonstrated that exposure to alcohol advertising is significantly associated with drinking behavior and intentions. Not surprisingly, this conclusion was challenged. Specifically, Donald Strickland (1984, p. 87) rejected the findings primarily on the basis of methodological flaws.

The purpose of the present article is to evaluate the methodological framework of Atkin's and Block's study, a framework which in many respects, is inadequate to support the findings, interpretations and conclusions contained in the document and increasingly reified through public dissemination of the more alarmist findings. The adequacy of the research seems a more sensible criterion of evaluation than does the agreement between the findings of the report and the moral biases of those who popularize its more sensationalistic conclusions.

Atkin and Block (1984, p. 99) responded to Strickland's criticisms the same issue and illustrate the emotionalism of this debate.
In our study, we conducted dozens of substudies reported in scores of tables described in hundreds of pages of texts. There are minor technical flaws as in any exploratory investigation examining complex and subtle phenomena, and there are occasional interpretive ambiguities inherent in social science methodology. Our methodological approach was judged by the sponsors to be the strongest in intense competition with proposals from other researchers from a variety of disciplines. We believe that we competently executed the research to provide a comprehensive, sophisticated and innovative analysis of the problem, and that our research meets the standards of methods for assessing the content and effects of the mass media. We hope that this reply will help dispose of the argument that the methodological framework is inadequate to support the findings and implications of our project.

Apparently, the American Medical Association believed the research by Atkin and Block was sufficiently valid to cite their findings in a 1986 Board of Trustees Report published in JAMA. While the Board was "aware of the inconclusive nature of the evidence for a causal link between advertising and alcohol abuse" (p. 1487), they nevertheless recommended that producers and distributors of alcoholic beverages discontinue advertising directed toward youth, such as promotions on high school and college campuses.

The only plausible conclusion from this discussion is that there is no compelling research that unarguably answers the question regarding alcohol advertising's overall effect on consumption. The most reliable conclusion that can be stated is that the research is equivocal and no definitive statement can be supported between the role of advertising and the short term effects on teenage drinking.

We do not contend, however, that one alcohol advertisement increases consumption. Rather, we suggest that alcohol advertising, in combination with other social observations and experiences of children and adolescents, are a pervasive part of the cultural landscape and that considered in the long range these factors have a cumulative effect that promotes utilitarian
drinking. Smart (1988, p. 315) supports this hypothesis and states, "advertising may have cumulative effects that are difficult to detect. While the influence of a single advertisement is likely to be insignificant, how can we assess the impact of thousands of advertisers over decades on the drinking of individuals, or society as a whole."

The evaluation of school and community based prevention programs operates under the same burden as the evaluation of alcohol advertising. The methodologies utilized to assess the success of prevention efforts are rudimentary and any results obtained are suspect and open to challenge. In a recent critical review of the research literature by Moskowitz (1989), an extensive list of studies conducted on the evaluation of prevention and education programs was cited. Moskowitz's conclusions are revealing.

In sum, the educational approaches to prevention have a limited empirical basis. Although knowledge/attitudes models have been researched considerably, the evidence for causal links in these models is inconsistent. Furthermore, there is little support for the validity of these models as applied to alcohol or drug use. The values/decision-making and social competency models have not generated much research. Thus, the assumption that individuals misuse alcohol or other drugs because of their deficient values, their inept decision-making or their inadequate social skills is largely unfounded (1989, p. 69).

Viewed as a whole, the evaluation of the impact of alcohol advertising on adolescent consumption and the evaluation of the impact of prevention and education programs on adolescent consumption is inconclusive at best. There is consensus among researchers that existing methodologies are inadequate, and that more research is necessary to inform public policy. We concur with these assessments. However, we contend that given the equivocal research findings, other explanations must be attempted and articulated. Towards that end we suggest that when agencies of promotion outspend agencies of prevention by
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a ten to one margin, associations created by the better funded agency will prevail. In this case, the happy images of drinking dominate.

Cultural and Political Economic Considerations

Social scientists studying drinking patterns have identified four cultural orientations to alcohol consumption that provide norms and guidelines for drinking (Kinney and Leaton, 1987, pp. 84–7). The first of these orientations is total abstinence. Drinking is negatively evaluated and forbidden altogether. A second orientation involves ritual use where drinking is confined to religious practices, ceremonies, and special occasions. The third cultural orientation is called convivial drinking. Here alcohol consumption is linked with social solidarity and camaraderie. Within this orientation drinking for personal reasons or to become intoxicated is frowned upon. Finally, the fourth orientation is utilitarian. In this perspective there are few normative constraints on an individual’s drinking choices. The person is free to drink to relax, to forget, to eliminate hangovers, or simply to have fun. There are few restrictions regarding quantity, time of day, or type of occasion. In short, the norm regarding drinking is the individual is free to choose, a norm that resonates well with American ideals of individualism and freedom.

Not surprisingly, agencies of promotion have an economic interest in perpetuating a utilitarian cultural orientation because it is most conducive to maximizing consumption. Thus, the great majority of images communicated in alcohol advertising are those of utilitarian use. Advertisements present images that link (often irrationally) alcohol with excitement, romance, naturalness and vitality, masculinity, camaraderie and other desirable conditions. Considered in the aggregate, alcoholic beverage advertising suggests that alcohol can be utilized for numerous reasons in a wide variety of contexts — all with happy outcomes.

In contrast, agencies of prevention attempt to rationally refute the happy, utilitarian orientations to drinking by communicating the dark side of alcohol consumption. Generally, agencies of prevention promote the abstinence orientation and associate alcohol consumption with deleterious social effects such as auto
fatalities, loss of personal control and achievement, domestic violence, alcoholism and other health problems. We will consider the impact of these competing images on adolescents shortly. What concerns us now is why favorable images dominate negative ones.

In order to answer this question we must first locate agencies of promotion and prevention within the total political-economic structure of society and its dynamics. Here we see that there are major differences in the organization and resources of agencies of promotion and prevention.

Consider alcoholic beverage advertising as an agency of promotion. Its structural location is in the "private sector" where selling and advertising alcoholic beverages is a commercial enterprise organized around profits. As such it is a self-supported enterprise. Because selling alcoholic beverages is a profitable enterprise, there are ample resources for reinvestment into advertising. In fact, it is standard practice in national consumer product industries to systematically include large advertising expenditures in a company's overall budget. Advertising is viewed as a regular facet of the overall business enterprise and advertising budgets are often calculated on the basis of percentage of sales revenues. What this means is that agencies of promotion have a fairly steady and reliable base to support their communications.

Moreover, because advertising is a significant aspect of capitalist commercial enterprise, a whole industry has developed and refined techniques and technologies of mass communication and promotion (persuasive forms of communication are one of the products of this developmental process of rationalization). Advertising agencies are experts at planning and implementing national mass communication campaigns.

Finally, advertising costs are subsidized in two ways. First, the cost of advertising, like other costs incurred in the course of producing and distributing a product, are embedded in the shelf price of the commodity. In short, the cost of advertising alcoholic beverages is passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices. Second, advertising as one of many business expenses is tax deductible and thus indirectly subsidized by taxpayers and the public.
We can see that agencies of promotion occupy a position in the total institutional structure of society that virtually guarantees a steady stream of communications promoting drinking. Moreover, even though agencies of promotion are supported by consumers and the public, it is not apparent to most Americans that they pay for these promotional messages. The location of agencies of promotion in the political economic institutional structure of society is such that ads appear to be free to the public.

In contrast, consider the structural location of agencies of prevention. They operate in the "public sector" funded directly by taxes, and function on a nonprofit basis. Unlike agencies of promotion, these agencies of prevention, even when successful, are not assured of a steady source of resources. Agencies of prevention compete with other social programs for public funds, and these funds are of course dependent on tax revenues that fluctuate with the ups and downs of the local, state, and national economy and are vulnerable to shifting political agendas. Add to this that agencies of alcohol prevention also compete with drug prevention programs, and it becomes clear just how precarious funding for alcohol prevention is. Compared with agencies of promotion, agencies of prevention are at a structural disadvantage in terms of resources. Moreover, the costs of maintaining agencies of prevention are more visible to the public who know that these programs are funded with their dollars, and who are often reluctant to pay taxes for "social" causes and problems that do not directly affect them.

Given this structural situation it is not surprising that favorable images of drinking outnumber negative ones, and one can expect this situation to persist. Using the figures presented earlier, we can offer a rough comparison that reflects the disparity in resources between agencies of promotion and prevention. In 1987, agencies of promotion spent $1.1 billion, while agencies of prevention spent only $158 million. Translated into actual communications, Postman, Nystrom, Strate, and Weingartner (1987, p. 1) claim that, "between the ages of two and eighteen, the period in which social learning is most intense, American children see something like 100,000 television commercials for
beer." The volume of these exposures to advertising can be contrasted with a model prevention program implemented in the state of Washington (Hopkins, Mauss, Kearney, and Weisheit, 1988, pp. 38–50). In this ideal “hands-on” program there was total support from parents, teachers, and school administrators, as well as enriched funding. Nevertheless, over a three year period children received ten one-hour sessions per year focusing on alcohol prevention. Although these are rough comparisons, they do illustrate the tremendous disparity in resources and communications between agencies of promotion and agencies of prevention.

Conclusion

It is now necessary to consider the differential impact of these competing images of drinking on adolescents. As Schudson has explained (1984, pp. 90–128) the power of advertising and the mass media is directly related to one’s “information environment,” and some groups who lack other sources of information are especially vulnerable to mass mediated messages. This notion of an “information environment” can be applied to the situation of adolescents facing the decision to drink or not and their relation to agencies of promotion and prevention. Consider the adolescent’s information environment concerning alcoholic beverages.

Compared to adults, adolescents lack an experiential base (or at least have a less developed one) for evaluating drinking and its meaning. Meaning here refers to what George Herbert Mead called “the imaginative completion of an act,” i.e., what one expects to happen as a result of drinking. Clearly, motivations for drinking entail some conception of what will happen as a result of drinking. We suggest that because adolescents lack direct experiences with alcohol, or at least have limited experiences, they are more susceptible to messages communicated by formal agencies of promotion and prevention. The impact of these formal agencies is enhanced further by the erosion and decline of traditional sources of information. As more women enter the workforce, for example, and “latchkey kids” emerge, the family is a less potent source of information, offers fewer constraints on adolescent drinking, and enhances other
sources of information — in this case agencies of promotion and prevention.

We have explained how agencies of promotion dominate agencies of prevention and have greater resources to communicate their happy images of drinking. We now must consider the nature of the messages communicated by agencies of promotion and prevention to fully understand their differential impact. Alcoholic beverage advertising is predominantly persuasive in its form. As explained earlier, these advertisements communicate images that irrationally and subconsciously associate drinking with numerous desirable states and attributes. Furthermore, these associations are absorbed cognitively in a process of "low involvement learning" (Krugman, 1972) very similar to behavioral conditioning. They are not "learned" in a discursive or rational way but rather in a natural, subconscious, nondiscursive manner. The associations communicated by persuasive advertising are learned in a subconscious, nonvolitional way (Harms, 1987) and become a part of our "natural attitude," a taken for granted view of the world where social regularities and associations are reified and assumed to be natural and immutable. The power of alcoholic beverage advertising, then, stems from the fact that these happy images of drinking are learned early, before rational explanations. Alcohol beverage advertising functions as an agency of promotion by making happy images of drinking a pervasive, ubiquitous feature of our cultural landscape.

In contrast, the messages communicated by agencies of prevention are overwhelmingly rational in their form, and thus learned later, after the positive images of drinking have been incorporated into the natural attitude. This means that current attempts of agencies of prevention are working against subconscious, irrational associations created by agencies of promotion. When it is recognized that agencies of promotion operate with considerable resources on a consistent, national basis, and agencies of prevention operate with fewer resources on a less consistent, more sporadic local basis, the full impact of the differential perception thesis becomes evident.

The analysis presented here raises serious questions about the following: (a) the philosophies and models guiding alcohol
prevention programs; Is an abstinence model or goal realistic in the U.S. at this time? (b) adequate funding for alcohol prevention efforts; Do we have efficient and effective levels and mechanisms for funding alcohol prevention programs? (c) the role of government in regulating alcohol beverage advertising; Should the government regulate or ban advertising? (d) the responsibility of alcohol beverage producers, advertising agencies, and the mass media vis a vis adolescent drinking and development; Are "agencies of promotion" acting responsibly in exercising their first amendment rights to freedom of speech and expression?

These preliminary considerations are offered to emphasize the sociocultural context in which drinking decisions are made. It is our contention that the majority of prevention efforts do not sufficiently take this context into account and that their efforts are compromised as a result. We acknowledge that other factors play a role in drinking decisions, but contend that successful prevention efforts must take these sociocultural factors into account.

References


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A Redefinition of the Problem of Homelessness Among Persons with a Chronic Mental Illness

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Two definitions of the problem of homelessness among persons with a chronic mental illness are examined, along with their implied solutions and ramifications for policy. Homelessness among this group is first viewed as the result of deinstitutionalization, and secondly, as the outcome of a critical shortage of low-income housing. Solutions stemming from the deinstitutionalization definition of homelessness, reinstitutionalization or improvement in the mental health system, are seen as inadequate to deal with the problem of homelessness among the mentally ill. Instead, state departments of mental health are called upon to provide a leadership role in the development of affordable housing.

How a problem is defined is a critical step in the process of solving that problem. Problem definition provides a framework within which certain activities are defined as solutions (Dery, 1984). This concept is useful in examining the various ways the problem of homelessness among persons with a chronic mental illness has been defined. Two definitions will be discussed along with the resulting solutions and the ramifications for policy.

The problem of homelessness among persons with a long-term mental illness is commonly defined as being primarily the result of deinstitutionalization (Jones, 1983; Lamb, 1984). By perceiving it in this manner, two possible solutions are forthcoming: reinstitutionalizing the chronically mentally ill or improving the mental health system involved in the deinstitutionalization process.

An alternative definition of the problem considers the critical shortage of affordable housing to be the foremost cause of homelessness among this group. This definition offers a solution outside of the exclusive domain of the mental health system, calling for increased low-income housing options.
The Incidence of Homelessness

The actual number of homeless individuals is uncertain. Estimates range from 250,000 to 3 million people. The number of homeless people having a mental illness is also unknown, with estimates ranging from 10% to 61% (Levine & Stockdill, 1986; Morrissey & Dennis, 1986). While estimates of the number of homeless people vary considerably, it is generally accepted that the number of homeless people, including the homeless mentally ill, has grown rapidly and steadily the past decade (APHA, 1985).

During this period of increased homelessness, there has been a large decline in the number of available low-income rental units. A study of 12 cities determined the number of low-income rental units decreased 30% over the last 10 years (Wright & Lam, 1987). The availability of public or subsidized housing is often not an option. In many cities the waiting list for such housing is so long, new applications are no longer being taken (Whitman, 1988).

Of particular importance in the examination of homelessness is the loss of many single room occupancy (SRO) units, a type of low cost housing frequently utilized by persons with a chronic mental illness (DHHS & DHUD, 1983; Hopper & Hamberg, 1984; Levine & Stockdill, 1986; Lipton, Sabatini, & Katz, 1983; Segal & Baumohl, 1980). Between 1970 and 1980, almost one million SRO units, one half of the total available were either destroyed or converted to other uses with few being replaced (DHHS, 1984).

Homelessness and Chronic Mental Illness Defined

It is essential to define homelessness and chronic mental illness, because in both cases, there is no clear definition that is consistently used (Bachrach, 1984; Levine, 1984). In a Department of Health and Human Services report (1984), homelessness is defined as both lack of shelter and the financial resources necessary to acquire it, and as a result, food and shelter are sought from public or private facilities. A broader definition of homelessness includes not only the lack of shelter and resources, but also the lack of community ties (Levine, 1984). For the purposes of this paper, this latter definition of homelessness is used.
Homelessness

The label “chronically mentally ill” actually refers to two rather different groups of people: the older client with a long history of hospitalization and the young adult chronic client generally considered to be between the ages of 18 to 35 years. In the past persons with a mental illness were considered to be chronic only if they had been institutionalized in a state mental facility (Bachrach, 1988). This definition had to be expanded because of deinstitutionalization. The vast majority of persons with a mental illness are now being treated in the community rather than being hospitalized for extended periods of time.

Unlike the older chronic client that is often seen as being passive and unmotivated, the young adult chronic client is usually characterized by medication noncompliance, drug and alcohol abuse, and frequent incidents of acting-out behavior. They are also often seen as misusing mental health services because they tend to seek out professional services when acutely ill, but then they do not complete the aftercare prescribed (Pepper, Kirshner & Ryglewicz, 1981). Although these two groups are dissimilar in some ways, they do share a commonality in that they have a major mental illness that is severe and persistent, and they need psychiatric services on a long-term basis (Bachrach, 1984).

