September 1994

Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare Vol. 21, No. 3 (September 1994)

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EDITORIAL

This is a noteworthy issue for the Journal, because it contains Paula Dressel's Invitational Presentation, delivered at the Council on Social Work Education's Annual Program Meeting in March of 1994, in Atlanta, Georgia. This presentation was part of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Journal. Those of you who were fortunate enough to attend that session know that it was a defining moment. The dedication of those who pioneered this Journal, and the philosophical foundations of the address merged together and spoke to the audience with more than words. There was a sense of common purpose; of brotherhood and sisterhood; of belief in the importance and truth of what was being said.

There is a boilerplate description of the mission of the Journal, often utilized in promotional literature, which includes this statement: "The Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare promotes the integration of the social sciences and the human services in order to understand social welfare. It publishes papers that analyze social welfare policy and politics, social problems, and the operations of human services." Paula Dressel manages to speak to every one of these issues in her address. In what Cornell West calls "these downbeat times", it is important that we not lose track of the key concepts of racism, poverty, and despair. At the same time, we must be vigilant in our search to find new voices to provide vision, hope and leadership. Paula Dressel is one of those voices.

To recapture the tone of the Invitational Session, the introductory remarks of Charles Guzzeta are included below. Dr. Guzzeta has been with the Journal since the beginning and was a logical choice to chair the meeting. In response to the many requests for reprints of the paper, we have rushed Paula's paper into print.

Gary Mathews
Managing Editor
REMARKS ON THE JOURNAL'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY

It's a particular pleasure to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*. My personal association with the Journal goes back to the days of the original publishing odd couple, Norm Goroff and Ralph Segalman. There were not many of us in those days: the Editorial Board has about as many members as there were subscribers.

The idea was to create a journal which unmistakably respected the intelligence of its readers. The intention was to bring the discipline and rigor and objectivity of the social sciences to social work practice. Success depended on the conviction, judgment, dedication, and extraordinary work of the staff—first, Norm and Ralph; then Norm and student assistants; then Bob Leigninger, who did the editing in Michigan while Norm did the publishing in Connecticut. As the work became too much for Norm, Ed Pawlak and Dan Thompson brought in a new look in the middle 1980s. A few years ago, Gary Mathews, Jim Midgeley and Steve Rose joined in. All that time, and with all that help, Bob Leigninger has continued to be the backbone of the Journal; its one indispensable person.

The success of the Journal has been astounding. Without the muscle and money of a major membership organization behind it and absent a publishing house, it has nevertheless grown to become one of the most respected journals in the field.

This success is the result of excellent editing, of course, but mainly because of the quality of articles it has attracted and published.

High in the ranks of scholars whose work has been brought to the field by the Journal is Dr. Paula Dressel, Professor of Sociology and Associate Dean for Social Sciences at Georgia State University.

Dr. Dressel first published in the Journal in 1981, about professional burnout; on job-related issues in 1985, 1988 and 1990; and last year, on the underclass. Her Book *The Service Trap* appeared in 1984. Her long and impressive list of publications includes reports of her studies of families, gerontology, and social

In addition, she has maintained a close touch with the applied aspects of her discipline, particularly in her work as a consultant to the Southern Prisoners Defense Committee; her studies of families of women in prison; her service as President of Aid to Imprisoned Mothers, and others. She nicely combines the scholarship and erudition of Cloward and Ohlen with the compassion and service of John Augustus.

One cannot imagine a more fitting embodiment of the principles of the Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare than Dr. Paula Dressel, who helps us celebrate our twentieth anniversary with her presentation: "... And They Keep on Building Prisons; Poverty, Racism and Challenges to the Welfare State".

Charles Guzzeta
Editorial Board
Prison-building is argued to be an intervention of last resort when a nation loses faith in the social welfare enterprise. Recent proposals for more punitive regulations for means-tested benefits, along with the recent dramatic growth in the construction of prisons and in the size of the inmate population, indicate that we are moving as a society toward heightened levels of scapegoating and victim-blaming as a response to troubles generated by significant structural shifts in the economy. This paper analyzes the connections between poverty, punishment, and prisons, with particular emphasis on the scapegoating of people of color. The role of racism in the production of poverty and in policy debates surrounding its alleviation is highlighted.

Given that so few social workers are actually employed by or interact directly with prisons, why did I choose the title, "And We Keep on Building Prisons," for this talk to the Council on Social Work Education? In truth, this is not for the most part about prisons, but hopefully by focusing some attention on this extreme social institution, we can arrive at a better understanding of current challenges both to the welfare state and to growing numbers of our people, especially people of color, and African-Americans and Latinos in particular. We all recognize that prisons are material forms of social control. It should become clear that they are also symbolic expressions of societal values and policy preferences. Furthermore, and regrettably, prisons are all too often metaphors for how we conduct our lives in isolation from one another.

Why is it that we keep on building prisons? Why is it that, among industrialized nations around the globe, the United States has now surpassed South Africa to become first in the
rate at which we imprison our people? During the 1980s the male prison population increased 112%, and the female prison population increased 202%. These figures reflect the fact that more people were being arrested and that arrests were leading to imprisonment at a rate 68% higher by the end of the 1980s than at the beginning of the decade. By 1989 nearly 4 million adults, the majority of whom have low incomes, were subjected to corrections agencies of one sort or another (Greenfield and Minor-Harper, 1991). Furthermore, despite a flurry of prison-building, by 1990 state prisons were operating at 122% capacity, and federal prisons were operating at 146% capacity (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1993a, Table 6.66), meaning that overcrowding remained a serious and ongoing problem. Why do we keep on building prisons that confine more and more members of our population? And how are these issues related to our interest in social welfare and poverty?

There are three main points to this paper: (1) When levels of social assistance are inadequate, some members of the population may be unable to conduct their lives within the usual legitimized opportunity structures. Under these circumstances, social control measures become the state's last resort for protection of the status quo. (2) The simultaneous trends toward more punitive regulations for means-tested welfare benefits and the dramatic growth in the rate of imprisonment are not unrelated dynamics. (3) Racism plays a significant role in the dynamics described in points 1 and 2.

Before pursuing those points, there are potential misunderstandings to avoid. First, nothing in this paper should be taken to mean that we should not work to reduce crime. To be sure, poor people are the economic group most heavily victimized by crime and are the least protected members of our population in terms of police response. We need policies that will ensure their safety and well-being. But I do not think that present policies of heightened social control will necessarily do that over the long run.

Second, nothing in this paper should be taken to mean that we should not hold people accountable for their actions, no matter how limited their choices. Rather, my emphasis is that we must also hold policy-makers accountable for the social forces
their decisions set in motion. It would be unscientific and, at least in my value system, politically dangerous to act as if people make choices in a vacuum and thus to ignore the social forces that impinge upon their lives. Professor Billingsley has remarked that families cannot be strong in isolation; he identified economic, political, educational, and social factors that produce stable families and stable communities (Billingsley, 1994). Similarly, I wish to argue that individuals cannot make optimal life choices without these same factors. To focus on individuals' actions apart from these contexts is to grossly simplify human life and to set the stage for some very wrong-headed social policies.

Third, I am appreciative of the continual need to recognize and build upon the strengths of individuals and their families. As Dr. Billingsley reminds us, the real miracle of African-American communities is not that some people have fallen but that so many still stand. Today as I focus on the nature of problems that many people overcome but give emphasis to the reality that some have not, I hope that my comments will be understood within the context of the real miracle.

To put flesh and blood onto the claims I will make, I wish to describe a family that is actually a composite profile of families served by an Atlanta community agency, Aid to Imprisoned Mothers, or AIM, on whose Board of Directors I have the privilege of serving. The scenario draws upon commonalities across a host of families but avoids describing any specific family in order to protect client identities. Approximately 95% of families receiving assistance from AIM are African-American. This percentage reflects a combination of factors, including the disproportionate imprisonment to which African-Americans are subjected, AIM's location in a city with a majority African-American population, and the reluctance stemming from the racism of European-American families with incarcerated mothers to utilize our agency services that are staffed fully by African-American professionals. Here is a typical family story from AIM's clientele.