For policy reasons, it is important to make a distinction between a person with a chronic mental illness and a person that exhibits psychiatric symptoms because of being homeless. There is considerable evidence that the stress caused by a temporary loss of shelter can produce psychiatric symptoms (Lipton, Nutt, & Sabatini, 1988). These individuals would not be considered “chronically mentally ill” because their symptoms, while they may be severe, have a situational cause and are not persistent. When housing is found, the symptoms should no longer be present and the individual should be able to resume his or her normal mental state without receiving long-term psychiatric and supportive services.

Deinstitutionalization and Homelessness

Deinstitutionalization is the policy whereby many mental patients living in state mental hospitals throughout the United States were released to the care of community facilities, to their
families, or without supervision. This resulted in a decrease in
state hospital census from almost 559,000 in 1955 to approx-
imately 138,000 in 1980 (Goldman, 1983). In addition to the
removal of patients from the state facilities, deinstitutionaliza-
tion also involves prevention of hospitalization through the use
of community-based facilities and services (Bachrach, 1983).

It is generally agreed that deinstitutionalization has not been
a success, or stated another way, the concept of deinstitutional-
ization is sound but its implementation has been flawed (Jones,
1983; Lamb, 1984). In the majority of cases, patients were dis-
charged to their families, were transferred to nursing and board-
ing homes where treatment and rehabilitation were generally
not available, or were released on their own without adequate
supportive and rehabilitative services. The system of commu-
nity care in many areas has been underfunded and fragmented
in such a way that no agency assumes ultimate responsibility
for the patient. Finally, the system has been inaccessible to many
patients, creating the young adult chronic population that has
not responded to traditional mental health services (Gralnick,

While homelessness among persons with a chronic mental
illness clearly has multiple, often interrelated causes, includ-
ing the economic recession, unemployment, cutbacks in federal
support programs, more restrictive hospital admission policies,
and the lack of adequate low-cost housing, the failure of the
deinstitutionalization process to adequately meet the needs of
the people it is supposed to serve is considered by many to be
the foremost cause of homelessness among this group (Dear &
Wolch, 1987; Jones, 1983; Lamb, 1984). The inadequacies of the
system, described above, are considered to have resulted in the
condition of homelessness among persons with a mental illness
as it exits today.

Policy Implications of the Deinstitutionalization
Definition of Homelessness

By defining homelessness among persons with a chronic
mental illness as being an outcome of the failure of deinstitutional-
ization, some people take the view that the state hospital
system should be revitalized (Dear & Wolch, 1987; Gardner,
1984; Gralnick, 1985). Through involuntary commitment, many mentally ill people, including the homeless mentally ill, would then be rehospitalized. The implications of this proposed change in mental health policy are twofold: it offers a quick solution to the problem of the homeless mentally ill by rehospitalizing them, and it restores the power base to the state hospital system which it lost during deinstitutionalization.

It is unlikely that state mental hospitals will be restored to their previous levels for the very reasons deinstitutionalization was initiated in the first place. For most clients institutional treatment is inappropriate and unnecessary. Clients can effectively be treated and supported in the community when ample resources are provided (Lamb, 1984; Okin, 1985). Also, the revitalization of the state mental hospitals would probably be prevented for legal reasons (Rachlin, 1983). Most state courts allow involuntary commitment only when the individual is a danger to self or others. Therefore, it is unlikely that most of the persons with a chronic mental illness living in the community, or even most individuals that are homeless, could be committed (Okin, 1985).

The second policy option developing from the deinstitutionalization definition of homelessness among persons with a chronic mental illness is to improve the overall community care system, which would ultimately decrease homelessness among this group. Lamb (1984), chairman of the American Psychiatric Association's task for the homeless mentally ill, summarizes the recommendations resulting from this definition of the problem. He calls for a full range of residential placements, aggressive case management, increased involuntary treatment, crisis intervention services, and access to acute hospitalization and other community services.

The primary benefit to the mental health system for defining homelessness as being the result of the failure of deinstitutionalization is that it keeps the solution within its own domain. Defined in this manner, the issue of homelessness among persons with a mental illness can be used to draw attention to the lack of resources allocated to the mental health system. Funds designated for homeless services can be used to improve the overall system, benefiting the entire mentally ill population, not
just the homeless mentally ill. Also, when new programs have to be created, it enlarges and strengthens the power base of the mental health community.

There are two major problems with the solution resulting from this definition. First, the changes offered above by Lamb are service intensive, resulting in large appropriations for various types of mental health services and very little for actual housing options. This point is exemplified by the plans of the Missouri Department of Mental Health (MDMH) to disburse $970,111 in federal and state funds designated specifically for the homeless mentally ill. None of the funds are to be used for permanent, long-term housing. Instead, the money will be used to purchase intensive case management services, mobile outreach and crisis intervention services, supportive and supervisory services for the homeless mentally ill staying in shelters, psychosocial rehabilitation services, and stabilization apartments. The stabilization apartments are the only form of housing funded by this grant, but it is not permanent housing, and it accounts for only 1% of the total allotment (MDMH, 1988).

The second problem with this solution concerns the expansion of the residential continuum model, a rehabilitation approach adopted by most states. This model is composed of different housing and service programs, each with its own level of structure and service intensity. As residents develop the skills and meet the service requirements of one setting, they are usually transferred to the next level of care, with the ultimate goal being independent living. Common elements of the continuum include nursing homes, intermediate care facilities, boarding homes, group homes, semiindependent apartments, and supervised or cooperative apartments. Most of these classifications can be subdivided based on the level of services offered (Carling, Randolph, Blanch, & Ridgway, 1988).

The residential continuum model has recently been criticized for a number of reasons. It forces persons with a mental illness to adjust to a predetermined program having little flexibility to meet individual needs; progress made in one setting is often lost when the individual is moved to the next higher level of care; an essential element of the range of residential
settings, long-term supported housing, is rarely available; and finally, treatment-oriented systems often do not provide enough assistance in helping the individual to secure permanent community housing (Allard, Carling, Bradley, Spencer, Randolph, & Ridgway, 1986).

In addition, by advocating for this continuum of residential service programs, the mental health community has in many cases confused the need for housing with the need for services (Carling & Ridgway, in press). Under this system, persons seeking housing must be willing to participate in the service program operated by the facility. Failure to comply with the service program usually means dismissal from the program and the resulting loss of housing. Many persons are unwilling to comply with the structure defined in each of the residential settings, or, because of past disruptive behavior, they are not accepted into most programs within the continuum. As a result, this group, which to a large extent is composed of the young adult chronic client, is at high risk of becoming homeless (Arce, Tadlock, Vergare, & Shapiro, 1983; Bachrach, 1984; Gardner & O’Hara, 1984; Levine and Stockdill, 1986).

From this group of people whose behavior is often inappropriate and disruptive or for those unwilling to give up their freedom and comply with the structure of the residential center, there is a definite lack of residential placements (Arce, Tadlock, Vergare, and Shapiro, 1983; Gardner & O’Hara, 1984). A choice is often made between two poor options: giving up one’s freedom or living on the streets. From one perspective, the act of choosing to live on the streets rather than conforming to a structured residential program does not have to be viewed as a bizarre act but can be seen as a positive move towards health, an attempt not to be identified as a patient (Gardner & O’Hara, 1984). Unfortunately, a serious mismatch developed between the structured services offered through the mental health system and the needs of this group (Ball & Havassy, 1984). This condition continues to exist in spite of evidence that not all homeless mentally ill persons are in need of structured treatment settings (Bachrach, 1984).
An Alternative View of Homelessness Among Persons with a Chronic Mental Illness

From one perspective deinstitutionalization has contributed to the problem of homelessness. If this policy had not occurred, many of people who are homeless and have a mental illness would still be hospitalized and therefore off the streets. For example, in Israel, where deinstitutionalization has not been implemented, homelessness among the mentally ill is not a problem (Lamb, 1984). But this approach does not explain why, when deinstitutionalization was implemented twenty years ago, the number of persons both homeless and mentally ill has increased only recently, coinciding with the rise in "the new homeless" which, unlike the stereotypical older, white, skidrow alcoholic, now includes former mental patients, minorities, women, children, and intact families (Hopper & Hamberg, 1984; Swanstrom, 1988).

Rather than deinstitutionalization being the significant variable in recent growth of the homeless mentally ill, the decline in low income housing is a primary cause. A number of reports emphasize the lack of housing options as a critical factor in the homelessness of persons with a mental illness (Baxter & Hopper, 1984; Hopper & Hamberg, 1984; Levine, Lezak & Goldman, 1986; Mowbray, 1985; NASMHPD, 1985; Wright & Lam, 1987).

From a policy perspective, this definition of the problem of homelessness among the chronically mentally ill is significant for two reasons. First, it identifies the greatest need of the homeless mentally ill as being affordable housing, not mental health services. There is considerable evidence indicating that until persons with a mental illness have a stable living situation that offers them some measure of dignity, rehabilitation services are of limited value. While some services may be necessary to secure housing, services alone cannot compensate for deficiencies in living circumstances (Baxter & Hopper, 1982; Levine & Haggard, in press).

Second, because the lack of affordable housing is a need shared by most homeless individuals, and not just the homeless mentally ill, the mental health system is no longer solely responsible for the solution. Therefore, it is legitimate for the
state mental health system to join forces with other governmental bodies and with the private sector to work towards the goal of additional low cost housing units, some of which would be utilized by persons with a mental illness (Allard et al., 1986).

The question still remains as to who will coordinate these resources and incur the bulk of the costs. Ultimately, the federal government needs to take the leadership role in the development of affordable housing, although under the Reagan administration, this did not occur (Whitman, 1988). There has been a tendency for each layer of government to "pass the buck" when it comes to assuming financial responsibility (Levine & Stockdill, 1986). Historically, state mental health agencies have viewed housing as a social welfare problem and have concentrated their housing efforts on residential treatment programs which are generally expensive and serve only a small percentage of persons with a mental illness that are in need of housing (Carling, Randolph, Blanche, and Ridgeway, 1988).

Attitudes towards housing are beginning to change, and some state mental health departments are beginning to assume a leadership role in the coordination and development of low income housing, because in many instances, they have the legal responsibility to see that persons with a chronic mental illness have appropriate housing options (Ridgway & Carling, 1987). The Position Statement of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (1988) reflects this stance, calling for public mental health systems to exercise leadership in the development of housing and emphasizing the need to coordinate and negotiate roles played by the mental health authorities, public assistance and housing authorities, the private sector, and consumers themselves.

An example of this mandate is found in Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Division of Mental Health, in its Housing Policy Statement (1988), outlines its roles and responsibilities:

(a) It should assess the housing needs of severely mentally disabled adults and develop an implementation plan for meeting those needs.
(b) It should serve as the advocate for the development of housing stock for severely mentally disabled adults.
(c) It should raise capital through bond monies for housing development and determine priorities for use.
(d) It should ensure that sufficient and suitable housing stock is secured to permit severely mentally disabled adults who require residential support services to live in the community.

Utilization of Housing Opportunities

Even if adequate low-cost housing options could be made available, there are some people who are uncertain if the homeless mentally ill would utilize them, the implication being they are homeless by choice (Mowbray, 1985; Bachrach, 1984). This assumption has been refuted by a number of studies which indicated when decent, humane shelter is provided, it will be utilized (Baxter & Hopper, 1981; Baxter & Hopper, 1982; Lipton, Nutt, and Sabatini, 1988; Morrissey & Dennis, 1986).

Although the homeless mentally ill are willing to accept some housing options, the perception of their needs by the mental health community and by the homeless persons themselves often do not coincide (Ball & Havassy, 1984; Carling et al., 1988). Mental health professionals usually focus on the need for structure and supervision (Lamb, 1984), while the mentally ill homeless look at such things as the neighborhood they may be moving in to, the safety it affords, and the amount of the space available, which are the same factors which most people, whether having a mental illness or not, consider when selecting a new residence (Morrissey & Dennis, 1986).

An approach to housing, referred to as supported housing or community residential rehabilitation (CRR), attempts to overcome some of the problems associated with the residential continuum model and to more adequately meet the individual housing needs of persons having a chronic mental illness (Carling & Ridgway, in press; Carling & Wilson, 1988). This housing approach concentrates on the community integration of persons with a mental illness. This emphasis on community integration is especially relevant to the discussion of homelessness, which was defined as having three components: the lack of shelter, of resources, and of community ties.

The essential components of supported housing include a shift away from treatment based housing facilities to the use
Homelessness of normal housing, clearly separating housing from services. It also emphasizes the choice of an individual as to where and how he or she will live. Finally, rehabilitative and supportive services are to be provided on a flexible basis determined by the needs of the individual and are to be available on a long-term basis (Carling & Wilson, 1988).

Conclusion

The improper implementation of deinstitutionalization is often suggested as being a primary cause of homelessness among persons with a chronic mental illness. Upon closer examination of the perspective, it was not until a severe housing shortage occurred that homelessness appeared among this group, as well as others. While the improvement of the implementation of deinstitutionalization is clearly needed, this will not alleviate the problem of homelessness among persons with a mental illness. Levine and Haggard (in press) emphasize the extent of this position: "Ultimately, the fate of homeless mentally ill persons depends upon the accessibility of both specialized and nonspecialized residential alternative."

By focusing on the need for housing, the mental health system can legitimately work with other organizations to improve the housing stock for all people. This emphasis on housing is critical, because while people with a chronic mental illness need long-term supportive and rehabilitative services, these services are most beneficial when provided to someone in a stable living environment and administered on a flexible, individualized basis.

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This study reveals the importance of front-line paraprofessional personnel in the rapidly expanding social services in Spain and identifies the functions they perform, the different kinds of training they receive, their opportunities for advancement, and several issues that must be addressed if they are to make their best contributions to Spain's social services.

In most countries of the world, the bulk of front-line or face-to-face helping activity is carried out by people (often local community residents) who have had little or no formal training for their important service roles (United Nations, 1980). This paper focuses on the ways in which front-line personnel are used to meet the needs of people and communities in Spain.

Previous research has shown that paraprofessionals (whether they be neighborhoods workers in Israel, home helps in Britain, village workers in India or day care workers in the USA) perform a variety of crucial functions in the social services around the world. These workers play a vital role in safeguarding the health and well-being of large groups of needy people. An international study recently reported by Schindler and Brawley (1987) confirmed the importance of the work being done by these front-line paraprofessionals, produced data on their characteristics, and identified the conditions under which they make their best contribution to human well-being. The international comparative nature of that study was especially useful. It included data from thirteen countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, North America and Oceania. However, there was no Spanish-speaking country in their study. Given the size, significance and growth of the Spanish-speaking population of the world, this gap in the available data needed to be remedied.
The present study was intended to be an important step in that direction. Visits to Spain in 1986 and 1987 enabled the author to lay the groundwork for a study of front-line social service personnel in that country. As well as sensitizing him to the gap in available data on paraprofessional social service personnel around the world, these visits alerted him to the dynamic social development and social service activities that are going on in post-Franco Spain, provided the opportunity to do some exploratory research, and gave access to the sources of data necessary for a formal research project.

Research Methodology

In carrying out this study, standard procedures followed in international comparative research on social welfare policies and services were used (see, for example Kahn and Kamerman, 1976; Rodgers, 1979; Higgins, 1981). National, regional, and provincial social welfare legislation and government reports, relevant locally-generated research findings, and appropriate sections of the professional literature in Spain were reviewed. Faculty and administrators at the University School of Social Work of Barcelona, the Higher Council on Scientific Research in Madrid, and the Province of Gerona Social Services Department provided assistance in locating and gaining access to the relevant documents. As well as serving as informed sources themselves, they helped identify additional experts (primarily government officials) who should be interviewed. Direct field observations of professional and paraprofessional social service personnel at work and in training in the Province of Gerona were made over a three-month period in 1989 and an effort was made to corroborate these observations in shorter visits during the same period to the Provinces of Lérida, Barcelona, Madrid, and Zaragoza.

Background: Spain at the End of the 1980s

Perhaps as a result of its relative isolation from the rest of Western Europe caused primarily by the geographic barrier of the Pyrenees and also on account of the political, economic and
Personnel in Spain

social differences that separated it from its neighbors until very recently, Spain has retained a certain distinctiveness or individuality that matches the typical individualism of its citizens and the distinct differences that exist between the separate regions of the country. In fact, Spain can probably best be described as a land and a nation of differences — in climate, in terrain, in language and, perhaps most importantly, in regional versus national identity. One of its greatest challenges at present is to retain some semblance of national identification and unity while responding to substantial pressures toward regional separate ness and self-determination, most notably but not exclusively in the Basque Country and in Catalonia (Presidencia del Gobierno, 1980). Upon Franco’s death in 1976, King Juan Carlos (who had been designated by Franco as his successor) became head of state. The King made clear his commitment to the restoration of democracy and the first general election in 40 years was held in 1977. Despite threats to the new democracy (an attempted military coup in 1981 and continued terrorist activities by Basque separatist extremists) the country has moved ahead and prospered. The granting of a high degree of autonomy to Catalonia and the Basque Country in the early 1980s and the later division of the whole country into sixteen self-governing regions has strengthened the commitment to democracy by signaling an end to the concentrated centralized power of the national government that has been abhorred and resisted historically and that is strongly associated in the public mind with the oppressive Franco regime. King Juan Carlos and the present moderate three-term Socialist government of Felipe González have successfully steered the country to recovery from the forty years of economic stagnation and political oppression that followed the Civil War and an end to isolation from the rest of Europe. What is remarkable is the degree to which this has been accomplished without isolating either the far left or reactionary right.

What seems to hold the country together in the face of strong general sentiments against any semblance of central authority and powerful Basque and Catalan independence movements is a general desire to be a respected and influential member of the modern European Community — an aspiration that can only
be achieved by a strong and united (although not necessarily centralized) Spanish nation. To this end, Spain has moved an enormous distance in a very short time. From being a backward, impoverished nation ruled by a totalitarian dictatorship, Spain had emerged in little more than a decade as a prosperous, stable, progressive democratic society that is poised to become a very significant economic, social, cultural and political force in Western Europe (Banco de Bilbao, 1988; Banco Español de Crédito, 1988; The Economist, 1987).

Social Welfare Services in Spain

Any attempt to describe the training and use of paraprofessional personnel in Spain must begin with a brief overview of social welfare services in that country. The new Spanish Constitution of 1978 continued the political subdivision of Spain into provinces and municipalities but soon afterwards a law was passed that divided the nation into "autonomías" (autonomous or self-governing regions) that had existed in pre-Civil War times (Montraveta and Vilá, 1984). The new "autonomías" can be regarded as rough equivalents to the states in the U.S. and were created in response to strong regional independence movements in Catalonia and the Basque Country in particular. The autonomous regions, unlike the American states, have varying degrees of decision-making capabilities depending on their particular circumstances, their individual historical relationship with the central government, and their legal right to levy or not to levy taxes. This latter difference is also the result of historical arrangements. Obviously, these general elements of political organization have some bearing on the organization and financing of the social services.

Following the creation of the autonomous regions, each of these passed its own law assuming responsibility for the provision of the personal social services (Documentación Social, 1986). Funding for the services is provided by the central government, except in the cases of the Basque Country and Navarra which have historically had the authority to levy their own taxes for social services and other purposes. In some maintenance provisions (Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, etc.) remain the responsibility of the central government (Casado and
Within the autonomous regions, most direct face-to-face social service activity is delegated to municipalities that have populations of over twenty thousand people. In the case of smaller municipalities, services are provided by provinces or "comarcas" (counties), depending on the social service laws of a particular autonomous region (Doménech, 1985; Comité Español de Bienestar Social, 1987; Revista de Treball Social, 1985; Peña, 1987; Torres 1987).

It can be seen, therefore, that the emergence of a relatively comprehensive system of social welfare services is a fairly recent phenomenon in Spain, really not much older than twenty years. Of course, there were charitable efforts before that, primarily a tripartite system operated by the state-approved "sindicatos" (unions), the Catholic Church, and the one approved political party ("el Movimiento") of the Franco regime. Social work as an identifiable profession also emerged only about twenty years ago in the body of a group of people ("asistentes sociales") employed to handle requests for supplementary assistance under the nascent Social Security system (Casado, 1987). Only relatively recently have schools of social work emerged in any significant number and the title Social Worker ("Trabajador Social") gained wide acceptance and legal recognition (Baeza, Cruz and Ordinas, 1988). Those persons who might be regarded as paraprofessionals are generally an even newer phenomenon although untrained child care workers ("cuidadores de ninos"), caretakers ("celadores"), and other providers of direct personal care have been around for a long time.

The Emergence of New Types of Front-Line Personnel

It is clear that there are now a large and growing number of occupational groups (some very new) that are participating in the provision of human services at the local level in Spain. Many of them would be regarded as paraprofessionals in other countries because they carry out tasks that assist and complement the work of the more established professions (e.g., medicine, education, social work, etc.). The term paraprofessional is unknown in Spain and the concept is even more problematic than
it is in other countries since social work itself is not yet highly professionalized in Spain and some of the people who would be regarded as paraprofessional human service workers in other countries (e.g., trained child care workers) have a level of training that is quite comparable to that of social workers.

As is true in the human services of other countries of the world paraprofessionals greatly outnumber professional social workers. However, it is worth noting that Spain has done an admirable job in developing a sizeable cadre of trained social workers in a relatively short period of time. Unlike the situation in other countries, a shortage of trained social workers does not seem to have been an important factor in the emergence of large numbers and diverse types of paraprofessionals. The newness of the social work profession and its relative weakness as a professional and political force in Spain may, of course, have prevented it from having much influence on whether certain jobs were defined as requiring persons with social work training. However, this does not seem to be a matter of much concern or debate among social workers in Spain.

A number of factors seem to have contributed to growth in the use of different kinds of paraprofessional human service workers during the past decade. These include the rapid expansion in the volume and range of social and community services in Spain in the post-Franco (and newly democratic) era. From a very low level of public investment in social provision, Spain has taken giant steps in a very short time to catch up with the rest of Western Europe. Its recent entry into the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Parliament has increased pressures to achieve parity with its new European partners in a variety of spheres, including human service. A period of unprecedented economic prosperity has made this possible, although there are signs that resource limitations are beginning to make themselves felt. Rising numbers of elderly and disabled claimants on the Social Security system and the fiscal demands of the new National Health Service are causing some alarm about future resources among some officials interviewed.

The very rapid expansion of the social services in Spain has occurred in a fairly uncoordinated and unregulated fashion. A
multiplicity of new tasks and functions have been created, many of which are beyond the traditional boundaries of the established professionals. These tasks or functions are being carried out by a wide variety of personnel who bring a variety of backgrounds and types and levels of training to their work.

Another factor contributing to the creation of a range of human service jobs is the persistence of large pockets of unemployment, especially among young people, despite the remarkably high level of prosperity that Spain is currently enjoying. Job-creation efforts (either through active government stimulation of economic activity or through a wide range of initiatives in the public sector) are a high priority in current government policy (see, for example, Díaz, 1986; Instituto de la Juventud, 1986; Plan Joven, Zaragoza, 1989). A significant portion of the new jobs that are created fall within the ambit of the social services. Although government stimulation of private sector economic activity greatly exceeds public sector employment, there is recognition at various levels of government (national and regional, in particular) that the service rather than industrial sector is where future growth will occur. Within the service sector, social welfare activity (broadly defined) is seen as a relatively small but very important element. (Generalitat de Catalunya, undated; Treserra and Altarriva, 1988).

An additional interesting factor in the emergence of a variety of new occupations within the human services is the oversupply of certain established professionals (most notably teachers, psychologists and lawyers). This has led to the recycling of some of these professionals into different but related human service fields — for example, teachers into residential and day care of children ("educadores especializados"), psychologists into drug and alcohol treatment programs ("psicopedagogos"), and lawyers into community action jobs ("animadores socio-culturales"). The schools of education in various universities (e.g., Universidad de Valladolid, 1988) have broadened their focus beyond teacher preparation to include a variety of selected human service occupations. There are interesting parallels here with the early service education movement in the U.S. (See Chenault and Burnford, 1978).
While there appears to be no explicit government policy that promotes the use of what could be regarded as paraprofessional personnel in the social welfare services, it is clear that specific action by government bodies at different levels implicitly supports the training and employment of a variety of new kinds of personnel in the human services. The creation of the Institut Català de Noves Professions (Catalonian Institute of New Professions) by the government of the autonomous region of Catalonia is but one example. The mandate and actions of the Institute encompass all occupational spheres; however, it has already identified health care and gerontology as prime areas of employment growth in the immediate future (Generalitat de Catalunya, undated). Sponsorship of schools and institutes for the training of family aides by regional governments (see, for example, Escola De Formació de Treballadors Familiars, undated) and other front-line workers by provincial and municipal governments are other examples of specific government actions that directly support the training and employment of paraprofessionals (Díaz, 1986; Institut Municipal d’Animació de Barcelona, 1988; Escola d’Educadors Especialitzats de Girona, undated).

Tasks and Functions of Front-Line Workers

Paraprofessionals are employed in a wide variety of fields within the social welfare services in Spain, including child care, services to the aging and programs for the physically and mentally disabled. The largest numbers are probably employed in these areas. However, they are also found in the following fields — drug and alcohol abuse, adult and juvenile justice, youth work, family service, and community of various kinds. They perform a wide range of tasks in these different areas of social welfare activity. These include caring for children in day care centers or residential settings; providing practical assistance or personal care to the elderly or disabled at home, in day centers or in residences; helping communities address specific problems and work toward appropriate solutions; providing supervision and guidance to young people in clubs, recreational programs or informally in the street; and helping appropriate groups or individuals to develop jobs for the unemployed.
There is an enormous range of job titles in use in the human services in Spain at present and it appears that new ones are emerging constantly. These include the fairly common types of direct care jobs that are found in the social service systems of most countries of the world; for example, "cuidador de ninos" (child care worker), "trabajador de la casa" (home help or homemaker) and "celador geriatrico" (aide or attendant in residential care for the elderly) are found throughout the country. The holders of these jobs may or may not have much formal training for the work they do. In addition to these, a number of newer jobs have begun to be developed, some of which require substantial training. For example, the "animador sociocultural" (community organizer), "trabajador familiar" (family worker) and "educador especializado" (trained child care worker) are becoming quite widely used in Spain. Newer and less common are the "educador de calle" (street worker), "agente de desarrollo" (job and employment developer), "gerocultura" (specialized worker with the elderly), "educador de tiempo libre" (leisure time organizer), and "monitor de actividades infantiles y juveniles" (supervisor of activities for children and youth).

Especially noteworthy are the "animadores socioculturales" whose role it is to help urban and rural communities to address local problems (for example, needs for day care services for young children, social and recreational programs for teenagers, centers for the elderly, etc.) and develop constructive responses (see López de Ceballos and Salas, 1987). Their work is based on the French "animateur" model which was developed to reorganize and revitalize urban neighborhoods and rural communities after the devastation and disorganization suffered in World War II (Grosjean and Ingberg, 1974). In some forms, it incorporates concepts from the liberation theology of elements of the Catholic Church in Latin America, Freire's "conscientizacao" approaches to adult education and community development, and the mutual aid, self-help, and cooperative movements in Britain, the United States and West Germany (López de Ceballos and Salas, 1987, pp. 32–33). However, the manner in which these different models and traditions have been blended and adapted has resulted in a unique and interesting role for the "animador sociocultural" in Spain. Although their numbers and functions
vary across the different regions of the country, they are ob-
viously an important and growing group of front-line human
service workers.

Also of special interest are the "educadores especializados" (or trained child care workers) who are emerging as a new and
important group of workers who have been trained to provide
specialized services to children and young people with a wide
variety of problems and needs. They work with poor or vul-
nerable children in their own homes, in day care centers, or
in residential facilities; they provide specialized care to children
with physical disabilities, psychological difficulties, or problems
in daily living. As has occurred in certain other European coun-
tries (for example, France and Belgium) during the past forty
years, the "educador" is emerging as a unique occupation for
persons interested in working with children at a relatively so-
phisticated level but who are looking for an alternative to the
more traditional professions of teaching, medicine, psychology
or social work (Escola d'Educadors Especialitzats de Girona,
undated).

As a group, paraprofessionals tend to undertake a much
wider range of jobs than social workers in Spain who seem to
focus on responding to requests for specific kinds of services
on a case-by-case basis. Paradoxically, individual paraprofes-
sionals appear to provide more specialized services than social
workers who are more generalist in their orientation. While
social workers undertake more complex work than relatively
untrained home helps and paraprofessionals performing rou-
tine personal care tasks in residential settings, there is not a
great deal of difference between the functions of social workers
and some front-line workers (e.g., "animadores socioculturales",
"educadores especializados", etc.) in terms of the level of com-
plexity, responsibility or difficulty inherent in their work.

Lines of authority and responsibility are often unclear or de-
emphasized in Spain so that it is difficult to determine who is
responsible to whom for the performance of what tasks in the
provision of social services. In a country with a highly ambiva-
 lent attitude towards authority, such concepts as accountability
and supervision are problematic, especially in the public sector.
People are uncomfortable with and resist the idea of one person
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being responsible to another or being supervised by another in the performance of their work. Therefore, it would appear that human service workers of all kinds and at all levels function with a great deal of autonomy. The concept of the team as a model of service delivery at the community level is one that is attractive to and quite common among social service personnel in Spain.

Social Work Attitudes Towards Front-Line Personnel

Unlike the situation in most other countries of the world where the social work profession tends to be either actively supportive or more or less antagonistic toward paraprofessional human service workers (Schindler and Brawley, 1987), in Spain social workers seem to be unaware of or disinterested in the other occupational groups that participate in the social service enterprise alongside them. This may be due to the fact that the social work profession is quite new in Spain and is not yet a very strong organizational or political entity. Furthermore, most social work practitioners are very recently qualified, are relatively inexperienced, and do not seem to have a very broad view of the social welfare services, the various components that make it up, and the range of people engaged in the total enterprise. They focus rather narrowly on the central tasks of their specific jobs, paying little attention to the broader scene.

Where individual social workers come into regular contact with paraprofessionals, their attitudes vary from full acceptance and cooperative work in team models of practice to some feeling of reservation about the activities of paraprofessionals, a fear that they may be invading professional territory, and a greater willingness to accept them if status differences between them are maintained.

As a consequence of the general lack of awareness of the range of other occupations engaged in social service provision, Spanish social workers are only marginally involved in efforts to support the work of other human service personnel. Some provide supervision to home helps or other paraprofessionals who are part of their team or unit and they may provide some rudimentary in-service training for these auxiliary staff but they do not appear to play a significant role (individually or as an
organized profession) in the deployment, development, or training of paraprofessionals. A notable exception is the School for Family Workers that has been developed by one school of social work, the Catholic Institute for Social Studies of Barcelona (Institut Catòlic d'Estudis Socials de Barcelona, undated).

On the other hand, a number of governmental and educational institutions have been active in supporting the training and employment of front-line human service personnel. At the national level, for example, the Instituto Nacional de Empleo (INEM) has provided incentives to local municipalities to hire unemployed persons (particularly young people or others newly entering the job market) in a variety of public service capacities including in the social services. A number of home helps employed in the "Comarca" (county) of La Garrotxa, Gerona Province, are supported by this program. Examples at the regional level are provided by the government of the Autonomous Region of Catalonia which has recently created the Catalan Institute of New Professions and sponsors the School of Family Workers, both of which have already been mentioned in this paper. To mention only one of several examples that could be cited of provincial government support of paraprofessionals, the Province of Valladolid has sponsored several initiatives intended to develop new and valuable employment and training opportunities in the human services (see Diaz, 1986).

Training of Front-Line Workers

While many Spanish paraprofessionals receive little or no formal training for their work, some receive training or have educational backgrounds that match and, in a few cases, exceed that of social workers. For example, home helps may or may not receive some kind of minimal in-service training provided by their employers and other paraprofessionals (for example, untrained child care workers or community workers) may attend short-term (anything from a half-day to four weeks) training courses, seminars or workshops offered by employers, government agencies, government-supported training institutes, or educational institutions (see Escola Taller, 1989; Escola Educadors en el Lleure, 1989; Institut Municipal d'Animacio de Barcelona, 1988). On the other hand, some persons that are included in
this study receive substantial training for the work they do. For example, some “animadores socioculturales” and “educadores especializados” have participated in two-year or even three-year training programs that are comparable in length and level to the training required to qualify as a social worker in Spain (See López De Ceballos and Salas, 1987; Animació, 1987). Furthermore, a significant number of these more highly trained workers are persons with prior university or other types of education (as teachers, for example) who have been retrained for their new professions in the human services.

Most formal training for paraprofessional human service workers is a combination of theoretical and practical instruction, with the latter usually including some practical field instruction. The training program for “trabajadores familiares” offered in Barcelona, for example, is made up of about 30% theoretical classroom material, 15% practice-related classroom material, and 55% field instruction (Institut Catòlic d’Estudis Socials de Barcelona, undated). The training program for “educadores especializados” in Gerona, which is of three years duration, is about equally divided among theoretical material, instruction in applied subjects, and direct experience in different practice settings (Escola d’Educadors Especialitzats de Girona, undated). These are fairly typical although all kinds of patterns and lengths of training exist.

Opportunities for Career Advancement

Since this is a period of great dynamism and fluidity in the human service field in Spain, one might expect that there would be many opportunities for people to move around between jobs and among various fields of service. However, this does not appear to be happening to any substantial degree. Most job incumbents tend to view their current jobs as relatively long-term situations. A major barrier to the advancement of most front-line workers is the absence of academic qualifications for entry into professional-level training as a social worker or the like. Few of the aforementioned training programs lead to formal qualifications for a legally-recognized occupational field or serve as a stepping stone to professional status. This is a problem because most jobs in government service in Spain, including in
the social welfare services, are fairly rigidly classified. To some degree, professional social workers are also victimized by inflexible categories. For example, they may not qualify for senior administrative positions in the social services since these are frequently restricted to persons with higher academic qualifications than social workers typically possess. Although participants in training programs, even the many types of short-term in-service training that are widely available, receive certificates upon completion, these do not usually qualify people for different or more senior positions. As a consequence, therefore, there does not appear to be much opportunity for vertical or horizontal mobility in the social services. In this respect, the situation of paraprofessional human service workers in Spain differs little from their counterparts in other parts of the world (Schindler and Brawley, 1987).