Ms. Sanders (a pseudonym) is a 27-year-old head of household with two children, Alicia (a pseudonym), age 9, and Brandon (a pseudonym), age 4. With a high school diploma but limited employment skills, she has been unable to locate work
that would allow her to support her family. After trying to juggle part-time jobs for a few years during hours when her sister could watch the children, Ms. Sanders finally applied for AFDC and food stamps so that she would have a steady flow of resources. Eventually she had to quit her part-time job because no one was available to stay with the children and she could not afford to pay someone to do so.

Ms. Sanders frequently ran out of money before the end of the month and had difficulty paying her bills. She and the children often wished for things they could not afford, such as adequate school supplies for Alicia and properly-fitting shoes for Brandon. One day Ms. Sanders shoplifted some jewelry at a local store and sold it on the street to make some extra money. The next time she tried to steal electronics equipment that she could sell for more money, but this time she was caught, arrested, and jailed.

When Ms. Sanders went to jail, she called her mother, Ms. Yancey (a pseudonym), to pick up Alicia and Brandon and care for them until she could get out of jail. Ms. Yancey had often taken care of her grandchildren for short periods of time, but not indefinitely. Due to the heavy backlog of cases at the city jail, Ms. Sanders' case was not heard for four months, and then she was convicted and sentenced to three years in prison. There being no other family alternative, Ms. Yancey cared for Alicia and Brandon for the full three years that their mother served her sentence.

Once Ms. Sanders was jailed, her AFDC and food stamps were terminated. And since the children's grandmother lives in the next county, whose computers do not interface with those in Ms. Sanders' county, it took Ms. Yancey over two months before she received any benefits for her grandchildren.

Ms. Yancey is a woman of 60 without a high school diploma. She has labored throughout her adult life in minimum wage jobs. At the time she was a cook in a hospital cafeteria, but she worried how much longer she could continue there because of a recently aggravated chronic back injury. Yet it was imperative that she work.

Having two grandchildren to look after—in addition to having two of her own adult children staying with her from time
to time — produced severe financial strains on Ms. Yancey, and she quickly fell behind on her bills. First her lights were cut off for non-payment, and were it not for emergency rental aid from a service agency, she would have been evicted from her apartment. Furthermore, Ms. Yancey continually had to patch together child care from a shifting pool of caretakers. When nothing else could be arranged, 9-year-old Alicia was left in charge. Such financial and childcare crises characterized the entire three years that Ms. Yancey kept her grandchildren.

When Ms. Sanders was released from prison, she had nowhere to live, so she moved in with her mother, her children, and her brother and sister. Ms. Sanders hoped that she would be fortunate to find work paying wages with which she could support her family. In the meantime, she sought to reestablish herself as household head and get welfare benefits on her own. Two months lapsed between the time Ms. Yancey’s benefits stopped and Ms. Sanders’ began. The first check contained retrospective benefits for the two month lapse. By this time, however, Ms. Yancey’s household utilities had all been disconnected for nonpayment. The first check barely covered the cost of paying overdue bills and new deposits to reconnect the water, electricity, gas, and telephone. Neither Ms. Sanders nor Ms. Yancey was certain how they would be able to pay the rent that month or any other bills. The same desperate feelings that led Ms. Sanders to shoplift the first time were coming back again.

The Political Economic Context of Social Control and Social Assistance

It is important to consider the Sanders-Yancey family situation within a broad political economic framework. Political economists and other social scientists whose work focuses on the macro-dynamics of stratification provide us with powerful schemas for understanding the intersection of race and class, and in this case also gender. The work of political economists undergirds my first main point, that: When levels of social assistance are inadequate, some members of the population are unable to conduct their lives within the usual legitimized opportunity structures. Under these circumstances, social control
measures become the state’s last resort for protection of the status quo. Put another way, prison-building is an intervention of last resort when a nation loses faith in the social welfare enterprise.

Figure 1 represents a model of the U.S. political economy that I have synthesized from the work of O’Connor (1973) and others. The logic of the model starts with the recognition that a capitalist democracy like the United States has two primary state functions. The first and foremost is the creation of a climate for the production of profit, which is a core requirement of the capitalist engine. The logic of profit-focused dynamics produces certain predictable outcomes for our nation and its workers. Within the logic of capitalism, work necessarily becomes more capital-intensive and efficient. For example, increased use of technology reduces the amount of human labor required to sustain productivity. Also within the logic of capitalism, production continually migrates to sources of cheaper labor (witness the ongoing regional shifts of jobs within the United States and the outmigration of jobs from the United States to peripheral nations).

Thus, a fully predictable consequence of these dynamics is the generation of what political economists call a surplus population. This phrase simply means that a portion of the population is not required for maximal capitalist productivity and thus it experiences unemployment and economic marginalization. Another logical feature of capitalism is the production of profit via the lowest wages and least expensive work arrangements possible. From this feature, a fully predictable consequence of our economy is the phenomenon of underemployment, which includes year-round work that pays non-livable wages and part-time work when full-time employment is needed. Put simply and directly, unchecked capitalist dynamics create poor people, both through unemployment and underemployment.

Vulnerability to membership in the surplus population is not random, however. This is where racism and sexism come in. Because of historical and contemporary expressions of racism and sexism in educational systems and labor markets (whose dynamics are too extensive to detail here), women and men of color and majority group women have been, and continue to
be, disproportionately vulnerable to becoming members of the surplus population. Statistics on unemployment, underemployment, and poverty are the most direct evidence for this claim. At the risk of repeating what you already know, African-Americans and Latinos endure an unemployment rate at least double that of European-Americans, and the disparities are even worse for Native Americans; men of color and women of all groups receive lesser returns on their human capital and are more susceptible to part-time employment than majority group males; and poverty rates for families of color and female-headed households are the highest of any categories of the population (Current Population Reports, 1990). These outcomes are not random; the social forces producing them, then, cannot be random.

Just as political economists describe how capitalism by its very logic produces poverty, they simultaneously point out that capitalist democratic states have a second essential function which is inevitably connected to creating a climate for profit. The second key state function is legitimation of the state itself, a task which is necessary precisely because the existence
of a surplus population represents the potential for political unrest. In order to reduce the likelihood of political challenge from an economically alienated segment of the population, the state introduces various forms of social assistance to enable the poor to participate marginally in the economy. Levels of social assistance, however, cannot interfere with the other key state function of creating a climate for profit; thus, the state necessarily provides social assistance below the equivalent of minimum wage so as not to discourage people from working for the lowest prevailing wages. At the same time the state subsidizes the private sector through mechanisms like the Earned Income Tax Credit so that private employers do not have to impact their profits by offering livable wages.

The other means by which the state undertakes legitimation is through its main apparatus of social control: police and prisons. These are last resort back-up systems that are expected to manage any consequences of political economic dynamics that produce acts of economic desperation or violence by impoverished individuals. (We should keep in mind, by the way, that interpersonal violence is largely directed within one’s own community (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1993b, p.15). Fanon (1963) views such acts as self-oppression when people who are already oppressed direct their rage and frustration horizontally.) Table 1 demonstrates that people of color and/or those who are economically marginalized represent the bulk of individuals subjected to the most extreme means of state social control. Sixty percent of people locked up in local jails, and 65% of inmates in state prisons are people of color. Over half of all prisoners in these sites (54% and 65%, respectively) and almost half (46%) of all federal prisoners did not earn a high school diploma. Fully 78% of jailed individuals and 70% of state prisoners had incomes of less than $15,000 annually.