Summary and Conclusion

Most face-to-face helping activity around the world is performed by people who have little or no formal training for their service roles. Previous research has shown that front-line paraprofessionals play a vital role in safeguarding the health and well-being of large groups of people. A gap in that research was the absence of data from Spanish-speaking countries and it was the purpose of the study reported here to remedy that situation. A three-month-long research project carried out in Spain in 1989 revealed the important role played by front-line paraprofessional personnel in the rapidly expanding social services of that country. It identified the different kinds of personnel that have emerged, the broad range of functions they perform, the kinds of training they receive, and the opportunities for career advancement that are open to them. In addition, several issues emerged that must be addressed if these valuable workers are to make their best contribution to Spain's social services.

There is an excitement and dynamism in the social, cultural, economic and political life of present-day Spain. It is evident that there is a strong public and political will to address human needs more adequately than in the past and to develop a range of social services appropriate for a caring society that is committed to promoting the well-being of all of its citizens.
Public support for the social services and for the people who staff them is remarkably high and is in sharp contrast to the retreat from social provision that has occurred in other parts of the world during the past decade (Brown, 1984; Graycar, 1983; Mishra, 1984; Morris, 1987; United Nations, 1985).

While this positive social climate prevails in Spain, it may be opportune to address a number of important issues in regard to the training and deployment of front-line social service personnel. For example, present approaches to job definition in the human services and the deployment of front-line workers appear to be more haphazard and expedient than systematic. Likewise, training programs seem to be developed and offered on an ad hoc basis and are often dependent on the initiative of local individuals or groups. In fact, the majority of front-line workers have been employed without specific training for the important work they do and the training received by the rest is of a great variety in terms of its length, rigor, content, and auspices. Institutes sponsored by regional, provincial and local government agencies or by private organizations are the most important formal training resources available for the kind of personnel discussed in this paper. While some of these institutes are affiliated with universities, most are not. Because of the enormous diversity of functions performed and training received by front-line social service workers in Spain, it is extremely difficult for them to develop a distinct professional or occupational identity. Only those trained as “educadores especializados” have come close to achieving legal recognition (“titulo”) for their occupational group. The great majority of front-line workers are a long way from that goal.

So far there has been little pressure and limited effort to address the issues mentioned above. This is attributable in large part to the newness of the social services that have been developed and of the persons who have been hired to provide them. However, as the system begins to stabilize and mature, there is a growing need to pay attention to and make sense out of the complex array of personnel involved in the provision of social services, the types of training needed, and the most appropriate ways to maximize available resources. Important first steps have been taken in this direction by trying to identify pro-
grams across Spain that prepare "animadores socioculturales" (López de Ceballos and Salas, 1987) and "animadores juveniles" (Animació, 1987). These research activities need to be expanded to include the full range of social service personnel, followed by some initial efforts to develop conceptual models of human resource development and utilization in the social services.

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Exchange Rules
in the Mediation
of Social Welfare Work

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This article demonstrates the utility of the concept of exchange rules for understanding welfare worker agency in the mediation of workplace ideologies and behaviors. The exchange rules of complementarity, reciprocity, and beneficence are applied to the issues of service worker burnout, worker-client interactions, and labor issues to illustrate their conceptual and practical power. This analysis from an interactionist perspective complements the macro-level observations of the fundamental contradictions within the social welfare enterprise. It also suggests avenues for the mediation and alleviation of certain workplace dilemmas.

Human service practitioners and social scientists have commented on certain fundamental contradictions within social welfare work since its formal organization in the latter half of the 1800s. Many writers have noted the occupation's competing ideologies of social control, social assistance, and social change (Galper, 1975; Rochefort, 1981; Trattner, 1979) and its contrasting practices of casework and group work on one hand and community organization and political action on the other (Galper, 1975; Trattner, 1979). Certain critics have described the dilemmas of practice in which nonstandardized human beings must interface with increasingly standardized bureaucracies informed by

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scientific philanthropy and economic criteria of efficiency and productivity (Bremner, 1956; Billingsley, 1964; Lubove, 1977; Miller, 1978; Finch, 1976; Wasserman, 1971). In short, the social welfare literature richly details competing occupational ideologies and practices within various historical contexts.

Perhaps less attention has been given to the active role that workers play, both individually and collectively, in the mediation of occupational ideologies and problematic work situations. To be sure, there are fine exceptions to this claim (Lipsky, 1980; Olmstead, 1983). Nevertheless, we feel that there is still much to gain by systematically bringing workers to the forefront of investigations in social welfare and viewing them as actors in, as well as reactors to, political and occupational dilemmas, overwhelming client needs, and often ambivalent public opinion (Wrong, 1961). When that is done, we will see that debates and resolutions about social welfare take place within as well as around these primary agents in the welfare enterprise in their cognitive structuring of everyday situations. The individual and collective resolutions of competing cognitions in turn have consequences for either the exacerbation or moderation of tensions in the welfare workplace. Furthermore, and understanding of workers' cognitive orientations can promote creative conflict resolution around welfare dilemmas and contradictions.

Prior to substantiating the utility of exchange rules for understanding welfare work ideologically and interactionally, it is first necessary to define key terms and concepts of the argument. We then describe selected exchange rules and illustrate their operation in social welfare work. Finally we demonstrate how exchange rules can shed new light onto longstanding issues in social welfare, including service worker burnout, worker-client interactions, and labor issues. We seek to demonstrate both the theoretical and practical utility of exchange rules as conceptual tools that can enrich our comprehension of the welfare enterprise.

Definitions of Key Terms and Concepts

In this article we employ a broad notion of the social welfare enterprise. We utilize the term social welfare work to encompass efforts toward community improvement as well as the provi-
sion of social services, financial and legal assistance, and interpersonal aid, regardless of auspices. Similarly, the term welfare workers refers to individuals who perform the aforementioned functions through direct contact with specified populations, regardless of the worker's occupational title, voluntary or paid status, or educational background. These parameters enable us to talk simultaneously about community activists and bureaucratic functionaries, ladies bountiful and indigenous paraprofessionals, intake workers and family counseling specialists, to name a few. Certain discussions mandate distinctions among these groups. However, we believe there is more to be gained herein by employing an inclusive definition. Furthermore, we use the terms "community worker," "welfare worker," "social worker," and "service provider" interchangeably to designate the actors on whom our comments focus.

Exchange rules refer to orientations individuals bring to interpersonal relationships that enable them to assess the appropriate distribution of rewards and costs in a social exchange (Emerson, 1976; Dowd, 1980). They represent the motivations from which welfare workers' behaviors come. In this paper we limit our discussion to the exchange rules of complementarity, beneficence, and reciprocity for the purpose of indicating this concept's utility for understanding social welfare interactions.

According to Gouldner (1973), the concept of complementarity refers to situations wherein "one's rights are another's obligations, and vice versa." (Meeker (1971) describes status consistency and rank equilibrium as similar principles.) Rights and obligations are embedded within the socially standardized roles and concrete status rights of role partners. Such roles "may require an almost unconditional compliance in the sense that they are incumbent on all those in a given status simply by virtue of its occupancy" (Gouldner, 1973). In other words, one's status implies certain behavioral expectations in the process of social exchange.

For example, with regard to the achieved status of age, Rhone (1973) describes the role of enslaved Black elders who offered "a ministry of human feeling" (Rhone, 1973, p. 7) to their people in the ante-bellum U.S. She writes that "it was clearly understood and accepted that the older slaves would
carry major duties in the area of human service” (Rhone, 1973, p. 8). An example of complementarity derived from ascribed status (in this case gender as it intersects in particular ways with achieved class status) comes from the 19th century constraints on the types of social work in which women of wealth should engage:

...women were not involved in the public welfare system, banned as they were from government and political activity. Woman's special sphere was the moral: by implication, she was not to be concerned with such crass material questions as wages, working conditions, and even the dispensation of relief. As in the family, the social charges of ladies bountiful were other women, children, the aged, and the sick; by implication, they were to avoid the idle, profligate, intemperate, and other immoral poor, particularly if they were men. Women's special province was the home; fitting service was therefore the creation of small institutions for children and the aged. By implication, women were not to go into prisons, insane asylums, or slums (Rauch, 1975, p. 254).

In contrast to complementary, reciprocity assumes that "each party has rights and duties" (Gouldner, 1973). Interpersonal exchanges are based on an evaluation of past and present actions of role partners rather than expectations built into their social status. Relationships are maintained because they are viewed as more rewarding than they are costly (Gouldner, 1973; Meeker, 1971). (Meeker (1971) notes the similarities of the concepts of reciprocity and equity.) From this orientation, it is possible to talk about social workers as workers, as Tambor (1979) does, by delimiting appropriate rewards for social welfare work. Suggesting that broad social and economic conditions of the late 20th century have made it difficult for social workers to obtain reasonable returns for their work, he stresses the need for union organization: “The job market for social workers has tightened up, limiting job mobility. Severe budget cutbacks and reductions in social service are constant threats. Salaries for social workers have been unable to keep pace with inflation” (Tambor, 1979,
In other words, these issues are addressed to the definition of a fair exchange between employers and employees in social welfare. They are grounded in assumptions of the rights and duties of both partners in the workplace.

Finally, beneficence describes interaction based on a role partner's need, with the expectation of nothing in return (Gouldner, 1973). (Meeker (1971) argues that beneficence is closely related to the concept of altruism.) Unlike complementarity, this exchange rule does not consider privileges and obligations deriving from statuses and roles; unlike reciprocity, it is not based on a cost-benefit analysis of the social exchange. Instead, an individual responds solely on the basis of recognizing another's need. Cherniss' (1981) study of "a residential setting for mentally retarded people operated by a Catholic religious order" is illustrative of this exchange rule:

When women join this order, they expect a lifetime of hard work and personal sacrifices with virtually no monetary reward or professional status. In fact, they explicitly take a vow of poverty, chastity, and humility. They expect to give up most of the comforts and rewards of the secular world and to work with the most needy. As one of them put it, "we don't clip toe nails and wipe runny noses for the salary or for the glory. There's no glory in it. The children are never going to thank you." (Cherniss, 1981, p. 7)

Cherniss (1981) continues, however, that the sisters' behavior is not totally selfless because they expect final reward in spiritual salvation. His notice of the ultimate reciprocity that they seek recognizes, as does Gouldner (1973) in his discussion of beneficence, that certain apparently beneficent acts may indeed contain elements of unstated reciprocity. Although the guiding exchange rule is one of beneficence, this scenario introduces the notion of nested motivations, to which we will return later.

Several additional points about exchange rules must be made at the outset. First, no single exchange rule can fully characterize an individual personality, an agency ideology, or an historical period in social welfare work. Rather, it is more
appropriate to talk about competing and shifting exchange rules over time, across settings and people, and within individual cognitions. Indeed, the recognition of shifts and competition enables us to understand changing welfare worker biographies at the same time that we better comprehend changing work contours within specific historical and political periods of social welfare in the United States. Indeed, shifts in exchange rule emphasis often serve as markers of historical periods, cueing us to changes in social work ideology and workplace arrangements, even as they reflect changing individual perceptions and orientations.

Now we turn to the application of exchange rules to selected historical and contemporary issues in social welfare work to demonstrate their utility for scholars and practitioners alike. The following data from our own research and archival materials are provided for the purpose of illustration rather than hypothesis-testing. As such, they are meant to be suggestive rather than conclusive.

Service Worker Burnout

Both researchers and practitioners have frequently pondered why it is that some workers are more inclined to burn out from welfare work than others. (See Dressel (1984) for a review of the literature.) We suggest that the exchange rules workers bring, usually implicitly rather than explicitly, to their work contributes to one’s relative vulnerability or immunity from occupational burnout.

It is useful to examine interviews with two workers in services to the aging to explore the implications of exchange rules in service worker burnout (1). The two workers selected have striking similar jobs on paper but highly differing orientations to their tasks. One is experiencing burnout; the other is not. At least part of the reason for the differential experience of burnout lies in their utilization of different exchange rules in their work.

Worker #1 worked in senior center where her responsibilities were rather open-ended. In effect, anything that could be funded through the Older Americans Act (OAA) was within her purview of responsibilities. The fundamental ambiguity of the OAA allows for a broad range of activities to be undertaken
by those who work within its policy guidelines (Dressel, 1982). This worker's orientation toward her job and the clients was to exploit the parameters of OAA to their fullest on behalf of the clients. Throughout the interview she repeatedly used phrases such as:

"(I'm) solely responsible for all their needs...."
"You know you've got to take care of all (their) needs... (and) everything is needed right now."
"We got a hundred things that need to be done right now."
"I would just give my all."

It is clear that this worker devoted a great deal of effort to her job and attempted to address a wide range of client needs, usually by herself. Yet eventually, despite (or perhaps because of) her commitment, which extended even to performing work-related activities at home, she became exhausted and burned out.

Let us compare Worker #1 with Worker #2. The work responsibilities of the latter were similar to, and virtually as open-ended as those of #1. Yet she was not burned out. In fact, throughout the interview she described her job positively:

"I like the job tremendously."
"I am so pleased with what I'm doing."
"I am perfectly satisfied with my working conditions."
"I can't think of anything I don't like about the work, I like it so much."
"Every day is just a new adventure."

There is no indication in the interview with Worker #2 that she initiated new projects, and she herself reported that she did not accede to all of the demands made upon her:

"With the agency, (certain demands) are just water off a duck's back. I don't pay any attention to (them). When there are demands that I feel are horrendous or just silly, I don't
pay any attention or do it. But with the participants, if there are demands that they made, you just have to be diplomatic about it (but not indulge them).

The considerably different approaches to work illustrated in the foregoing vignettes can partially be described in terms of exchange rules. Worker #1 appears to have been moved primarily by beneficence, or the notion that she should respond whenever needs appear. No doubt she views the job of social worker (achieved status) as having certain, very expansive, obligations to one’s clients (complementary). Worker #2, on the other hand, had a far more circumspect orientation to her job. Elsewhere in the interview she indicated that she had come out of retirement to take the job because she “was interested in staying busy at something.” She preferred the present job to her former occupation as a school teacher. In addition, she received considerable support from her coworkers and supervisor. In effect, she seems to feel that she is getting a fair deal, a cognition grounded in the exchange rule of reciprocity. If the point is reached whereby she comes to perceive her work as an unfair exchange (nonreciprocal), then she too would be said to experience occupational burnout.

What the foregoing suggests is that workers may come to their jobs with different exchange rules operating, and each exchange rule sets the stage for different experiences regarding burnout. Elsewhere (author reference deleted for review process) we noted at least three paths to burnout based on the three exchange rules discussed above:

(a) the juncture at which the more obligated role partner in a relationship based on complementarity no longer accepts that exchange rule; (b) the threshold of physical and/or emotional exhaustion of someone guided by beneficence; (c) the point of unsatisfactory returns from a relationship based on reciprocity.

This understanding of burnout offers a critical review of the recent claim by Goroff (1986, p. 198) that love is an antidote
to burnout in social welfare work. The author calls for a Love paradigm characterized by egalitarian client-worker relationships of "caring, respecting, responding and understanding one another" to replace an existing Power paradigm in social services, which relies on hierarchical organization and the assumption that service workers control clients. In effect, he is suggesting that the elimination of complementarity as an exchange rule can eliminate burnout as an occupational hazard. He is partially correct — indeed, it can eliminate burnout grounded in complementarity. However, it does not address the other two routes to burnout we have described that derive from beneficence and reciprocity. Consequently, Goroff's antidote may work in some cases but not in all situations harboring the potential for service worker burnout. Agencies seeking to frame policies and practices that will reduce burnout must be aware of the various avenues to that condition, avenues that are informed by different exchange rules.

Our multidimensional understanding of burnout also implies that clients as well as service workers can burn out, especially due to continual confrontation with their structured and imposed obligations to service workers (complementarity, and the felt lack of reciprocity). Street, Martin, and Gordon (1979, pp. 68–9) note that

The poor need... great amounts of patience (as when welfare officials refuse to make appointments and keep recipients waiting interminably), high tolerance for rudeness and insult (as when indigent users of hospital emergency rooms find that no one even notices they are trying to ask questions), and a rare readiness to make their private lives public (as when one is questioned about one's sex life by a stranger in an open cubicle of a welfare office).

In addition, Lipsky (1980, p. 60) writes about service bureaucrats' control over "... structuring the context of clients' interaction with them and their agencies; ... teaching clients how to behave as clients; and ... allocating psychological rewards and sanctions associated with clients entering into relationships with
them." Many others have commented on various dimensions of worker-client role relationships; yet surprisingly little attention has been given to these phenomena as issues of burnout. Nevertheless, the foregoing descriptions convey the potential for client burnout, or "the juncture at which the more obligated role partner... no longer accepts (the) exchange rule."

In the preceding section we demonstrated how an understanding of different exchange rules can alert practitioners to cognitive sources of worker burnout and policy and programmatic sources of client burnout. The following discussion applies exchange rules to another arena of welfare concerns, the worker-client relationship.