Returning now to Figure 1, how does the model of the political economy capture the experiences of the Sanders-Yancey family, who are indeed members of the surplus population? What we recall about Ms. Sanders is that initially she was underemployed in part-time work, which she eventually had to quit because of difficulty finding adequate and reliable child care arrangements. The AFDC and food stamp assistance from
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Facilities</th>
<th># of Inmates</th>
<th>% Anglo Hispanic of Color</th>
<th>% Persons &lt;High School Diploma</th>
<th>% Education: % Income: %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Jails, 1991</td>
<td>3,000+</td>
<td>395,554</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Prisons, 1991</td>
<td>1,239</td>
<td>711,643</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
the state was inadequate to maintain her family, leading her to shoplift and then sell the stolen goods to supplement her income. The state had not provided for her adequately through social assistance; but her desperate, illegal behavior brought the state social control apparatus to bear on her. In fact, the state ended up spending $20,000 per year to keep Ms. Sanders in prison and had recently spent $53,000 per bed to build another medium security prison to confine people like Ms. Sanders. Yet the state had spent only about $7000 per year for Ms. Sanders and her children when she was out. Think of the enormous changes that could be made if the $73,000 per inmate were to be rededicated to avenues of empowerment rather than imprisonment, to family support rather than family separation. Furthermore, when Ms. Sanders was released from prison, she was in no better position to compete in the labor market, nor was the labor market any more expansive, than when she went into prison. Thus, the likelihood of her recidivism appears high, unless her circumstances change extraordinarily and miraculously.

Parenthetically, it should be pointed out that most inmates work during their confinement, so that prisons in effect operate their own form of workfare. Sixty-nine percent of state prison inmates have work assignments, typically janitorial work, food preparation, maintenance and repair, groundskeeping, and other services, none of which significantly improves an inmate's human capital. Of the two-thirds of prison jobs that are accompanied by wages, the average rate of pay is 56 cents per hour, or $22.40 for a full 40-hour work week (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1993b, p.27). At this pay scale, it is not surprising that private managers of prison industries realize significant profits from these operations. For example, the company that controls and manages all of Florida's prison industries, which is a subsidiary of Eckerd drugstores, reported a $4 million profit from prison industries in 1988 (Richey Mann, 1993). In effect, even on the social control dimension of state functions, a climate for private profit-making is created by the state-sanctioned coercion of labor from the very people who were sloughed off from the economy outside of prison. Jeffrey Reiman's book title, *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison* (1990), is an apt description
of the dynamics of the full political economy generally and of prison industries in particular.

We need only look at the growing expenditures for prisons and police alongside the current challenges to meager and virtually stagnant levels of welfare expenditure to conclude that societal values and policy preferences are shifting toward more punitive approaches toward the surplus population. Table 2 compares trends in selected federal social assistance and social control expenditures. What we see in these data is a growing commitment to social control, whose budget is proposed to increase 21% in the next fiscal year and has increased 48% in the past five years. Compare these figures to the stagnation of federal expenditures for AFDC, which is proposed to increase only 2% in the next fiscal year and has increased 27% in the past five years. Note that these smaller percentages are figured on a smaller base, thereby reflecting an even larger actual dollar gap. Furthermore, the Clinton administration is proposing only token gestures toward full employment via an 18% increase for the coming year in employment and training programs (Budget..., 1994).

The political rhetoric of the FY95 budget message from the President signalled these comparative fiscal commitments. The President referred simultaneously to the increasing threat of crime and violence (which can easily be viewed as a state responsibility to contain) and the need for more responsibility from welfare recipients (which rhetorically shifts responsibility away from the state and onto the individual). Thus, it is also important to consider the ideological context of social assistance and social control.

The Ideological Context of Social Assistance and Social Control

Attention to the rhetoric around the politics of social control and social assistance leads me to my second main point: The simultaneous trends toward more punitive regulations for means-tested welfare benefits and the dramatic growth in the rate of imprisonment are not unrelated dynamics.
Table 2

Comparative Federal Expenditures for Social Control and Social Assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>(proposed)</th>
<th>% Change 1994–95</th>
<th>% Change 1990–95</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime Control</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFDC</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment &amp; Training Programs</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are all familiar with the concept of blaming the victim, which was popularized by William Ryan (1976). His point was that frequently discourse about, and policy around, inequality blame the victims of structurally-generated inequalities for those inequalities. The process through which this happens is that people subjected to inequities are first defined as somehow different; that personalized difference is viewed as the cause of their inequity; then policies and programs are developed to correct that presumed personal difference rather than to correct the structural conditions which produced the inequities. My colleagues and I have found it useful to think about victim-blaming as a layered phenomenon (Dressel et.al., 1994). We talk about first-order victim-blaming when it arises in debate about how to approach fundamental social problems such as poverty or discrimination. This is the victim-blaming on which Ryan focused. Second-order victim-blaming focuses not on the presenting problem but rather on the interventions which were designed to alleviate the presenting problem. Second-order victim-blaming argues that if the interventions have not worked, it must be because of the participants, not because of the features of the programs themselves or broader changes going on in society. In this discourse, issues such as the general state of the economy, inadequate policy design, poor program implementation, underfunding, or any combination thereof are sidestepped.

I wish to suggest that much political discourse around welfare reform engages in second-order victim-blaming. This process sets the poor, more precisely poor persons of color, apart from others and thereby enables the consideration of punitive measures and diverse forms of social control. I will illustrate this claim by focusing first on proposed welfare reforms and then on the phenomenon of the so-called underclass. Next I will link these issues to the growth of prisons and inmate populations. Finally, on this point, I wish to consider the dangerous path that accumulated victim-blaming travels in terms of its logical consequences.

First, consider how some of the most widely discussed AFDC reform measures engage in victim-blaming of the second order; again, I refer to it as second-order because it explains programmatic shortcomings by placing the blame on program
recipients. Table 3 identifies three typical approaches to welfare reform and the underlying victim-blaming assumptions about recipients on which they are based. First, proposals for the elimination of AFDC increments when recipients give birth to additional children is premised on the victim-blaming assumption that such cash increments encourage pregnancy and larger families. Second, proposals to eliminate all assistance after a specific time period assume, in victim-blaming form, that the ongoing availability of assistance encourages welfare dependency. Third, the requirement that a larger number of AFDC recipients must participate in training and employment programs is premised on the victim-blaming assumption that recipients lack economic initiative.

Table 3

Victim-Blaming Assumptions Underlying Welfare Reform Proposals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposals</th>
<th>Underlying Victim-Blaming Assumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Eliminate AFDC increments for recipients giving birth to additional children.</td>
<td>Cash increments for additional children encourage women on AFDC to get pregnant and have more children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Eliminate all assistance after a specified time period.</td>
<td>Ongoing availability of assistance encourages welfare dependency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Require a larger proportion of AFDC recipients to participate in training and employment programs.</td>
<td>Recipients lack economic initiative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yet, in each case systematic studies challenge these assumptions and in turn call the wisdom of the proposals into question. With regard to the first assumption, we know, on the contrary, that single-parent families receiving AFDC average only 1.8 children (Abramovitz and Davis, 1992). We also know empirically
that recipients' fertility rates are not affected significantly by either welfare receipt or benefit levels (Ellwood and Bane, 1984; Wilson and Neckerman, 1986). Furthermore, a large study has shown that the longer a woman is on welfare, the less likely she is to bear a child (Rank, 1989). Research related to the second assumption has consistently demonstrated that AFDC recipients do not lack motivation to work. Rather, they lack skills for jobs that pay livable wages, and they lack affordable childcare and work-based health benefits that would enable them to accept available work (Goodwin, 1983; Duncan, 1984; Gilbert, 1993).

The third assumption is misguided in several ways. First, a major reason for low participation in workfare is the lack of space in available programs. Second, a singular focus on the supply side of employment without comparable focus on the creation of jobs only partially addresses unemployment problems (Marmor et al., 1990). Without attention to the demand side of the need for more jobs, the Urban Institute estimates that a full national workfare program would reduce welfare reliance by 5% at the most (cited in Walsh, 1988).

Clearly, then, political debate is not always guided by empirical reality. What does seem to drive the current debate around welfare reform? I do not believe it is an exaggeration to say that much of that debate is driven by racist stereotypes and scapegoating that are embedded in a skewed, almost frenzied, concentration on the so-called urban underclass. The victim-blaming assumptions I have just outlined are features, among other negative traits, that are said to characterize this population. It is telling that the term underclass was used by Myrdal thirty years ago purely as an economic term. Today that meaning has been almost fully transformed. Today, instead, the term underclass is used in a way that links the urban African-American poor by definition to issues of crime, drug abuse, welfare dependency, out-of-wedlock birth, and illegal economies (Dressel and Porterfield, 1993).