Worker - Client Interactions

Another social welfare issue about which exchange rules provide new insights regards worker-client interactions. For illustrative purposes we limit the discussion to (a) misunderstanding about the exchange rule of complementarity and (b) distinctions in worker orientations between philanthropy and hospitality.

Misunderstanding About Complementarity

The nature of the worker-client relationship is a critical element in the quality of social welfare activities. Yet, all too often, it becomes a site for conflict and misunderstanding. Consider the following scenario that occurs between floor staff and residents in the dining hall of a nursing home, as described by Gubrium (1975, pp. 131-132):

Residents expect the hostess and medication nurse to treat them as normal, adult patrons of the room. Floor staff is quite aware of this. To avoid trouble, it usually accommodates residents' wishes, but it resents doing so because it makes them feel subservient to the residents... On those occasions when floor staff is not appropriately subservient, it is roundly castigated by residents. Sometimes this means a harsh complaint to the top staff about the transgression; sometimes it means an immediate, embarrassing insult.
One aide was quoted as saying, "'Those people... are just too demanding. They think we're here to wait on them. They treat us like dirt.'" (Gubrium, 1975, p. 133).

The tension in the foregoing scenario derives from differing definitions of the situation grounded in different exchange rules held by staff and residents. Staff members are operating on the basis of professional assumptions about their achieved statutes and roles. They view their work as limited to a certain expertise or specialization. In turn, they expect the residents to treat them accordingly. Residents, on the other hand, do not accept the contours of the implicit exchange rule. Instead, they see their achieved statuses and roles as those of customers who should be accorded deference because they are paying for a service. From either vantage point complementarity is implied: one's rights are another's obligations. However, the actors do not agree about who has the rights and who has the obligations.

Another situation of potential tension between clients and welfare workers occurs when they have strikingly different backgrounds (e.g., Grosser, 1966; Olmstead, 1983). Whenever there are status differences in a relationship (by gender, ethnicity, age, social class, etc.), the relationship has the possibility of being motivated by some form of complementarity. For example, a middle class welfare worker may feel that s/he has certain rights such as respect and deference due from a lower-income client precisely because of the social class privilege the worker has. To be sure, complementarity by age, ethnicity, sex, and social class has structured relationships historically and continues to contemporarily, thereby establishing the potential for suspicion, misunderstanding, or mistrust in all cross-class, cross-gender, cross-ethnic, cross-age relationships.

Within class-gender-ethnic-age categories, however, complementarity as an exchange rule is virtually eliminated. In these relationships there is less opportunity for misconstruing (or understanding and disliking) the motives of one's role partner, be it the social worker or client. (Insofar as oppressed groups assimilate stereotypes, however, it is possible that status expectations will be maintained even in relationships between people with similar backgrounds.) Consequently, at selected times in the history of social welfare indigenous paraprofessionals have
been utilized as direct service providers or as mediators between clients and professional workers. The success of such efforts is uneven (Groser, 1966; Berman and Haug, 1973; Brager, 1965; Cudaback, 1968; Gartner, 1969; Adams and Freeman, 1979). Part of the reason for variable success derives from the paraprofessionals' emphasis regarding their new responsibilities. The employment of indigenous paraprofessionals was undertaken in part to preclude the likelihood of ascribed status complementarity being operative in worker-client relationships. Instead, paraprofessionals frequently gave greater salience to the exchange rule of complementarity based on the newly achieved role of worker and felt that employers had certain obligations to them as workers, including the provision of opportunity for career mobility. Some researchers report that, in order to enhance their chances for advancement, a number of paraprofessionals conscientiously adopted agency attitudes and professional reference groups, thereby obviating the initial reason for their employment. In effect, they shifted from exchange rules of complementarity based on ascribed status to ones based on achieved status. In doing so, they pursued their own goals, perhaps at the expense of the community from which they were hired.

Not all reports of community-based workers document this outcome, however. Gilkes' (1983) study of professional Black women details the complex ways in which they managed both race and class consciousness for the benefit of the Black community. In terms developed in this paper, they essentially refused to select between complementarity based on ascribed status and that based on achieved status. Rather, in obtaining their education they used "dominant culture educational institutions for black community interests" (Gilkes, 1983, p. 115); their upward career mobility was paired with increasing social and political criticism; and they employed specific strategies to maintain connections with the community on whose behalf they worked. Gilkes observes that "the goals of black communities for social change" inherently conflict with "dominant culture professionalism" (Gilkes, 1983, p. 115). In other words, the dominant culture's emphasis on individual career mobility works to coopt potential change agents by being organized around and insisting on the priority of one exchange rule over another (i.e.,
complementarity from achieved status over complementarity from ascribed status).

Recognition of the potential for conflicting exchange rules, in the case of the nursing home staff and clients, or shifting exchange rules, in the case of indigenous paraprofessional workers, alerts practitioners to issues around which workers could be educated. In the former case, workers’ understanding and anticipation of residents’ attitudes could at least dilute the impact of their complaints. More optimistically, workers and residents might actively come to agreement about mutually agreeable and respected orientations each group brought to the relationship. In the latter case, agencies should anticipate the work orientations indigenous paraprofessionals bring to their responsibilities even as they recognize the dilemmas with which paraprofessional work is fraught. Insofar as agency policy and programmatic considerations can reduce occasions wherein paraprofessionals feel the need to make choices between the agency and the client group, they will be adding to the quality of paraprofessionals’ worklives. Indeed one might assume that they would also be more aligned with the agency’s original purpose.

Philanthropy and Hospitality

Another vantage point on worker orientations to clients is offered by Elliott (1984), who distinguishes between helping or giving based on philanthropy and that based on hospitality. With philanthropy, she argues, giving is an act flowing from the self-sufficient to the needy in gratuitous and asymmetrical fashion. In our terms, this can be thought of as complementarity lodged in the patronizing attitude of noblesse oblige or a professional mystique. On the other hand, she describes hospitality as giving based on mutuality, collectivity, and the recognition by the giver that at some point s/he also may need assistance. In our terms, the latter attitude can be thought of as generalized reciprocity.

Elliott alerts us to a broader point: acts may superficially appear the same (in this case, giving), but they are not always equivalent in important respects. Beyond Elliott’s focus on giving, another example of this point lies in the history of the club movement of U.S. women around the turn of the 20th century.
As similar as the Black National Association for Colored Women (NACW) and the white General Federation of Women’s Clubs (GFWC) appeared in terms of organization, membership, and certain activities, the work of their members was at the very least differently motivated (Davis, 1981; Giddings, 1984). In effect, the work that the GFWC did with the poor was probably grounded in beneficence or noblesse oblige (complementarity) and undertaken as an opportunity to be active outside the home (reciprocity). The motto of NACW, “Lifting as we climb,” suggests a wholly different orientation to the work performed by its members. Theirs was a recognition of a common group destiny across social classes that was undergirded by operation of the exchange rule of complementarity based on ascribed racial status. One important difference, then, between the GFWC and NACW, is, to use Elliott’s terms, that of philanthropy and hospitality, respectively.

The foregoing suggests that social scientists seeking to portray and analyze social welfare historically and contemporarily must look beyond behaviors to cognitive orientations and helper motivations. Only in doing so will we ascertain the important differences among welfare activities and possible reasons for differential client evaluations of seemingly comparable services and supports.

The previous section has revealed ways in which worker-client tensions may arise because of competing or shifting exchange rules. Yet, as we discussed with the situation of para-professionals, if exchange rules that initially appear to compete or conflict are recognized and addressed, their resolution can improve social welfare operations beyond the worker-client relationship. The final section provides historical support for this possibility.

Labor Issues

The structural location of welfare workers as mediators between clients and agencies of the state generates a host of interaction tensions and labor disputes that can be described through the utilization of exchange rules. From a radical perspective, workers and their clients are viewed as fellow members of the working class, both of whom must insist upon equitable treat-
ment by the state and its agents. The Rank and File Movement of social workers in the 1930s manifested this ideology. In urban areas workers formed coalitions to protest eroding salaries and express other work concerns; in addition, they sought fundamental changes in worker-client relationships and common bonds with other laborers through the expression of a radical critique of the state. In effect, they were calling for a reordering of what constitutes a fair exchange (based on the exchange rule of reciprocity) between a state and its people. The Rank and File members thought of themselves as members of the proletariat. This analysis gave their movement identity and helped focus their attention on efforts to unionize. The impetus for unionization was fuelled by the failure of the American Association of Social Workers (AASW) and other social work groups to take effective action against salary reductions or to develop a program to improve the economic security of social workers (Fisher, 1936). The distinct identity forged by the Rank and File — the one that separated them from the liberal social work establishment — is most clearly formulated by the exchange rule of reciprocity. Using such a framework, the Rank and File Movement launched a political discourse that not only established the first union for social workers in the United States but also argued for a voice in the construction of the structure in which their work would take place — the modern welfare state (Leighninger, 1987). The Rank and File Movement in essence shepherded in another era in social welfare in its insistence upon an occupational shift from models of complementary (via a professional mystique) and beneficence (via ladies bountiful or altruists) to one of reciprocity. The posture of the Rank and File, however, created tensions both inside and outside the movement, tensions in fact built upon competing exchange rules.

Whenever workers express interest in reciprocity, conflict potentially emerges between the occupational ideology of beneficence (altruism) on the one hand, and worker interests in occupational returns, on the other. Worker activism may violate one of social work's codes of ethics, namely that one should always put clients' needs first. How should welfare workers manage competing exchange rules?
A contemporary comparison to the dilemmas of the Rank and File Movement will illuminate some striking points of convergence of the different exchange orientations, suggesting strategies wherein exchange rules become pivotal to conflict resolution. In a survey by Lightman (1983), social workers in Toronto indicated no objection to the use of a workers’ strike to achieve certain goals. However, the only reason for a probable strike that was endorsed by a majority of respondents was to seek improvement in the quality of services to clients (beneficence). Less than one in three respondents endorsed strikes for employee self-interests of wages, fringe benefits, decision-making authority, and caseload size (reciprocity). Points of convergence between the exchange rules of beneficence and reciprocity are interesting to note in these data. One exchange rule is nested inside the other. Indeed, the quality of services to clients (the respondents’ over-riding concern based on beneficence) is not likely to be improved without the changes that are packages under employee self-interest (based on reciprocity).

In Lightman’s work, then, it appears that the issue of a social work strike can be informed by both exchange rules, beneficence and reciprocity, although under different circumstances these orientations may conflict. By taking such a stance toward a strike, the social workers in Toronto managed this potential conflict by linking the exchange rules under a particular arrangement that proved them compatible. The optimistic conclusion is that even as shifting and competing exchange rules illuminate fundamental conflict within the occupation of social welfare, they also serve as a conceptual filter through which to formulate options for conflict resolution.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion intends to complement some — and challenge other — analyses of competing ideologies and actions within social welfare. The perspective offered is interactionist rather than functionalist in perspective, focusing on service workers’ agency as creators of social welfare practice and policy. The present explication and illustration of exchange rules were necessarily limited; ongoing work in the sociology of motivation promises further articulation of this perspective. In
addition, ongoing analyses of contemporary welfare activities as well as the retrieval of archival materials and reconstruction of historical issues promise ample opportunities for the creative application of social exchange rules to the social welfare enterprise. Finally, as we have demonstrated in the discussion of labor issues, knowledge of exchange rules can be functional in achieving conflict resolution around central debates in the welfare workplace.

References


Notes

Burnout and Job Satisfaction: Their Relationship to Perceived Competence and Work Stress Among Undergraduate and Graduate Social Workers

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and

SRINIKA JAYARATNE

The University of Michigan

This study investigated the effects of two types of social work competency on job satisfaction and burnout among undergraduate and graduate social workers. While previous research has suggested that perceived practice competence may increase job satisfaction and reduce burnout, the findings of this study suggest that there is a differential effect between various types of competence on these factors, especially among undergraduate workers. The findings did not support the contention that perceived practice competence was a primary cause of burnout reduction among graduate workers or undergraduate workers, when compared to other occupational stressors.

The profession of social worker has been shown to be especially vulnerable to work stress and resulting burnout in a number of significant studies (Freudenberger, 1977; Harrison, 1983; Daley, 1979; Pines & Kafry, 1978; Jayaratne & Chess, 1983). As a remedy to these problems, a number of studies have suggested that the key to burnout prevention and remediation is the development of increased practice competency among social workers, and have observed that this has been a neglected area of study (Streepy, 1981; Harrison, 1983; Heller, Price, & Sher, 1983). In response to this concern, Corcoran and Bryce (1983) reported that competency training workshops for social service workers in interpersonal skills were associated with less reported burnout, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory. In addition, Farber and Heifetz (1982) reported that a perceived
lack of therapeutic success with clients was a primary factor in burnout among a sample of psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. According to Jayaratne and Chess (1986), perceptions of competence by social workers did buffer (moderate) levels of burnout, as measured by a modified version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory among a sample of child welfare workers. All of these studies supported the contention stated by Harrison (1983) that burnout may be a function of perceived competence among various mental health occupations, and that the extent to which a worker perceives that he or she is having an effect on client problems, may moderate levels of experienced burnout.

However, we are not aware of any studies which have examined the relationship between various types of competency and burnout among both undergraduate and graduate degree social workers, measured separately, although both groups have been present in a number of research studies previously cited (Harrison, 1980; Streepy, 1981; Jayaratne & Chess, 1986).

Therefore, the present study is an examination of the relationship between two types of perceived competency (knowledge of subject matter and mastery of practice methods), and job satisfaction and burnout among these two different groups of social workers, as well as the relationship between competency and a variety of work stressors.

It is not our intent in this report to examine differences in the objective knowledge and skill competence between and among undergraduate and graduate workers, however measured, but rather to examine each group of workers' personal perceptions of their practice knowledge and skills. This research approach is what Kurt Lewin (1951) called the examination of the "psychological environment" in which a worker functions.

Method

Study Samples

Two separate samples of social workers have been used in this study. Both samples were surveyed at the same time and received the same ten page questionnaire. The first sample consisted of 1,173 master's degree (MSW) social workers randomly
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drawn from the membership of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The response rate from this sample was 72.7% (N=852). A separate sample of 192 individuals listed in the NASW directory as baccalaureate degree (BA/BS/BSW) workers were also randomly selected. The response rate from this latter sample was 63.5% (N=122). It is important to note that the small size of the baccalaureate degree sample is a function of their lower membership level in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW Data Bank, 1985). However, the findings presented in this report are representative of those workers, both undergraduate and graduate, who do belong to NASW.

From these two groups of respondents, only the responses of those social workers who were engaged in direct practice with clients, were selected. This criterion resulted in a sample size of 108 baccalaureate degree (BA, BS, or BSW) workers and 639 master's degree (MSW) workers. The mean age of undergraduate workers was 29.3 years, while the mean age of the graduate workers was 41.3 years. There were fewer males (15.0%) in the undergraduate group than in the graduate group (30.1%). The average time in current position for undergraduate workers was 1.7 years, for graduate workers 2.8 years. These social workers were employed in a number of settings: mental health agencies (undergrad. 26.4%; grad. 41.3%), health agencies (undergrad. 26.4%; grad. 17.7%), child welfare agencies (undergrad. 20.8%; grad. 19.1%), and a variety of other settings (undergrad. 26.4%; grad. 21 9%).

Study Variables

Most of the variables examined, and the questionnaires used in this report have been used widely in the study of burnout and job satisfaction, and are described below. The reliability estimates of these questionnaires and measures have been reported previously (Jayaratne & Chess, 1986).

Measures of Burnout, and Job Satisfaction

The dependent variables used in this study were items and indices measuring job satisfaction, and measures of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, which
together constitute the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Job satisfaction was measured by the single item: "All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your job?" This item has been widely used in national surveys of job satisfaction, and has a score range from 1 (not at all satisfied) to 4 (very satisfied) (Quinn & Shepard, 1974; Quinn & Staines, 1978).

The indices which measured burnout were based on a modified version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Jayaratne & Chess, 1984). This Inventory has three subscales, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion was measured by a single item, "Are you burned out?", with a score range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The depersonalization scale is a five item scale with a score range from 5 (strongly disagree) to 35 (strongly agree). A sample item is, "I treat some clients as impersonal objects." The personal accomplishment scale is an eight item scale with a score range from 8 (strongly disagree) to 56 (strongly agree). A sample item is, "I can deal effectively with the problems of my clients." The content of these three subscales correspond to the generally accepted definitions of burnout (Perlman & Hartman, 1982).

Work Stress Measures

The measures of work stress used in this study (role ambiguity, workload, and role conflict) have been widely used in studies of job satisfaction and burnout (Quinn & Shepard, 1974; Quinn & Staines, 1978; Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison, & Pinneau, 1975).

Additional measures of work related stress (job challenge, financial rewards, and fairness in promotional opportunities) were also used in this study, and have been used in studies of job satisfaction (Jayaratne & Chess, 1982-1983; Quinn & Shepard, 1974).