The terminological shifts that we have seen with the concept underclass are occasioned moreso by political forces than by empirical findings. Morris (1989) argues that three significant shifts in emphasis occurred in the 1980s with the term underclass. These shifts in thinking entail blaming welfare programs and recipients for economic dependency, focusing specifically on
racial/ethnic minority groups, and assuming that the economic marginalization of millions of our people will only worsen.

These changing emphases are not surprising in that the 1980s saw diminished federal commitment both to welfare programs and to racial equality. The rhetorical shifts have arisen in conjunction with a vulnerable national economy and an increasingly competitive international marketplace. How politically convenient it is, then, to find embedded in the very conceptualization of poverty the messages that welfare actually harms people, that poor people—especially people of color—create their own disadvantages, and that the public should not expect much improvement in the lives of the very poor (Dressel and Porterfield, 1993).

Gans (1990) and others have raised concern that this shifted political rhetoric reifies low-income, urban, largely African-American and Latino citizens as the singular causal agents of their circumstances. Insofar as this rhetoric sustains the illusion that these groups are fundamentally different from everyone else, ideological space will have been opened up to shift policies from those of social assistance to those of social control. I submit that this is precisely what is happening, as evidenced by the punitive, victim-blaming nature of certain proposed welfare reforms and the growing inclination to incarcerate poor people.

Seldom does a week go by without my seeing proposals for the utilization of harsh and extraordinary forms of social control, all of which are premised on creating an otherness and a differentness for people, largely people of color, who are poor. For example, here in Atlanta city officials have developed what they call a hospitality zone, so that you and other conventioneers and tourists and those of us who work downtown will not have to encounter Atlanta’s growing homeless population, which now numbers about 22,000 people. Within the so-called hospitality zone police are able to arrest people for loitering, panhandling, and public drunkenness. Two of these three behaviors, loitering and public drunkenness, are quite typical of conventioneers and tourists and even some of us who work downtown, but the policy has disproportionately produced the arrest of homeless people, because it is only they who are seen as different. And if rhetoric is unable to sustain the illusion
of differentness, then a proposal being discussed in California would concretize the concept of differentness. Petitions are being circulated there for a referendum that would require violent felons to wear identification numbers implanted on their faces upon release from prison ("Facial ID Implants?" 1994). A supremely ironic feature of the proposal is the provision that it would be a misdemeanor to taunt or harass anyone who had such a facial implant! If Ms. Sanders, about whom I talked earlier, had been carrying a gun when she shoplifted those items in the store, she would be one of the candidates for a facial implant if this plan succeeds. Imagine how easy it would be for her then to find a job with livable wages.

The foregoing proposals assume a certain intractability of individuals and social situations. Gan's (1990) key concern is that underclass conceptualization is a linguistic strategy to prepare the public for permanently economically marginalized groups—a caste, if you will. If such a scenario unfolds, and if some people are set off as essentially different, usual constraints around treatment or intervention could disappear. Efforts toward change may be abandoned altogether, and proposals for segregation are more likely to appear (Dressel et.al., 1994). President Clinton signed an executive order soon after he took office that allows for homeless people to be moved to underutilized or abandoned military reservations. Such a policy, regardless of whatever merits it might have, paves the way for both the physical and the symbolic isolation of those who are defined as different.

Before leaving this point, I wish to say a few more words about the implications of second-order victim-blaming for social policy. So long as we allow program recipients to bear full blame for policy and program shortcomings, we serve to deflect emphasis from structural questions of societal changes, policy design, and programmatic features. Furthermore, we strengthen what Goffman (1963) called the spoiled identities of those who are blamed by institutionalizing the notion of differentness in social policies.

Victim-blaming is a layered process that may have particularly severe consequences when next-order forms are built upon already existing forms. Each successive layer or form presents people as increasingly troublesome and intractable. These
potentially cumulative processes are represented on the horizontal axis in Figure 2. Some people will have personal, interpersonal, and material resources that will enable them to deflect the stigma of victim-blaming, but others will not. This variable is represented on the vertical axis of Figure 2. The diagonal line represents the increasing perception of intractability and the increasing mobilization of these stigmatized perceptions. The shaded area of the diagram suggests that the likely outcome of limited layers of victim-blaming and reasonable levels of exchange resources is simple scapegoating. However, when reduced levels of exchange resources are combined with multiple layers of victim-blaming whereby individuals' problems are perceived as intractable and/or victim-blaming is broadly institutionalized, the most severe forms of social control are more likely to result. These include isolation such as imprisonment and other forms of segregation and either direct genocide or the more protracted forms of genocide that come from avoidance and neglect (Dressel et al., 1994). Given the hypotheses reflected in this model, there is ample reason to be concerned over second-order victim-blaming as it is occurring in current debates about welfare reform. Figure 2 suggests that welfare and other forms of social assistance are not unrelated to matters of prisons and other forms of social control.

At the beginning I mentioned that prisons are symbolic expressions of social values and policy preferences as well as metaphors for how we conduct our lives in isolation from one another. I hope that the intervening remarks have given substance to those claims. To capsulize the point, to the extent that we are willing to conceptualize persons who are poor, again, especially persons of color, as different, we are choosing to imprison ourselves in exclusionary thinking and choosing to spend our tax dollars for facilities and activities that guarantee the mental and physical segregation of people by class and color.

The Role of Racism

My final point is this: Racism plays a significant role in the dynamics I have just described. Racism is a key factor in the production of poverty and in policy debates surrounding
Prisons, Racism, and Poverty

Figure 2

Hypothesized Implications of Accumulated Victim Blaming

A = Scapegoating
B = Isolation, Genocide

Source: Dressel et al., 1994.
the alleviation of poverty. Discussions of poverty reduction are necessarily incomplete unless they simultaneously take into account the complex ways in which racist ideologies and practices operate. The elimination of racist stereotypes that surround the welfare system and its recipients would also benefit the 21 million poor whites who comprise the largest racial/ethnic group among those citizens who are economically marginalized.

Jacqueline Jones (1992) has written a compelling historical and contemporary overview of the many groups who have been dispossessed in this country. She describes the diversity of today's economically marginalized populations, which include "jobless coal miners in Appalachia, displaced Midwestern factory workers, Haitian and Cambodian immigrant migrant laborers, and the chronically unemployed" (p.1) in the nation's central cities. She points out that, despite this diversity across groups and over time, "middle-class Americans in general and public policymakers in particular (persist) in defining the nature of social distress in purely racial terms" (p.1). She refers to this distortion as "the idea of black distinctiveness" and believes that because we are a society "conceived in slavery" this ideology is "rooted in the national consciousness" (p.292).

To the extent that this ideology finds its way into political discourse, social policies, and the popular culture, many people stand to lose. To be sure, the people who are rendered as "Others," especially impoverished African-Americans, are the most immediately and pervasively threatened by virtue of having been rendered convenient scapegoats for difficulties created by global and national economic forces. Others who are poor will also be negatively affected to the extent that the rhetoric of scapegoating diminishes public will for meaningful reform of social assistance policies for all people in need. Furthermore, groups as yet shielded from the harshest economic changes, who are disproportionately European-Americans, may possess a false sense of security (and superiority) if they believe themselves to be too different from those who currently find themselves in need.

We have not yet seen the full impact for our nation of a globalized economy. Indeed, Ellwood (cited in U.S. House of Representatives, 1991, Table 33) estimates that almost 2/3 of
first-time AFDC recipients will have worked in the two years prior to the experience of needing social assistance. This means that today’s workers are not necessarily safe from future need. Just yesterday the New York Times carried an article about the 35th year reunion of Harvard graduates, all white men with elite educations (Uchitelle, 1994). Among that group 10 to 20 percent had lost jobs, and the article profiled one who was being assisted with food stamps. Jacqueline Jones is both descriptive and prescriptive when she writes that “Poverty abides no line drawn by color or culture” (p.1) While color and culture inform vulnerability to poverty, as I have argued here, by no means do they exclusively determine who will face economic need across the course of their lives.

Conclusion

I began by claiming that prison-building is an intervention of last resort when a nation loses faith in the social welfare enterprise. I want to argue strongly that we must back away from an emphasis on measures of social control. If we are willing to do that, at the same time we will be backing away from allowing racist ideologies and practices to dominate political debate and action.

Just recently two new voices have courageously called for us to back away. One is President Clinton’s former Deputy Attorney General Philip Heymann, who sharply criticized the Clinton administration and Congress for responding to political pressure by supporting a host of anti-crime measures that he described as shortsighted, wasteful, and counterproductive (“Justice official . . . ,” 1994). The second voice is that of Senior U.S. District Court Judge Clyde Cahill, who ruled that federal penalties against crack cocaine are unconstitutional because they are undergirded by “unconscious racism” (Rankin, 1994). What he is referring to is a 1986 law that effectively penalizes those in possession of only 1 gram of crack just as harshly as it does those in possession of 100 grams of cocaine powder. Why is one gram of crack considered as dangerous or threatening as 100 times the amount of powder? Apparently because it is likely to be found in the possession of a Black or Latino male.
In 1992 97% of defendants sentenced under this law for selling crack were Black or Hispanic (Rankin, 1994). Clearly Judge Cahill recognizes that the determination of penalties was driven far more by racist ideology, the so-called underclass threat, than by any sense of comparable justice. Whatever else might be said about it, the war on drugs being waged in our cities is also in part a war on poor people, especially impoverished Black and Latino men (and increasingly Black and Latino women as well).

Are there any new voices courageously calling for us to back away from equally misguided, scapegoat-driven welfare reform measures? I hope so. Courageous voices that challenge divisive political rhetoric around both social assistance and social control seek to legitimate the state through measures of opportunity and empowerment. To me, this is far more productive both in the short term and in the long run than the pursuit of state legitimation through coercion and intimidation, in whatever ideological or material forms these might find expression. I am not ready to give up on the potential of Ms. Sanders, her children, and her mother, whom I described earlier, or the millions of families like them around this nation. Nor am I ready to give up on my belief that we can become a much fairer nation than our policies currently suggest we are.

References


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Presented at the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education, Atlanta, GA, March 7, 1994. The author thanks the following colleagues for their contributions to this project: Sandra Barnhill, Jeff Porterfield, Anand Balachandran, Vincent Carter, Melissa Gilbert, Cheryl Brown, and Andrea Georgalis.
Racial Differences in Timing and Factors Associated with Retirement

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Utilizing data from the 1968–1987 interview waves of the Panel Studies of Income Dynamics, this paper analyzes the racial differences in timing and factors associated with the retirement of a sample of 408 male workers. The analysis of the timing of retirement shows that black males past age 60 have a lower retirement rate than white males. Multivariate logit analysis also indicates that disability is a reason for retirement of both black and white males. In addition, white males who desire for leisure and black males with lower economic status are found to be more likely to retire.

Despite an increasing perception of retirement as an integral part of modern life and increasingly positive attitudes toward retirement transition, retirement is a process which is heavily affected by individual’s attitudes towards retirement, retirement policies, expected post-retirement income, health status, and other conditions, or situations, leading to retirement (Atchley, 1980, 1982). As well, unanticipated changes in macroeconomic conditions such as high rates of unemployment or high rates of inflation can alter retirement decisions (Clark, 1988).

Especially because of a prolonged period of retirement, however, retirement decision is made largely in conjunction with an older worker’s current as well as expected future life situations. Thus, although retirement may be a significant life event or transition, it is not a transition which is isolated from one’s other life experiences. Most older workers make a retirement decision based on a realistic appraisal of situational and structural factors associated with their current life situation and their post-retirement life. They have to appraise the effect of retirement on their income, physical as well as mental health, family responsibilities—financially and otherwise, and life satisfaction.
Given this lifespan continuity, it is no wonder that black Americans, with their distinctively different life circumstances, experience a process of development and aging different from white Americans. Black workers typically have less education than white workers and have also been victims of racial discrimination in work places as well as in other social arena. Thus, not only have blacks been concentrated in low-status jobs, but society in general has also ascribed different values to their work and occupational roles. Black males especially have not been considered traditionally as strong breadwinners as white males. They have often shown a higher rate of unemployment and a higher incidence of disabilities, which hinder continuous work into old age, than have white males. Because of their discontinuous work patterns and concentration in jobs providing little protection after retirement, blacks obviously perceive retirement differently, are influenced by different factors, and have different social psychological characteristics than their white counterparts (Gibson, 1987; Jackson and Gibson, 1985). Gibson (1987) argues that the lifelong work (and therefore economic) disadvantages of blacks may even blur the line between work and retirement, especially for those older blacks who are the most deprived of all. On the other hand, Gibson (1988) also found that the income packages of older blacks compared to other groups contain a greater proportion of money from their own work and a smaller proportion of money from retirement sources: an indication that black elderly may be more likely to work into old age out of economic necessities. A couple of recent studies in fact found that black men, if physically of functionally capable, are less likely to retire than are white men (Chirikos & Nestel, 1989a, 1989b; Hayward, Grady, Hardy, & Sommers, 1989).

But if we compare black males who have had similar work histories to white males, would the factors associated with their retirement as well as the timing of their retirement be still different from those of white males? The purpose of this paper is to provide insight into the retirement process and behavior of black males, and to help understand differences between black and white males who share similar work histories and family responsibilities. Based on findings of previous studies, hypothesis in this paper is that, among other things, blacks are more
likely to be influenced by variables which mirror pre- and post-retirement economic circumstances and type of work (i.e., professional versus non-professional jobs), whereas white males are more likely to be influenced by attitude toward work (i.e., desire for leisure). In addition, since retirement is also a process affected by many other situational factors, we analyze the differential racial effects of temporal changes in the worker’s health status and work conditions (such as commuting mileage and hours of unemployment). Thus, by including variables indicating economic resources, occupational characteristics, health status, and attitude toward work, and temporal changes in many of these variables, this paper analyzes racial differences in retirement of workers who have had substantial work histories and were still working full time—75% or more of their time in this case—in their late fifties. Although this study is limited to male workers (due to the small sample size of females), it is hoped that the findings will facilitate the understanding of the retirement patterns of black as well as white older workers.

Previous Studies

According to Social Security administration (SSA) statistics, an average worker retires at age 63, and more than two thirds of all those eligible for Social Security benefits claim them before age 65 (Social Security Administration, 1990). The rate of participation in the labor force, especially of older men in the United States, has indeed been declining continuously over the past several decades. The declining working life expectancy and increasing postretirement life expectancy thus prompted a plethora of studies of determinants of early retirement or retirement on time—often referring to retirement at age 65—among older men and women. Specifically, the effects of occupational characteristics, of health status, and of Social Security and pension benefits as factors pushing or pulling people to retire have been variously dealt with, although the findings have not been conclusive (Anderson, Burkhauser, & Quinn, 1986; Boaz, 1988; Deviney & O’Rand, 1988; Diamond & Hausman, 1984; Hall & Johnson, 1980; Hardy, 1982, 1984, 1985; Hayward, 1986; Hayward & Hardy, 1985; Hayward, Hardy, & Grady, 1989; Quinn, 1978; Quinn & Burkhauser, 1983).
Surprisingly, however, many of the studies that used longitudinal or cross-sectional data sets to analyze the timing and determinants of retirement limited their samples to white men. Only a small number of studies have dealt with black-white comparisons and the retirement behavior of black workers. Possibly because of the well-documented racial differences in work histories, occupational characteristics, economic resources, and health status, previous research on the retirement of black workers, though slim in quantity, tends to confirm our belief that timing and factors associated with their retirement are often quite different from those associated with white men’s retirement (Abbott, 1980; Bould, 1980, 1986; Fillenbaum, George, & Palmore, 1985; Jackson and Gibson, 1985; Gibson, 1987; 1988).