Practice Competency Measures

The level of perceived competence was measured by two questions about social work knowledge and mastery of prac-
Perceived Competence

tice skills: "In thinking about your work last year, how would you rate (a) your knowledge of subject matter in your area of practice, and (b) your mastery of practice methods on the job?" The score range of each of these questions was from 1 (low) to 5 (high). These two items have been used in a previous study of the buffering effects of competence on burnout among social workers (Jayaratne & Chess, 1986).

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the comparison of the mean scores for the study variables between the two groups of workers.

Table 1

_Mean Scores Between Groups of Social Workers on Study Variables_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Undergraduate Workers</th>
<th>Graduate Workers</th>
<th>T-Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>-.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional Exhaustion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Depersonalization</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>12.58</td>
<td>11.05</td>
<td>2.85**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Accomplishment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>37.43</td>
<td>39.42</td>
<td>-3.43**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role Ambiguity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>7.85</td>
<td>7.64</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workload</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>15.88</td>
<td>15.87</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenge</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>17.16</td>
<td>17.80</td>
<td>-1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>8.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promotion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role Conflict</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge Mastery</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practice Mastery</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. On each scale, higher scores indicate a higher value on that particular attribute.
* *p < .05. **p < .01.

The results show that there are statistically significant mean score differences between undergraduate workers and graduate workers on two of the burnout subscales. Undergraduate workers reported higher levels of depersonalization and less personal accomplishment in dealing with clients, than graduate workers. It is of interest that Maslach (1982) reported that depersonalization has been found to be inversely related to the level of educational attainment among a variety of research studies.

Graduate workers reported significantly higher mean scores related to knowledge and practice mastery than undergraduate workers. Among undergraduate workers 22.9% perceived themselves to be highly competent in mastery of content, and 20.0% perceived themselves to be highly competent in mastery of practice methods, whereas 45.4% of graduate workers perceived themselves to be highly competent in mastery of content, and 38.6% highly competent in mastery of practice methods.

Both of these findings may be reflective differences in the amount and type of educational training received by each group. However, there is considerable controversy in the literature over the nature of the actual differences between
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undergraduate and graduate social work training. For example, Dinerman (1982) stated in a study of curriculum content of BSW and MSW programs, that it was evident that some programs at the BSW level offered more preparation for social work practice than did some MSW programs, and that some nongraduate degree entry level workers may be more proficient in some content areas than advanced degree workers. She also stated that degree level was no predictor of the exposure to any social work educational content, nor did she find persuasive evidence of a continuum of training in social work knowledge for students moving from a BSW to a MSW program. These findings make it very difficult to relate the differences in knowledge mastery or practice mastery, as observed in this study, solely to differences in educational level. Further research is needed to resolve this issue.

There were no significant differences in mean scores in overall job satisfaction between the two groups. Eighty-eight percent of undergraduates were somewhat or very satisfied with their jobs, 79% of the graduate workers were also somewhat or very satisfied with their jobs. However, to state that one is relatively satisfied with one's job, does not necessarily mean that there are no problems on the job, as further analyses will show.

There were no significant between group differences in mean scores on almost all the variables related to organizational stress, namely role ambiguity, workload, challenge on the job, financial rewards, and role conflict. This suggests that both groups have similar perceptions of the levels of work stress, even though they have different levels of educational training. One exception is that graduate workers perceive significantly less promotional fairness on the job than undergraduate workers. This concern of graduate workers about promotional fairness has been noted in previous research, and clearly signifies that agency policies need to be examined for possible ambiguity, unfairness and bias (Himle, Jayaratne & Chess, 1986).

While it is of importance to compare the mean scores on the study variables between these two groups of workers, it is the basic purpose of this paper to examine the relative strength of association between the study variables within each group, especially since it is difficult to assess the significance of mean
score differences based on educational differences alone, since a precise discrimination between the absolute content of academic training offered each group is difficult, and due to the fact that there were significant differences in age, gender, and length of time in position between these two samples. Therefore, Table 2 presents the results of a series of standardized multiple regression analysis for each worker group.

### Table 2

*Standardized Regression Analyses of Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction, and Burnout*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Undergraduate Workers</th>
<th>Graduate Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.10*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in Position</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Ambiguity</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Reward</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>.17**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Mastery</td>
<td>-.25*</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Mastery</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R² = .50</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional Exhaustion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in Position</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.12**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Ambiguity</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.10*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Reward</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Mastery</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Mastery</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R² = .25</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>R² = .19</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In these regression models job satisfaction and burnout are treated as dependent variables, and the work stress and competency variables as independent (predictor) variables. This method of analysis has been used frequently in the literature on burnout (Cohen & Ashby-Wills, 1985; Shinn, Rosario, March, Chestnut, 1984; Etzion, 1984).

Since Maslach and Jackson (1981) have reported age and gender differences in the use of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, and since we observed similar demographic difference in our samples, we included the age, gender, and length of time in present position, as control variables in the separate regression equations. Agency setting was not included, since it was examined and accounted for a minimal amount of variation in the equations.
Table 2 shows the difference beta weights (predictors) which the various work stressors and the issue of competence have in association with the dimensions of job satisfaction, and burnout for each group, and the $R^2$ scores (explained variance) for each model.

**Knowledge Mastery and Practice Competence**

Perceived knowledge mastery and practice competence were significant predictors of job dissatisfaction, and burnout in four instances out of a possible sixteen instances in both groups. Three of the four instances were among undergraduate workers. Of the work stressors, job challenge, financial reward, role ambiguity, and promotional fairness were significant predictors of job satisfaction and burnout in the undergraduate sample, and in the graduate sample the same significant predictors of job satisfaction and burnout were present, with the addition of role conflict.

**Job Satisfaction**

Among undergraduates, knowledge mastery had a significant inverse relationship to job satisfaction. This is an unusual finding, and we can only speculate that as social work knowledge increases among this group, individuals are less satisfied because of the limitations in the use of such knowledge in their present position.

**Burnout**

The finding, mentioned above, of an inverse relationship between knowledge mastery and job satisfaction was further supported by the finding that knowledge mastery was positively associated with the emotional exhaustion aspect of burnout among undergraduates. Therefore, the finding by Harrison (1983) that the perception of a lack of general practice competence is central to the development of burnout, is not supported in this study. In fact, knowledge mastery may actually contribute to the increase of burnout, especially if such knowledge is in conflict with agency practice, policy or delivery of services.
Perceived Competence

On the other hand, practice mastery was inversely related to depersonalization among undergraduates. In this case, competence was actually associated with a reduced aspect of burnout. Practice mastery was also positively associated with another aspect of burnout, namely personal accomplishment, among graduate workers. These two findings support the contention that practice competence can reduce aspects of burnout. It is therefore important that workers be asked about their specific practice and knowledge development needs, and that education programs be provided.

Therefore, within these samples, it appears that practice competency may not be a general panacea for the reduction of burnout, but selectively helpful or harmful, depending on which aspect of competency is being measured, and which group of workers is examined. The different effects of knowledge mastery and practice competence on job satisfaction and burnout is illustrative of this. Further research needs to be done to examine the broader aspects of knowledge development and practice skill training and their effects of burnout, which have not been addressed in this study.

Job Challenge

The variable most positively associated with job satisfaction and the reduction of burnout in both groups was job challenge. To assess the level of challenge on the job, workers could be given special training to monitor and evaluate the results of their work with clients through the utilization of single-subject research methodology, such as suggested by Jayaratne and Levy (1979), Thomas (1978), Bloom and Fischer (1982), and Sowers-Hoag & Thyer (1987).

General Work Stressors

Among the graduate group, work related stressors such as role conflict, and role ambiguity were significant predictors of burnout among the graduate workers on the dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, and on the personal accomplishment and emotional exhaustion burnout subscales among undergraduates. These
predictors were especially significant among younger workers. The large number of work related stressors which contributed to burnout in this study, should caution against attributing a single variable, such as competency, as either the cause of burnout, or the sole target for change in the reduction of burnout.

It is also of interest that promotional fairness was a significant issue for both groups. It was inversely associated with the perception of personal accomplishment among undergraduates. This is an unusual finding. We can only speculate that whatever promotional opportunities might have been available were not perceived as contributing to a sense of personal accomplishment. Further research is needed to examine this issue.

Among graduate workers promotional fairness was positively associated with job satisfaction. Promotional fairness has been an important concern for many workers, since evidence of gender and other types of discrimination in promotional practices related to social workers has been pointed out in a number of studies (Fanshel, 1976; Sutton, 1982; Himle, Jayaratne & Thyness, 1986).

Conclusion

The initial analysis of between group differences in this study presented some important findings. First, the undergraduate workers in this sample reported significantly higher levels of depersonalization and lower levels of knowledge mastery and practice mastery than graduate workers. Therefore, administrators of social service agencies should provide opportunities for these workers to upgrade their knowledge and skill through extensive programs of continuing education, and the kind of supervisory support which stresses skill and knowledge development. This may be a high priority task among undergraduate workers, since they reported a significantly lower perception of personal accomplishment than did graduate workers.

Secondly, the within-group regression analyses suggested that knowledge mastery, an aspect of practice competency, was not always associated with increased job satisfaction and a reduction in burnout. In fact, knowledge mastery was associated with a decrease in job satisfaction and an increase in burnout, among undergraduate workers. However, practice mastery was
a significant predictor of increased job satisfaction and decreased burnout in both groups, as we have noted. Therefore, it is important that further research be done to examine the issue of knowledge mastery and practice mastery as moderators of burnout, in view of these findings. It may be that social work knowledge needs to be taught with a greater emphasis on the realities of the workplace, the limitations of the often complex social service bureaucracy, and the constraints of social welfare policy, mental health legislation, and public and private funding, rather than on idealistic and untested models of service delivery. Further research needs to be done to ascertain what specific aspects of knowledge development contribute to burnout.

Since practice mastery was found to moderate certain aspects of burnout, this finding could stimulate the development of a practice model that directly targets the problems of worker burnout, in addition to client problems, so that the negative effects of burnout and job dissatisfaction could be modified by both preventive and remedial coping skills which are an integral part of practice training.

The within group regression analysis have also shown that potential work stressors, other than perceived competency, such as role ambiguity, role conflict, financial rewards and promotional fairness were also strongly related to burnout and job dissatisfaction, thus minimizing the impact of practice competency as a primary or sole causal factor, or primary remedial intervention for burnout. Therefore, it may be a mistake to concentrate solely on the competency issue in the reduction of burnout, to the neglect of organizational change which can reduce the negative effect of a variety of work stressors, such as examined in this study and other studies (Bramhall & Ezell, 1981; Zastrow, 1984; Shinn, Rosario, March, & Chestnut, 1984).

In general, these findings lend some support for Streepy’s (1981) arguments that specific practice training and education be provided for workers who are experiencing burnout and job dissatisfaction. However, interventions which target only practice competency or knowledge mastery are unlikely to be successful in reducing burnout, since a variety of occupational and organizational work stressors are also highly associated with burnout.
What is really needed is a combination of in-service practice skill development and appropriate knowledge development along with organizational changes that promote greater job challenge, promotional fairness, and role clarification and specificity. Since burnout has been defined as a multi-faceted concept which includes many aspects of the workers' response to a variety of work stressors, based on the results of this study, the reduction of burnout will probably be accomplished by only by multiple interventions which address a variety of such problems among workers, and especially among workers with different levels of training (Maslach, 1982). This broad approach to the lingering problem of burnout will probably be more productive than an unwarranted concentration on a few aspects of worker competency, which have been found to be associated with burnout.

References


Perceived Competence


Promoting Voting Behavior Among Low Income Black Voters Using Reminder Letters: An Experimental Investigation

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A controlled experimental design applied in a field setting was used to determine the effectiveness of a bipartisan mailed letter reminding registered low income black voters to participate in the 1988 Presidential election. Each member of three groups of approximately 85 voters received either one, two or three such reminder letters shortly before the election. A fourth, control group of voters did not receive any letters. Statistical analysis revealed that the reminder letters appeared to have no effect on voting behavior.

The last twenty-five years have seen a general decline in the numbers of eligible voters who exercise their ballot in national elections. The participation of the electorate has declined 30% from the 1962 high of 72.8%, although there have been elections in which the number of voters has increased. Seventy-five million voters in the 1984 election, and more than 107 million voters in 1986, failed to cast their ballot (cf. Piven & Cloward, 1988a, 1988b).

Social workers have a vested professional interest, as well as a philosophical one, in encouraging the right to vote among all members of society, but especially among the consumers of social welfare services. Traditionally the poor, the handicapped, racial and ethnic minorities and other members of oppressed groups have had relatively low levels of participation in national elections (Piven & Cloward, 1988a). In part, such failures to vote are attributable to both inadvertent and intentional obstacles to

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the free exercise of the ballot. In the past, such intentional obstacles have included unconstitutional voter literacy requirements and psychological and physical intimidation intended to discourage both voter registration and the act of voting. Possibly inadvertent obstacles include the amounts of time required to register or to vote, the inconvenient location of polling places and voter registration sites, the inattention of politicians to the poor and oppressed, the hours of operation of polling places, and the days on which elections are held.

Data have clearly shown that voter participation is a function of socio-economic status. The higher the level of education, income or occupation, the greater the voter turnout. In the upper-class voting group, voter turnout is comparable to the rates of many European countries, 75–85% (Piven & Cloward, 1988a). "Today, barely two-fifths of voters among the bottom segments of the working class and among the unemployed vote, even in presidential elections. The class gap during the 1980s has been 40% or more. It follows...that the lower the general level of turnout, the larger the class gap grows" (Piven & Cloward, 1988a, p. 30). In the 1988 presidential election, the United States witnessed the lowest voter turnout, only 50% since 1924.

Social workers and other human services professionals have designed a number of interventions for the purpose of registering voters and/or to encourage already registered voters to exercise their ballot (Fawcett, Seekins, & Silber, 1988; Harvey, 1983; Kuttner, 1987; Shearer, 1988; Tharp, 1984; Waters, 1984). A common (but under-researched) method of encouraging citizens to cast their ballots is through the use of mass media programs designed to either remind people to vote (and usually who to vote for) or to motivate them to vote through some informational strategy such as reiterating the importance of the issues being voted on in the imminent election or of the importance of exercising the democratic right to vote in maintaining the viability of a free society. Literally hundreds of millions of dollars are spent each year by local politicians, political organizations, parties and lobbying groups, and public interest organizations for these purposes. Among the approaches employed are television and radio advertisements, display ads in magazines and newspapers, and in political mailings. These resources seem to
be expended on the basis of the intuitive appeal of the value of such informational programs, as opposed to any significant empirical research demonstrating their value in achieving selected political ends. We undertook the following study to investigate the value of one type of strategy aimed at promoting voting behavior, the political mailing flyer.

Methodology

Sample of Voters

This study was conducted in the fall of 1988 in Dublin, Georgia, a town of approximately 17,000 citizens located in a predominantly rural portion of the state. Voting Precinct #1 was intentionally selected for our study because it contained the largest concentration of government subsidized housing projects within the city, and, we inferred, contained a large number of low income registered voters. Precinct #1 consisted of 2473 registered voters and had a racial composition of approximately 90% blacks and 10% whites.

A master voting registry was obtained from the office of the Registrar of Voters. This list, obtained in the form of computer-printed address labels, consisted only of those persons who were already registered to vote and who had participated in a city or county election within the past three years. The voter roster of 2473 names may be considered the 'population' of this study. Four groups of approximately 100 voters each were randomly selected from the larger population. Each of these four groups was randomly assigned to receive one of the following conditions:

Group 1 — Voters assigned to Group 1 were to receive one reminder letter (described below) a few days before the presidential election on November 4th.

Group 2 — Voters assigned to Group 2 were to receive two identical reminder letters, one the same time as Group 1, and the second a week earlier, around October 27th.

Group 3 — Voters assigned to Group 3 were to receive three reminder letters, two at the same time as Groups 1 and 2, and the third about October 21st.
Group 4 — Voters assigned to Group 4 did not receive any letters reminding them to vote.

This above approach involving the random selection of a sample of voters from a larger population of interest (Precinct 1) and their subsequent random assignment into four conditions (three 'treatment' groups and one 'no-treatment' group) thus conforms to the requirements of a posttest-only control group design with random selection and random assignment (Grinnell & Strothers, 1988), and thus may be viewed as a true experimental field study conducted under natural conditions.

**Independent Variable**

The voting promotion intervention (independent variable) employed in this study was a bipartisan letter sent to the members of groups 1-3, encouraging them to vote. Statements were included reminding them of the privilege and responsibility of all registered voters to participate in the voting process. To add credibility to the letter it was endorsed by the authentic signatures of the local county chairpersons for the Democratic and Republican parties. Each letter was printed on plain light blue paper (a copy of this letter is available from the corresponding author).

The mailings took place over the three week period described above. Each letter was mailed first class in a plain white envelope and labeled with the senior author's name and return address.

**Dependent Variable**

The outcome measure (dependent variable) in this study was the determination of whether or not a given registered voter actually voted in the election of November 4th, 1988. Following the election, a master poll list was obtained from the Office of the Registrar of Elections, which contained the names of all registered voters of Precinct 1 along with an indication of whether or not they had voted. This information, along with the roster itself, is a matter of public record. How they voted was of course not indicated. A cross check was made from this master list
against the members of groups 1–4, permitting a determination of the numbers of each group who actually voted.

Results

Letters that were not deliverable (e.g. addressee unknown, unable to forward, forward time expired, insufficient information to deliver, deceased, etc.) were returned to the senior author through the usual postal delivery system. If any one mailing sent to a member of groups 1–3 was returned, that name was purged from his/her respective group’s membership.

Of the 104 original voters assigned to Group 1 (those who received one letter), 18 names were excluded from the study because of undeliverable letters, leaving a final presumptive sample of 86 voters. Of these 86, 49 (57%) were found to have actually voted; 37 (43%) did not vote.

Of the 104 original members assigned to Group 2 (those who received two letters), 24 names were excluded from the study because of undeliverable letters, leaving a final presumptive sample of 80 voters. Of these, 54 (68%) had voted and 26 (32%) did not vote.

Group 3 originally had 103 members, but 20 voters were excluded because of undeliverable letters. Of the final sample of 83 presumptive voters, 45 (54%) voted and 38 (46%) did not vote.

With respect to the 103 voters originally assigned to Group 4 it was not possible to determine the actual pool of potential voters since we could not exclude names on the basis of undeliverable mail. Of the 103 presumptive members, 57 (55%) did cast their ballots in the election and 46 (45%) did not vote.

These data were analyzed using a one (voting status) by four (group assignment) chi-square analysis. The results failed to uncover any statistically significant differences in the voting patterns across the four groups \(X^2(3)=5.6; p<.30\). A comparison of the rate of returned letters from each group showed no statistically significant difference, thereby permitting the conclusion that the number of returned letters per group had little or no bearing on the apparent outcomes of voter participation \(X^2(<1)=1.9; p<.50\). Another comparison was conducted to determine if the combined voter percentage from the three groups that received letters varied from the percent of voters in
Group 4, those who did not receive reminder letters. Again there was no statistically significant difference $[\chi^2(<1)=1.9;p<.50]$. These results argue strongly in favor of the contention that with this sample of voters the receipt of bipartisan letters reminding them to participate in the forthcoming election had little if any effect on their voting behavior.

Discussion

The results of the present investigation on the effects of reminder letters on voting behavior among low-income registered voters are subject to several interpretations. One explanation would suggest that political mailings have little influence at the ballot box, but our data clearly do not permit this conclusion. The bipartisan nature of our letter may have mitigated against the promotion of voting in that significant issues were ignored in favor of generalized statements about the importance of every eligible voter participating in the election. It is possible that a more partisan or heated mailing would have exerted a stronger effect.

Within the limits of our sampling procedure we believe it is justifiable to conclude that the particular letters we employed had no apparent influence in promoting voting among low income and minority voters. We have no way of ascertaining the representativeness of our sample of voters with respect to other citizens as whole, hence the uncritical extrapolation of our results to other groups of voters should be undertaken with caution.

Because we limited sending our reminder letter to citizens who were already registered to vote, and who had actually voted within the past three years, it is possible that we were tapping a pool of the electorate who had already demonstrated their commitment to the ballot process by undergoing the voting registration procedure. The lack of difference in voting behavior among our four groups may be attributable to a form of 'ceiling effect' in that the maximum practicable number of voters who could vote were already intending to do so, and that little influence could be expected from our reminder letters. Another potential confounding variable in the effectiveness of political mailings is the literacy level of the recipient. We have no way of
ascertaining the extent to which this factor may have attenuated the efficacy of the reminder letter. We are aware of no reason to believe, however, that literacy levels systematically varied across our four groups, given the randomized assignment procedure we employed.

We do believe that our outcomes, coupled with the paucity of well designed and conducted empirical investigations on the efficacy of alternative means of promoting voting behavior, argue strongly in favor of social workers and other human service professionals committed to promoting the participation of poor, minority and other oppressed groups in the electoral process, to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of such voting promotional programs. As an empirically-based discipline, we recognize that controlled field research provides the best means of identifying practicable methods of engaging the consumers of social welfare programs in the political process. The procedure employed in the present study, obtaining the names and addresses of registered voters, implementing some type of voting promotion intervention, and the subsequent determination of actual voting patterns, provides a useful model for the conduct of experimental field research in an area lacking well controlled outcome studies.

References


Testing the Underclass Concept by Surveying Attitudes and Behavior

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Recent interest in the problems of an underclass has highlighted deficiencies in the conceptual understanding of the term and empirical investigation into its dynamics. This research note describes the current definition of the concept and presents recent empirical tests of it. By presenting available survey data sets that can identify underclass attitudes, values and behavior, the note refines the deliberations on measurement. Two underclass groups, welfare recipients and criminals, are used to illustrate the methodology.

Defining the underclass, understanding the conditions of its evolution and maintenance, as well as its size in different areas across the country and in different neighborhoods are highlighted as important contemporary national policy concerns (The Federal Register, March 28, 1988). This paper describes current definitions of the underclass, presents recent empirical efforts to measure it, and identifies available surveys on welfare recipients and criminals, two underclass groups described by Auletta (1981, 1982) and Wilson 1987).

The paper contributes to the measurement deliberations. It points out that attitudes and values are integral to definitions of underclass, yet they have been ignored in recent studies. It describes empirical possibilities for measurement of attitudes and values as well as behavior to answer questions of keen

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interest to policy makers: (a) Is there an underclass?, (b) What are the conditions of entry to and exit from the underclass?, and (c) How big is the underclass?

From a policy perspective, the concept of the underclass is intellectually attractive because it is capable of provoking bipartisan support to put a dusty issue back on the social policy agenda (Nathan, 1986). When Auletta introduced the term underclass in his article in The New Yorker magazine (1981), he prompted a renewed debate on the culture of poverty. Wilson's (1987) recent book has forwarded the policy debate and further legitimated the term. However, considering the amount of theoretical and ideological interest that the proposition stimulated, empirical research on the concept is relatively modest.

There are exceptions. Particularly noteworthy is the research of Ricketts and Sawhill (1988) and Hughes (1988). By operationally defining the underclass using behavioral rather than income criteria, these researchers follow the intellectual tradition forwarded by Auletta (1982), Nathan and Carson (1982), and Wilson (1987). Empirically, their measurement strategies rely on census tract data to describe the underclass by the density of deviant behavior. Illustratively, Ricketts and Sawhill (1988) estimate the size of the underclass—880 census tracts that contain 2.5 million people or about 1 per cent of the total United States population. Using demographic data, they created measures in order to calculate the mean on proportions of high school drop outs, prime age males not regularly attached to the work force, welfare recipients, and female heads in each census tract in the United States. Census tracts one standard deviation above the mean were defined as underclass. Ricketts and Sawhill (1988) and Hughes (1989) both demonstrate that poverty is not synonymous with underclass, although there is some overlap especially in extremely poor neighborhoods. In fact, 39 percent of all underclass tracts are not in areas of extreme poverty, according to Ricketts and Sawhill 1988).

Actually identifying geographical areas containing a high density of social problems is useful from an epidemiological perspective. Wilson (1987), in fact, defines the underclass in terms of social problem density and argues that the density of problems leads to the development of norms for deviant
behavior. The norms, he argues, have deleterious effects on the structure of neighborhoods, making the neighborhoods increasingly homogeneous, isolating, and accepting of deviance.

Auletta (1982) identifies particular groups as underclass: street criminals, hustlers living in the underground economy, mothers on welfare, and the traumatized (homeless, former mental patients, alcoholics, addicts, bag ladies, derelicts). Unlike Wilson (1989), Auletta is less concerned about geographic density as he is about the attitudes, values, and lack of skills that correspond with out-of-the-mainstream behavior across different groups. Presenting us with a focus on behavior, he asks the following question: What is common about these groups? His answer, based on his nonrandom and admittedly small sample, is that they lack social skills necessary for integration in the society, have a different value system, and are alienated from the social structure. Auletta’s journalistic attempt to describe commonalities among these people represents a good beginning—a beginning that can be improved upon empirically and substantively.

What is called for is a larger scale empirical test of the underclass propositions forwarded by Auletta (1981, 1982) and Wilson (1987). For policy purposes, it is not unimportant to determine whether and to what extent certain kinds of behavior are associated with certain kinds of antecedent social conditions, including neighborhood underclass composition, and attitudes, including normative attitudes.

This paper is a review and evaluation of surveys which could be used to investigate empirically the structure and dynamics of the underclass. The review focuses on two underclass groups—welfare recipients and criminals. In particular, it operationalizes the underclass, and identifies data sets which singly, or in combination, may be useful to test the underclass idea through the survey method to understand and describe the dynamics of underclass status.

Problems in the Survey of the Underclass

The survey method, a quantitative approach capable of uncovering covariation in behaviors, attitudes, and social conditions, has several drawbacks. Sampling procedures depend on
the stability of the sample population, and underclass populations are likely to be transient. The survey method depends on subject compliance, either through questionnaires or interviews. Potential respondents in underclass groups may not want to comply for a variety of reasons: feelings of invasion of privacy, fear of retribution for information given or general mistrust of the intentions of the researchers. In addition, problems in literacy or ability to understand survey questions may influence potential respondents' decision to participate.

Additionally, the effectiveness of the survey method depends on the organization of the research operation. Interviews can be gained or lost as a function of the research group's adaptability to securing interviews with underclass groups, for examples, by paying for interview time and travel costs, and conducting interviews in the natural environment or an easily accessible neutral location.

Several people who are involved in studying underclass groups (Jackson, Tucker, & Bowman, 1982; Weiss, 1977) have reported a number of such problems. In the study of the underclass, the problem of actually locating the sample, once drawn, is of particular concern. Nonresponse bias threatens the reliability of the findings, and the high costs of locating subjects are of great concern to a research endeavor concerned with the underclass (Lerman & Pottick, 1988; Montero, 1977; Myers, 1977; Schwartz, 1970).

To study the underclass, it makes sense to begin with a group of people who are seen as out-of-the-mainstream and study the nature and course of their social condition. Focusing on groups that have been defined in terms of their behavior has advantages. Carson (1983, for instance, argues that by focusing on behavior, theorists and researchers from a variety of disciplines can investigate the concept using common language. Focusing on the behavioral patterns of the underclass can be useful to determine how certain kinds of conditions lead to certain behaviors — such as entering out-of-the-mainstream subgroups or leaving them. Criminals and welfare recipients are chosen for study in this paper because they represent groups on which surveys have been conducted. Moreover, they represent groups on which policy decisions currently are being made.
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All of the data sets to follow can be acquired by interested researchers. Specific detail of purposes, sampling, methodology, variable domains, and representative publications by program researchers is available on request from the author.

A Review of Potentially Useful Surveys

Is there an underclass?

The question of whether there is an underclass as a function of social conditions, values and attitudes requires analysis across underclass groups. Data which describe psychological variables (attitudes, values, motivation), behavioral variables (frequency of out-of-the-mainstream behavior) and social-situational variables (school conditions, age, education, income, marital and parental statuses, and occupational history) for each of two underclass groups would provide a foundation for beginning to understand if there are any commonalities in social conditions or personal experience between the groups.

Since the question requires only a snapshot to be taken of the underclass groups at a given point in time, cross-sectional data rather than longitudinal or panel data, are sufficient. Investigators traditionally have not explored these groups simultaneously, so patterns across groups that may have policy implications remain undetected.

There are several data sets which have variables which are comparable, use similar methodologies, and contain at least some identical measures. Listed below are several potential survey organizations with data tapes available for interested researchers to analyze.

2. The University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Birth Cohort (1972–present); Principal Investigator, M. Wolfgang.
3. Iowa Urban Community Research Center, Racine, Wisconsin Birth Cohort Studies (1974–present); Principal Investigator, L. W. Shannon.
5. Harvard University, Murray Center, Stress and Families Project, Principal Investigator, D. Belle.

To take a snapshot of each underclass group with these data could uncover commonalities in the social conditions, attitudes, and values that predict variation within each group. The nature of the variation could be compared across groups. The questions could be phrased in ways familiar to researchers interested in gender or racial differences: What are the similar and different predictors of the same outcomes for distinctly different groups? Quite acceptable would be to analyze separately the two populations — criminal and welfare recipients, with an eye to understanding the commonalities and differences.

What are the conditions of entry to and exit from the underclass?

Survey methods vary in their ability to answer questions of entry into and exit from any group. Panel data, where respondents act as their own controls, are the best to understand changes over time. Longitudinal data are the next best, limited only by the possibility of sampling error due to cross-sectional sample selection and comparison. Cross-sectional data, the least expensive to collect, are the least adequate to answer the question because researchers must rely on retrospective accounts of past behavior to understand changes.

Potentially useful panel/longitudinal studies are ones conducted at the following:

1. Iowa Urban Community Research Center, Racine, Wisconsin Birth Cohort Studies (1974–present); Principal Investigator, L. W. Shannon.
3. The University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research, Panel Study of Income Dynamics; Principal Investigator, J. L. Morgan.

Change could be studied within a particular underclass group or between two different underclass groups. Because researchers studying criminals and welfare recipients all focus on behavior, these researchers traditionally have been interested in examining the predictors of changes in behavior over time. The data sets would allow one to compare change relationships
discovered for critical and comparable variables through multivariate regression analysis in two different underclass groups. Focusing on the conditions under which “within group” change occurs across different groups could be useful to predict common characteristics of the underclass for potential social policy interventions.

How big is the underclass?

How widespread the underclass condition is and where it is geographically concentrated are important concerns for social policy analysts. As Ricketts and Sawhill (1988) and Hughes (1989) ably have demonstrated, census tract data can be analyzed to uncover the density of social problems in particular geographical areas. Census tract data also can be used in conjunction with survey data sets. Several investigators have merged census tract information onto the data files:

1. The University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Birth Cohort Studies; Principal Investigator, M. Wolfgang.
2. Iowa Urban Community Research Center, Racine, Wisconsin Birth Cohort Studies; Principal Investigator, L. W. Shannon.
3. The University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research, Panel Study of Income Dynamics; Principal Investigator, J. L. Morgan.

The birth cohort studies can track changes in the distribution of attitudes, values, and behaviors over time. Neighborhood social conditions can be investigated using the detailed measures in the census tract data. From a policy perspective, systematic variations in attitudes, values, and behaviors as a function of neighborhood demographics could allow us to locate high risk geographic areas and target service accordingly. From a theoretical perspective, the demonstration of the types of impact of neighborhood demographics on attitudes, values, and behaviors is a test of the propositions set forth by Wilson (1987).

The Panel Study of Income Dynamics includes welfare recipients in its subsample of 1900 low income families, and provides detailed information on attitudes, behavior, work history through intensive interviewing. It has a variety of variables to use to uncover determinants of changes in the number of
welfare recipients and low-income families. With the use of census tract data, investigators can begin to understand the effects of neighborhood on attitudes, values, and future behavior.

Summary and Implications

The observations of Auletta (1981, 1982) and Wilson (1987) have inspired a continued inquiry on the structure, dynamics, and size of the underclass in American society. This review of the survey research literature on the underclass, with specific reference to criminals and welfare recipients, represents an attempt to locate available studies which could be used to investigate empirically the nature, dynamics, and size of the underclass through large scale survey data.

Several potentially useful studies were uncovered. Because they were not designed specifically to study the underclass, they have limitations, however. Of most concern is the different choice of variables that investigators interested in criminals and welfare recipients, respectively, include. Studying the relationships among social conditions, attitudes, values, and behaviors within two different underclass groups could serve as a beginning effort to understand the similarities and differences between the groups. This type of analytic strategy has been used profitably in the literature on race and gender differences.

The use of census tract information to predict the size of certain underclass groups across the country is a provocative possibility to identify high-risk areas in the nation. If we can identify the nature of the underclass, its dynamics, and its size — that is, if we can describe the conditions which create out-of-the-mainstream behavior in different underclass groups — we can begin to design and test programs aimed at modifying the conditions under which the behavior is maintained.

References

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Do Respondents Who Pen Comments Onto Mail Surveys Differ From Other Respondents? A Research Note on the Human Services Job Satisfaction Literature

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A current study has criticized the human services job satisfaction literature for relying solely on information obtained by "closed-ended" questionnaires. Stating that these studies may not accurately reflect the actual conditions under which public welfare employees function, the authors base their criticisms on an analysis of the extemporaneous comments of subjects participating in a national study. Nonetheless, whether or not those who pen comments are representative of the broader population of human service workers remains an open question. The study reported in this article sought to shed light on this issue by comparing respondents who commented versus those who did not. Findings indicate that the two groups are quite similar although some differences were observed.

McNeely and Schultz (1986) recently have assailed what they assert are methodological weaknesses in the job satisfaction literature involving human service workers. Their assertions are based on a content analysis of the extemporaneously penned comments of 481 human service workers employed in county welfare departments located in disparate areas of the nation.