A study by Fillenbaum, George, and Palmore (1985) based on the Retirement History Study and the National Longitudinal Surveys (of men) found an obvious difference between white and black men in predictors of retirement: Fewer categories—including demographic, socioeconomic, health, job characteristics, and attitude—were as significant for blacks as for whites. The authors stated that blacks, with their lower occupational status, have fewer options than whites, except “those basic characteristics related to keeping a job” (p. 85). Unfortunately, the specific points of difference varied between the two data sets. Bould’s study (1980), which analyzed factors influencing the choice of Social Security early retirement benefits for whites and blacks, showed that the predictors of early retirement for whites—pension eligibility, college education, family responsibilities, and health limitations—were not significant for blacks. (The author indicated that the lack of significance for health limitations and pension eligibility for blacks could be attributed to the small sample size.) Length of previous unemployment, however, was found to be the common predictor of early retirement for both black and white men (Bould, 1980, 1986).

More recent studies which included race as a covariate for older men’s labor force behavior, however, indicate that racial differences are more salient in the incidences of worker’s disability and death and in the quality of life out of the labor force than in the timing of retirement per se (Chirikos & Nestel, 1989a, 1989b; Hayward & Grady, 1990). Chirikos and Nestel
(1989a, 1989b) in fact found that black men were significantly less likely than were white men to retire while functionally capable. Hayward, Grady, Hardy, and Sommer's study (1989) found that black men were less likely to retire than white, possibly because of the fact that blacks had less accumulated savings or claims to adequate levels of retirement income. Hayward and Grady (1990) also stated that while there was little difference in working life expectancy between blacks and nonblacks, blacks lived fewer total years, enjoyed fewer years of retirement, and spent a greater amount of time disabled.

Data and Sample

The data for this study were obtained from the 1968–1987 interview waves of the Panel Studies of Income Dynamics (PSID) conducted by the Survey Research Institute of the University of Michigan. The PSID provides longitudinal information on family composition changes, labor force participation, economic status, and health status of more than 6,000 families and, especially, of household heads. The sample selection criteria for this study were (1) the original PSID sample (for the generalization of findings); (2) individuals aged 58 or 59 at the first year of observation (T0)—1968 for cohort 1, 1970 for cohort 2, 1972 for cohort 3, 1974 for cohort 4, 1976 for cohort 5, 1978 for cohort 6, and 1980 for cohort 7; (3) individuals with 10 or more years of total work history after age 18 (because the PSID began collecting work history information in 1974, those who belong to the earlier cohorts and whose work history information is missing are not included); (4) individuals who worked 1,500 or more hours at the first observation year (i.e., approximately 75% or more of work hours at T0); and (5) household heads. The age-time-cohort structure of the sample is illustrated in Fig. 1.

The total number of individuals thus selected was 528, consisting of 298 white males, 110 black males, 79 white females, and 41 black females. (The PSID oversampled blacks by more than 3 to 1.) Due to the small sample size of females, however, analysis in this study is limited to the 408 male samples. These male workers were followed up every year for seven years (T1 through T7) or until they exited the survey or no longer satisfied
the sample selection criteria by relinquishing their household head status to someone else in the family. Approximately 85% of both black and white sample members stayed throughout the study period for T1 through T7, while the other 15% dropped out in the middle, anytime between T1 and T7. The drop-outs were not significantly different from those who stayed on in terms of racial composition, level of education, and so forth.

The rationale for selecting 58–59 as beginning age is based on the fact that most retirement of stably employed men and women occurs from age 60 on. We selected people who work at least 75% of the time in their late fifties, thus focusing on those who do not appear to have unusual predisposing conditions, such as disability in young and middle ages, chronic unemployment, or sudden layoff. (Such conditions might have led them to opt for premature retirement in their early or mid-fifties.) For black males in low-status jobs who are more likely to be unemployed and in poorer health than the other workers, ages 58 or 59 are likely to be too late to start observation. But so as to highlight possible racial difference, this study aims at analyzing the retirement behavior of blacks and whites who are not drastically different in their work experiences and work hours.
The restriction of the sample to household heads is due solely to the fact that the PSID collects detailed work, income, and health information only on them (and their wives to a certain extent). The PSID individual files do not contain information on many of the variables that are chosen in this analysis. But this restriction is not judged to create an important difference between the samples of previous studies and the sample of the current study, because most men in their late 50s are in fact household heads who bear heavy economic responsibility for family members.

The data in Table 1 describe the sample characteristics at T0 with regard to level of education, work history, type of occupation, overall economic status, and marital status. As expected, although blacks and whites share similar work histories, and show no significant differences in home ownership and marital status, blacks are more likely to have worked in lower-level jobs, received lower wages, and had lower income-need ratios (the level of income vis-a-vis needs of the family adjusted for family size, as is adopted by the PSID; largely equivalent to the ratio between income and the official poverty line).

Methods and Variables

A simple discrete-time event history approach (Allison, 1982) was used, first, to examine the hazard rate of retiring—defined here as working less than 375 hours per year, or at least 75% reduction from the annual work hours at T0—and to map the distribution of the timing of retirement over the study period by black and white men. In this analysis, retirement is viewed as a risk faced by each individual per unit of time, due to a host of retirement-inducing factors, for which that individual remains at risk. The adoption of this analytic framework makes it possible to analyze differences between white men and black, not only in the risk of ever becoming retired but in the timing of the risk of being retired.

The definition of retirement has differed in many studies; some researchers defined it as complete withdrawal from the labor market, others chose reduction of work hours (usually down to 25% or less), and still others accepted the respondents'
Table 1

Sample Characteristics at T0 on Selected Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>White (N=298)</th>
<th>Black (N=110)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of education (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-8th grade</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>57.8***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th-12th grade</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>18.9***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th grade or higher</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>23.2***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of occupation (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof/admin/manag.</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>21.2***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk/sales/service</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>58.2***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer or other</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>20.5***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work history since age 18 (yrs.)</td>
<td>39.62</td>
<td>39.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly earnings ($)a</td>
<td>14.24</td>
<td>10.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income-need ratiob</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>2.85***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership (%)</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>80.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union membership (%)</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


b. The income-need ratio adjusted for family size: the need baseline is similar to the official poverty line. 

*p < .10; **p < .05; ***p < .01; these denote significant differences between whites and blacks.

self-definition. The current study chose the work-hour definition, according to which those engaged in postretirement work for pay are considered working, while those who have reduced the number of hours of work (and most likely the amount of pay) without formally retiring are considered as de facto retired. This is, anyone who reduced his work hours to less than 375 hours—at least 75% reduction of work hours as compared to those at T0—is considered retired, whether the reduction is due to unemployment, sickness, or voluntary withdrawal from the labor market. This definition is chosen because it most
accurately reflects changes in economic status due to retirement: Reduced work hours typically indicate reduced earnings. The most pronounced implication of retirement for most individuals has been and will be significant reduction in income, and the 75% reduction in work hours obviously implies drastically reduced earnings. Many previous studies chose the same threshold apparently for the same reason. Also, although retirement is a repeatable event with many retirees reentering and reexiting the labor market, only the first event in considered in this analysis. Because the purpose of this paper is to map the timing of retirement of those who have reasonably stable work histories (as shown in Table 1) and analyze the variables influencing their retirement decision as well, the first of such events is of special interest.

Second, because the purpose is also to examine factors associated with retirement, a logistic regression model is analyzed. The logistic regression model is chosen because retirement is an indicator, not continuous, dependent variable. The dependent variable was set equal to 1 if the individual who had still faced the risk of being retired at a given study period actually became retired. If the individual did not retire, the dependent variable was set equal to 0. As shown in fig. 2, explanatory variables are divided into four categories—economic resources, health status, occupational characteristics, and work attitudes. Economic resources are indicated by educational level and homeownership at T0. Hourly earnings had to be omitted from the logistic analysis because of their multicollinearity with the level of education and occupational categories. As for health status, a dummy indicating the presence or absence of any physical or nervous condition that limits the types of work or the amount of work at each observation year is chosen. It is judged that the temporal changes in the presence or absence of any disabling condition(s) are important for retirement decision.

The occupational characteristics category includes types of occupations, pension coverage, commuting mileage, and the number of hours the sample member was unemployed. Unfortunately, the information on pension in early interviewing years of the PSID was not adequate to use as a continuous variable. The commuting mileage is included because, especially in
### Figure 2

**Description of Explanatory Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Time dependency</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic level at T0</td>
<td>Time constant</td>
<td>1: 0-8th grade; 2: 9th-12th grade;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3: 13th grade or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership at T0</td>
<td>Time constant</td>
<td>0: Does not own; 1: own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of disability at each</td>
<td>Time varying</td>
<td>0: no; 1: yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>observation year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupational characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation at T0</td>
<td>Time constant</td>
<td>1: Professional/managerial/administrative;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2: Clerk/sales/service;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3: laborer or other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>Time Varying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension coverage at T0</td>
<td>Time constant</td>
<td>0: Not covered; 1: covered (for those who do not have the coverage information, pension received after retirement was adopted: 0: less than $100 a year in 1987 dollars; 1: $100 or more)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuting mileage in the year prior to each observation year</td>
<td>Time varying</td>
<td>Each way to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual amount of time unemployed in the year prior to each observation year</td>
<td>Time varying</td>
<td>In hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work attitude</td>
<td>Time varying</td>
<td>Stated, “would have preferred to work less even if less money”: 0: other; 1: yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
cities where most of the sample members are likely to work, it is often a primary source of daily work-related hassles which are likely to affect both the physical and mental health of an older worker.

The work attitude variable is based on the annual interview question which probes whether the sample member would have preferred less work in the previous year even if he would have received less money. It is believed that, other things being equal, those who answer the question affirmatively are more likely to choose retirement over work. The relationship between the dependent variable and the work attitude variable, when the other variables are controlled, may thus help us understand whether a desire for leisure is an important reason for retirement.

The logistic model specifies how the log odd of retirement among those at risk of retiring at a given time depends on these explanatory variables. So, the number of cases entered in the model is equal to the number of person years or the cumulative number of sample members who still faced the risk of retirement at each successive study period, T1 through T7. If we denote the hazard of retirement by \( P(t) \), the probability that an individual will retire at time \( t \), given that the individual is still at risk of retiring at the time, the logit model is written as follows:

\[
\log \left( \frac{P(t)}{1-P(t)} \right) = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2(t),
\]

where \( X_1 \) is a vector of time-constant explanatory variables, \( X_2 \) is a vector of time-varying explanatory variables, and \( b_1 \) and \( b_2 \) denote the change in the logit (log odds) for each one-unit change in \( X_1 \) and \( X_2 \). The log-odd coefficients of categorical and dichotomous explanatory variables—level of education, types of occupation, homeownership, disability status, pension coverage, work attitude, and race—represent the comparative effect of each category to the effect of a reference category. The log-odd coefficients of each explanatory variable can be easily converted to odds and probabilities by taking antilogs. But, because the logistic model is nonlinear in odds and probabilities, as opposed to log odds, the size of the effect in terms of odds and probabilities depends on where it is measured.
Findings

Timing of retirement. As shown in Table 2 and Fig. 3, the estimated hazard rates of retirement of the two groups are quite different. (The larger the coefficient of the hazard rate, the higher the likelihood of retirement.) For white males, the hazard rate rose continuously, marking a minor peak at T4 (sample ages 62–63), but going down briefly at T5, to increase again at T6. It should be noted that T4 coincides with the eligibility for social security early retirement benefits. For black males, the minor peak was reached at T2 (sample ages 60–61), but the overall increment in hazard rates was much smoother than that for white males. As a consequence, the cumulative proportion of surviving—the proportion of those who are still working—for black workers at T7 was higher than that for white workers. Thus, it shows that black males who continue to work into their 60s are less likely to retire than are their white counterparts.

Factors associated with retirement. The results of the logistic regression for all sample members clearly show that race was not a significant determining factor of the retirement of older male workers. Other things being equal, black older male workers were neither more nor less likely to retire than white older male workers. The significant determinants of retirement for all these people were the presence of a disabling condition(s) and work attitudes. That is, those who indicated that they had any disabling condition(s) and those who expressed preference for leisure to work in the previous year were more likely to retire than those who did not.

As for white males alone, the disability status and work attitude also turned out to be significant determinants. As for black males alone, however, the work attitude was insignificant, whereas, in addition to the disability status, homeownership, 9–12 years of education, types of occupation, length of unemployment, and commuting mileage were. That is, homeowners were less likely to retire than renters, and those who had 9–12 years of education were more likely to retire than those who had 13 or more years of education. Those who had worked in professional, administrative, or managerial positions were much less likely to retire than those who had worked as
Table 2

Racial Differences in the Estimated Hazard Rates of Retirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number at risk</th>
<th>Number retired</th>
<th>Proportion terminating</th>
<th>Proportion surviving</th>
<th>Cum. prop. surviving</th>
<th>Hazard rate (SE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>.171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T7</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.337</td>
<td>.177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,526</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
laborers and others, while those who had worked in clerical, sales, or service positions were more likely to retire than the laborers and others. A further analysis in fact indicated that the hourly earnings of those in clerical, sales, or service jobs were significantly lower than the hourly earnings of those in the other categories ($7.05 versus $11.09 for laborers/others and $17.58 for professionals, administrators, or managers, p<.001). Thus, the significance of homeownership and types of occupation implies that black male workers who are in upper economic strata tend to delay their retirement as compared to those in lower economic strata. The positive correlation between the number of
Table 3

Racial Differences in Factors Associated with Retirement: Weighted ML logistic Regression Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B  (SE)</td>
<td>B  (SE)</td>
<td>B  (SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.952***</td>
<td>-2.722***</td>
<td>-5.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.477)</td>
<td>(.522)</td>
<td>(5.290)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (white)</td>
<td>-.112</td>
<td>(.139)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-8th grade</td>
<td>.155 (.102)</td>
<td>.134 (.119)</td>
<td>-.045 (.303)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th-12th grade</td>
<td>-.018 (.985)</td>
<td>-.021 (.110)</td>
<td>.604* (.332)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership</td>
<td>-.052 (.099)</td>
<td>.108 (.117)</td>
<td>-.434**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability status</td>
<td>.384*** (.076)</td>
<td>.385*** (.089)</td>
<td>.835 (.184)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof/admin/manag.</td>
<td>-.067 (.105)</td>
<td>-.045 (.120)</td>
<td>-1.308***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk/sales/service</td>
<td>-.107 (.108)</td>
<td>-.137 (.126)</td>
<td>.560***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension coverage</td>
<td>-.091 (.067)</td>
<td>-.028 (.078)</td>
<td>-.183 (.181)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuting mileage</td>
<td>-.003 (.007)</td>
<td>-.009 (.009)</td>
<td>.060***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual hours of unemployment</td>
<td>.000 (.000)</td>
<td>4.8E-05 (.001)</td>
<td>.001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work attitude</td>
<td>1.387 (.453)</td>
<td>1.355*** (.509)</td>
<td>2.432 (5.290)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-2log L.R.                     |          |            |            |
| Model Chi-square (df)         | 59.47 (11)| 43.32 (10) | 68.18 (10) |
|                               | .0001     | .0001      | .0001      |
| p<                            | .723       | .690       | .933       |

* p<.10; ** p<.05; *** p<.01
unemployed hours and retirement is also supportive of the higher likelihood of retirement among those who are in lower economic strata. Although the significance of unemployed hours was expected especially because of our definition of retirement, it should be noted that the same variable was not significant for white workers. The most interesting of all, however, is the significant positive correlation between commuting mileage and the likelihood of retirement. Although there was no significant racial difference in commuting mileage, the mileage explained a large amount of variance of black retirement only.

Discussion and Summary

As for the timing of retirement, comparison between white and black males shows that the hazard rates of retirement for blacks up to ages 60–61 are higher than that for whites, but after that it is generally lower than that for whites. Apparently, there exists a momentum for black male workers when those who want to or are forced to retire early actually retire before, on or soon after they turned 60. But those who do not retire this early appear to maintain a fairly low level of exit from the labor market until they reach or pass age 65. On the other hand, the timing of white male retirement appears to be influenced, to a certain extent, by the availability of Social Security early retirement benefits. The retirement tide is noticeably high when they are 62–63 years old, drops the following year, then keeps rising sharply thereafter.