According to the authors the image of social services work derived from an examination of these remarks differs substantially from images based upon data collected in studies relying solely on "closed-ended" questionnaires. Among other factors,

* The research reported in this article was funded by the School of Social Welfare, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. The author wishes to acknowledge Professors Wayne Chess and Sri Jayaratne for posing the questions leading to the examination reported in this article.
the authors suggest that closed-ended questionnaires may be constructed in ways that miss key sources of dissatisfaction with the job, may be insensitive to situational influences peculiar to the different study sites being surveyed, or may miss altogether the impact of broader situational influences such as the shock of present-day federal and state budgetary cutbacks. Too, McNeely and Schultz suggest that "the closed-ended" questionnaires may be forcing respondents' replies into structured explanators not fully reflective of the work-site dynamics being investigated (1986, p.1). For example, indices designed to assess influences such as "job challenge," "job autonomy," and similar concepts may not capture adequately the concerns of those actually involved in the "dust and smoke" of public welfare work. Finally, the authors note that the analysis of subjects' extemporaneous feedback is responsive to criticisms (cf. Gutek, 1978) that have been leveled against job satisfaction researchers who rely exclusively on closed-ended questionnaires.

Nonetheless, the representativeness of replies penned by a comparatively small group of motivated respondents participating in McNeely and Schultz's study remain an open question. While 481 respondents provided written comments, 1,179 other subjects did not. Could the 481 subjects be significantly different than the other respondents? Could it be that only the most disgruntled or most enthusiastic participants took the additional time necessary to write about their concerns after completing a lengthy survey? Or, could it be that only those in higher occupational and income categories were responsive to the invitation to provide written comments?

These questions represent rather significant research issues about which little is known and, to the author's knowledge, nothing at all is known in the human services job satisfaction literature. Specifically, if the two types of respondents are significantly different, issues relating to sample noncomparability abound. Too, the image of working conditions constructed from the minority who provide written comments can be said to misrepresent conditions as experienced by the majority of subjects. These possibilities are broader than the McNeely and Schultz study under scrutiny in this article. The issue really is one of whether or not respondents who pen comments are significantly
Job Satisfaction

different that those who do not, irrespective of any particular study.

Method

Data obtained for McNeely and Schultz's study were collected by mail survey for the period 1977-1984. Data were collected in 1979 and 1981 from the Racine (Wisconsin) Comprehensive Human Services Department. One portion of the 1979 survey requested retrospective information for 1977. One hundred and sixty respondents from Racine participated in the study in 1979 and 105 participated in 1981. The Dade County (Miami) Department of Human Resources was surveyed in 1983. In 1984, the Genesee County (Flint, Michigan) Department of Social Services and the Sacramento County (California) Department of Social Welfare were surveyed. A total of 337 respondents from Dade County returned questionnaires, 303 were returned from Genesee County, and 755 were returned from Sacramento County. Altogether, 3,287 questionnaires were sent out. Thus, the 1,660 returned questionnaires resulted in a response rate of 50.5%. Unfortunately, 25 questionnaires were too insufficiently completed to warrant inclusion in most analyses. (Most of these respondents provided extensive written comments but failed to complete the structured questionnaire.)

Three structured indices were imbedded into the questionnaire. The Science Research Associates Attitude Survey (SRA) was included because it pinpoints very specific aspects of subjects' working conditions such as effectiveness of internal grievance procedures, availability of support services, quality of fringe benefits, etc. Two job satisfaction measures, the Index of Job Satisfaction (IJS) and the Morse Index (MI), also were included. The IJS measures overall work satisfaction while the MI seeks to assess "intrinsic" satisfaction levels. Intrinsic satisfaction refers to the capacity of the job to satisfy needs for creative and challenging work. All three indices may be examined by the reader as published in Miller's (1977) reference text. Other questionnaire items required information on demographic characteristics such as gender, marital status, educational attainment, etc.

Following completion of the questionnaire respondents read the following statement: "Please use the reverse side of this page
to write any comments you may have. Thank you very much for your cooperation." Thus, respondents were free to comment extemporaneously on any matter of importance to them. There was no effort to guide respondents' replies and members of the research team did not seek to anticipate the remarks subjects would make.

There were several differences in the questionnaires prepared for Racine County versus those prepared for Dade, Geneseo and Sacramento counties. First, data were not collected for race and income in Racine County. Second, one portion of the 1979 survey requested information for 1977. Third, an index assessing organizational styles (McNeely, 1983) was imbedded in the 1981 Racine instrument. However, the format of the questionnaires were identical in all other respects.

Speaking with reference to the particular research questions addressed within this article, the Racine data posed an additional problem. Unlike the other sites, Racine County was surveyed more than once. Forty-five respondents had been employed in Racine during both survey periods (McNeely, Feyherm, & Johnson, 1986). Some of these individuals penned comments onto the backs of their questionnaires in 1979 but not in 1981. Consequently, were Racine subjects to be included in the present analysis it could artificially inflate similarities between those who penned comments versus those who did not. For this reason, and the fact that information had not been collected for race and income, a decision was reached to exclude Racine respondents from this examination.

Several statistical measures were utilized in order to determine whether or not there were significant differences between those penning comments versus those who did not. These included chi-squared ($X^2$), Pearson's r, t-tests and multiple step-wise regression analysis.

Findings

There were no differences in the tendency to write comments based on gender ($X^2=.229; p=.632; $Yates correction). However, younger respondents were more likely than other respondents to provide comments. The average (mean) age of commenters was 39.7 years versus 41.5 for noncommenters ($t=3.05; p=.002;
separate variance estimate). Commenters were no more likely than noncommenters to be "professionals" (includes administrators, supervisors and professionals) or nonprofessionals ($X^2 = 15.3; p=.696; Yates correction). The average employment length for commenters was 9.1 years while noncommenters had been employed an average of 9.3 years. The standard deviations on employment length for both groups were precisely equivalent ($SD=6.76$). Differences in employment length did not achieve statistical significance ($t=.61; p=.541; pooled variance estimate$). Although commenters ($\bar{X}=$$19,225$) earned less than noncommenters ($\bar{X}=$$19,558$), these differences were not statistically significant ($t=.51; p=.621; pooled variance estimate$).

A nonsignificant trend was observed wherein commenters were slightly better educated than noncommenters. For example, 56.5% of the commenters had completed at least one college degree compared to 51.5% of noncommenters who were similarly educated. However, these differences did not achieve statistical significance ($X^2=13.69; p=.09$). No differences were observed in

Table 1

Profile of the Sample* by Selected Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commenters</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Non-Commenters</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entire Sample</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 30</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–41</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42–53</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional**</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-professional**</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>56.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Length</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 4</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>7–9</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10-13</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>14.6</td>
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<td>$13-15</td>
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<td>13.9</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>10.3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>61</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>18.3</td>
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<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
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<td>928</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $15,000</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000-20,999</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21,000-26,999</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>28.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>27,000-32,999</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33,000-38,999</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 39,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<td>926</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td>≤ H.S.</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.S. Diploma</td>
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<td>42.1</td>
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<td>45.4</td>
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<td>College Degree</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>34.4</td>
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<td>Grad. Degree</td>
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<td>15.9</td>
<td>145</td>
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<td>Ph.D./M.D.</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td>434</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>927</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td>435</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Stamps/AFDC</strong></td>
<td>434</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipient</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Recipient</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>74.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excludes 25 insufficiently completed questionnaires. Excludes Racine questionnaires (N=265).

**"Professionals"=Administrators, supervisors and professionals. Non-professionals=Paraprofessionals, clericals and service workers. (Service workers = Building custodians, vehicle operators, etc.)

the propensity to comment based on marital status ($X^2=6.48; p=.166$). However, Caucasian respondents were more likely to comment than members of other racial/ethnic groups ($X^2=24.3;
Individuals who had been recipients of food stamps and/or AFDC were no more likely than other respondents to pen extemporaneous comments ($X^2=20.79; p=.409$; Yates correction).

As evidenced in Table 2, commenters were less satisfied on both measures of job satisfaction. Differences between the two groups achieved statistical significance on overall (IJS) satisfaction ($t=3.80; p=.000$; separate variance estimate) and intrinsic (MI) satisfaction ($t=3.07; p=.002$; pooled variance estimate).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>$\bar{X}$</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>Significance*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall (IJS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commenters</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>59.32</td>
<td>12.61</td>
<td>3.80**</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Commenters</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>62.03</td>
<td>11.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic (MI)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commenters</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>14.23</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.07**</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Commenters</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>14.93</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Two-tailed probability.

**Separate variance estimate.

Multiple stepwise regression analysis was performed to determine the predictors of overall job satisfaction for both groups. The SRA variables, as well as the demographic variables, comprised the independent variables in the regression model.

Table 3 indicates substantial similarities in the predictors of job satisfaction for the two groups. Respondents' assessments of the degree to which their jobs were dull was the best predictor of job satisfaction for both groups. Those who agreed that "My job is often dull and monotonous" were considerably less satisfied than other respondents. The near equivalence of this predictor's importance for both groups is reflected by near equal beta weight values (.455 and 474).
Both groups were affected by whether or not their jobs permitted them to use their abilities. Those agreeing with the statement “I have little opportunity to use my abilities in this organization” were much less satisfied than other subjects. However, the importance of this predictor was greater for commenters (Beta weight=.302) than for non-commenters (Beta weight=.193). Too, both groups were affected by perceptions of job pressures, with less satisfied employees agreeing that “There is too much pressure on my job.”

The satisfaction of commenters also was predicted by age and employment length although these variables explained comparatively small amounts of the variance in commenters’ job satisfaction scores. Older commenters were more satisfied than younger commenters but employment tenure was inversely related to satisfaction, with longer employed commenters being less satisfied than more recently employed commenters.

Non-commenters who agreed that “The longer you work for this organization the more you feel you belong” and that “They

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Simple r</th>
<th>Weight Changes</th>
<th>Total R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commenters</td>
<td>Non-Commenters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Simple r</td>
<td></td>
<td>Weight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commenters</td>
<td>Non-Commenters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Dullness</td>
<td>-.610</td>
<td>-.455</td>
<td>.372</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Abilities</td>
<td>.540</td>
<td>.302</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too Much Pressure</td>
<td>-.235</td>
<td>-.162</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Length</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>-.105</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.503</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Dullness</td>
<td>-.609</td>
<td>-.474</td>
<td>.371</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Abilities</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too Much Pressure</td>
<td>-.257</td>
<td>-.157</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongingness Increases</td>
<td>.204</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaints Handled Well</td>
<td>.296</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td></td>
<td>.471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
have a (good) way of handling employee complaints here" were more satisfied with their jobs. However, both predictors explained relatively small amounts of the variance. Altogether, predictors depicted in Table 3 explained 50.3% of the variance in commenters' job satisfaction scores, and 47.1% of the variance in noncommenters' job satisfaction.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

Demographically speaking, there are no substantive differences between commenting and noncommenting respondents except that commenters tend to be younger than noncommenters and non-Hispanic Caucasians are more likely to pen comments than other subjects. Although commenters, as a group, were slightly better educated, differences in educational attainment between commenters and noncommenters did not achieve statistical significance.

Both of the statistically significant demographic differences are related to the major difference observed between the two groups. The major difference, of course, is the fact that commenters are significantly less satisfied with their jobs than the noncommenters. Research on job satisfaction has demonstrated consistently that younger workers are less satisfied than older workers (Hall, 1986; Doering, Rhodes, and Schuster, 1983; Wright and Hamilton, 1978) and, although the findings are less consistent, that Caucasians tend to be less satisfied than minority-group members (Bartell, 1981; Jones et al., 1977; Gavin and Ewen, 1974). These same patterns are present among the human services stratum of workers as evidenced by previous analyses conducted on the subjects comprising this study's sample frame (McNeely, 1986a; McNeely, 1986b).

Factors affecting satisfaction for both groups are surprisingly similar, although younger commenters are less satisfied than older commenters and employment tenure is inversely related to satisfaction among these respondents. Among noncommenters, more satisfied respondents experience a sense of increasing "belongingness" and feel that workers' complaints tend to be handled reasonably well. But the strength of all of these influences were comparatively weak. Insofar as the
predictors are concerned, the only notable difference is that the importance of being in jobs permitting one to use one's abilities is more profound in predicting the satisfaction of commenters versus noncommenters. The latter observation, again, perhaps is tied to the greater youthfulness of commenters given the fact that younger workers are less likely than older workers to have secured the jobs present in county human services work that provide the most autonomy and involve the greatest task complexity (McNeely, 1986b). Taken in sum the data lead this investigator to the conclusion that the major risk of constructing images of working conditions based upon the remarks of respondents is that these remarks may not fully represent the views of minority group members and older employees, both of whom tend to be more job satisfied. However, if this risk is placed within the context of the purpose of most job satisfaction research, which is to identify job satisfaction levels and to locate the sources of worker discontent, the risk of underrepresentation pales given the need to pinpoint factors that mitigate satisfaction. In this respect, the images constructed are accurate although some groups of employees, such as minority group members and older workers, may be less affected by the conditions that reduce satisfaction among other employees. Thus, the most likely outcome of having greater representation from older workers and minority workers in employees' written comments is that the intensity rather than the substance of conditions specified as dissatisfying would be reduced. This possibility, in fact, is evident in the quantitative data depicted in Table 3 showing the greater strength of one of the major job satisfaction predictors, "Use of Abilities," for commenters versus noncommenters.

In conclusion, and returning to the questions that led to the examination reported in this article, it appears that analysis of subjects' penned comments may be a better "barometer" in efforts to locate the sources of discontent among those actually involved in the "dust and smoke" of human services work. Forcing respondents' replies into the structured explanators of closed-ended questionnaires simply may not tell all.
References


Response by Ralph Segalman to
Isidore Walliman's review of The Swiss Way of Welfare
which appeared in Volume XV, Number 2 (June, 1988).

I find the Walliman review deeply faulted in many ways.
1. Walliman challenges the conclusions I have come to regarding Swiss welfare methods and the Swiss Social Insurance system. He questions my not having consulted a number of references on the subject, most of which were published after 1985, when my book was written (it was published in January, 1986). To ask me why I didn’t consult these works is equivalent to charging me to interview my great-grandchildren who are yet to be born.

2. The second fallacy Walliman builds is to challenge my claim that the Swiss welfare system is superior. He believes that the Swiss system is functional and superior only because there are a number of strengths in the society, the family, the neighborhood and community, schools, etc. and indicates that any welfare system in such a setting would be good. But Walliman misses the point entirely. For a welfare system to be effective, the society must ensure that the other social institutions are all functional and habilitative or rehabilitative.

3. A third argument used by Walliman is to claim that any welfare system could be effective if it exports its unemployment. Here he, like other liberal critics of the Swiss system, claim that problem populations are exported by the Swiss. The is a severe calumny. All nations are selective in their immigration polices, and all countries allow immigration on a conditional basis following which the “gastarbeigers” usually return to their native lands. In the US we allow thousands of farm workers (the bracero program) to enter for the harvest season and then they return. Great Britain allows various specialists to come on work contracts. And all the countries have problem borders with thousands of illegal workers entering. The only difference is that Switzerland is more effective in controlling its conditional and illegal entries. Also, the Swiss are more effective in preventing visas and conditional contracts to be issued at times when Swiss residents are unemployed. At such times the jobs go to them and there is no unemployment. When the Swiss residents are all employed, only then are entries permitted.
To compare the situation with the United States might be useful. If we could actually control our Mexican border, then there would be a severe shortage of unskilled labor. In order to fill the jobs, many people now on public assistance would be attracted to these unfilled jobs, and the wages would rise. Many employers would train the welfare clientele if this was necessary. Many young minority men, currently unemployed, would be hired and trained by employers. Then our welfare agencies would become effective because the manifest purpose of these agencies would be to help people become self-sufficient. Would you say that this would be equivalent to "exporting unemployment"?

Incidentally, to show how effective the Swiss welfare system is, you need only note that one fourth of all people enrolled are not Swiss natives. They are either people on conditional contracts, or immigrants with residency permits, or visitors to families of immigrants. The Swiss institutions effectively teach foreign children who have an astoundingly low drop-out rate. The local communities have had great success in serving these immigrants, and the only people who seem to be unhappy with the situation are the few "gastarbeiter" who fail to perform their contracts and who do not get renewals from their employers or who are refused renewals on the basis of illegal activity. Employers are answerable to the cantonal government in their appointment actions, and there is an appeal process for aggrieved immigrants in most situations.

4. Walliman challenges my conclusions on a number of other matters relating to the Swiss welfare agencies and the social insurance system. In each instance he slantingly refers to some other authority but neglects to show how that authority arrives at a position different from mine. For me to answer such an indictment without having the argument he refers to is equivalent to having to defend oneself before a star chamber.

5. In my opinion, the Swiss Way of Welfare presents too great a threat to the proponents of the welfare state. Just as there is a vested interest in any ideological stance, so there is a desire among many of the social policy scholars in Switzerland and elsewhere to replace the democratically operated, locally controlled Swiss system with the massive, centralized behemoth
found elsewhere in the western world. The criticisms against the effective Swiss system tell us more about the desires of the critics than it does about how well the system works.

Ralph Segalman, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, California State University, Northridge.
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