Though interesting, the above findings are in congruence with the findings of previous studies which showed that black men are not more likely to retire early than are white men while functionally capable. What this study adds to the existing body of knowledge is that black men who share similar work histories and family responsibilities (household headship) with white men are in fact more likely to keep working into their old age than are their white counterparts. Another important implication of this study is that the early retirement of black men is less likely to have been encouraged by the Social Security early retirement benefits than that of white men. When black men retire early, they do so before they are eligible for the Social Security
early retirement benefits (or pension benefits as indicated by the multivariate analysis). Thus, the early retirement of black men appears to be influenced more by disability, unemployment, or certain occupational characteristics which are beyond their control than by their own desire for leisure and availability of retirement income. The involuntary nature of black men's early retirement, as compared to the voluntary nature of white men's early retirement, needs to be recognized in the future research.

Although race itself is not a significant determinant of retirement when other variables are controlled, the separate logistic regression analyses of factors associated with the retirement of whites and blacks show that there are more differences than similarities between these two groups. The sole similarity between the two is the positive association between their retirement and disability, which explains the largest amount of variance for both whites and blacks. Thus, health status is again confirmed to be the most significant as well as common predictor of retirement of black and white workers. Although the validity of self-reported assessment of health status as a reason for retirement has been a matter of controversy (Muller & Boaz, 1988), it should be noted that the PSID sample was not probed to answer the specific question regarding disability status in lieu of their retirement. Therefore, the response is judged to be more spontaneous than in the case of other surveys of retirement behaviors in which people tended to mention poor health as a socially desirable reason for their retirement.

The differences between whites and blacks are more noticeable than the sole similarity. For example, good jobs with prestige and/or high pays apparently kept older black men at work, whereas they did not make any difference among whites. Unemployment in the previous year kept blacks away from the world of work, either voluntarily or involuntarily, while it did not affect whites. (In fact, those who experienced unemployment in the previous year might have been still unemployed, but are regarded in this analysis as retired.) Black homeowners, who are more likely to be represented by those who had higher education and held good jobs, were also less likely to retire than black renters, whereas homeownership had nothing to do with the retirement of white men. Black older male workers who travel a
longer distance to work are also more likely to retire. Why it affects black males more than white males is not clear, except that such a hassle and cost of commuting are likely to aggravate the blacks' work situation, which is already worse than the whites' because of lower wages and often a less amenable work environment. These findings from the multivariate analyses, together with those from the analysis of the hazard rates, certainly confirm what previous studies of black retirement have shown. That is, black men at the lower end of the economic strata are more likely to retire than are black men at the higher end of the economic strata.

The insignificance of white males' types of occupation (even in the absence of the education variable) has been previously found by many studies, whereas the insignificance of pension coverage is contradictory to some previous findings. It is possible that the eligibility for the Social Security benefits, as suggested by the timing of retirement, along with a pension rather than the availability of a pension alone might influence the decision to retire. Also, the pension variable for older cohorts is not so accurate as it should be, because the PSID collected information on occupational pensions only intermittently prior to 1984. The most interesting finding with respect to white males, however, is the relationship between work attitude and retirement. The findings indicate that, other things being equal, those who appear to be tired of working are more likely to retire than those who have positive attitude toward work. Thus, desire for leisure, in conjunction with the eligibility for the Social Security early retirement benefits (as shown by the hazard rate), is judged to influence white males' retirement decision.

Overall, this analysis shows that, contrary to some previous findings, the retirement of black males is associated with a wider variety of factors than that of white males. It is true that blacks, in general, might have fewer options for retirement than whites (see Fillenbaum et al., 1985). Previous findings have also indicated that quite different factors affect middle-class black retirement than poor black retirement (Gibson, 1987). But, in general, blacks contain a lower degree of within-group differences in preretirement status than do whites. Although the gap between the black middle class and black poor has been
increasing (due to the increasing assimilation of the black middle class with the white middle class in contrast to the residualization of the black poor), the homogeneity within blacks in their income and occupational status is still greater than that within whites. For example, as shown in Table 1, unlike the white male sample almost 60% of the black male samples are concentrated in clerical/sales/service jobs. This higher level of homogeneity with the black samples may well be the source of the inflated statistical association between variables.

In conclusion, the separate analyses of the timing and determinants of the retirement of black and white males with similar work histories indicate that there are important racial differences. Above all, however, black early retirees, as compared to white early retirees, are more likely to be the ones who appear to have little economic protection in their retirement. Therefore, it is recommended that future retirement income policies address the plight of these black retirees.

References


The Elusive Boundaries of Social Work

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University of Hong Kong

Repeated attempts to conceptualize social work have assumed that social work should and can have a precisely defined domain. One suggestion is to equate social work with personal social services. This article suggests that the uniqueness of social work lies in the very absence of defined boundaries. Implications for social work practice are identified, in particular social work's heavy dependence on resource controllers, and the consequent need of social work education to shift its traditional focus from client-centered interventions to managing non-client interactions.

The purpose of this article is to narrow the range of definitions of what social work is about. It examines social work's role in the division of labor and the resources its practitioners control, and demonstrates that the function of social work is clearly different from that of the personal social services. This, in turn, enables us to extrapolate the specific roles social workers are required to perform, and to examine what implications they have for social work education. The major conclusion of the analysis is that social work is a residual institution with boundaryless areas of concern, which, paradoxically, requires that social work agencies command no material resources other than labor. Consequently, social workers must meet most of their charge indirectly, mainly by brokerage and advocacy. This also suggests that social work education must lessen its focus on client-centered interventions in favor of teaching practitioners how to work with other, non-client, resource controllers.

Introduction

During the last thirty years, the distinction between social work and personal social services has slowly eroded, leaving many to wonder whether social work can sustain an independent identity, and, if so, what this identity should be. One answer to this question is to subsume personal social services
under social work. In the United Kingdom, this has partially happened already. Scotland's Social Work Departments embrace such diverse services as home help, occupational therapy and probation, and though Social Services Departments in England and Wales are less comprehensive, they "have been widely assumed to be social work writ large" (Webb & Wistow, 1987, p. 195). In the United States, similar professional expansion is still a desideratum: "As educators are to schools, lawyers to courts, and doctors to hospitals", argue Kahn and Kamerman (1980), "so social workers are to the personal social services. Social work must . . . recognize that unless (it) seizes the opportunity . . . (it) will be . . . the only human service claimant for professional status unable or unwilling to assume responsibility for a social institution to devise and be accountable for a delivery system."

For an aspiring profession, such steps may be politically astute. The acquisition of its own turf would provide social work an independent organizational base on which, in time, it could consolidate its status. Yet before social work thus broadens its domain, it is necessary to enquire whether it can adopt this strategy in the light of its societal purpose and objectives.

Social Work's Social Mandate and Concerns

Defining social work's purpose and objectives is no simple task. Generations of scholars have tried to clarify what this profession does and to what ends it aspires, but regardless of the theoretical, ideological or practical perspectives employed, social work defies a generally accepted definition, or even an accepted description. The first conceptualization of social work's social assignment was presented by Abraham Flexner (1915) in his address to the National Conference of Charities and Correction on the topic "Is Social Work a Profession?". More recent attempts were undertaken by Wootton (1959), Lubove (1965), Atherton (1969), North (1972), the National Institute for Social Work (The Barclay Report) (1982), Rosenfeld (1983), Popple (1985), Wakefield (1988), and Specht (1990). Other discussions of this topic were published in two special issues of Social Work
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(22(4), 1977; 26(1), 1981), but more deal with how social work should be carried out than with its ends. In fact, it lacks even an elementary consensus about its concerns. As Meyer (1981, pp. 71-74) eloquently phrased this phenomenon: “Architects design buildings, doctors deal with sickness and health, lawyers practice law, and educators teach. (But) social workers are concerned... With what?... It would be reassuring to have this author, or some other professor, dean, president, or guru announce the purpose of social work.” Consequently, social work invites its practitioners to apply its teachings each in a personal way. This is clearly reflected in the diversity of duties social workers perform, in their varied employments, and in the virtual absence of an internationally accepted core curriculum for social work training (Brauns & Kramer, 1986).

The following discussion is predicated on the assumption that the purpose and objectives of social work derive from its self-proclaimed domain and from the profession’s institutional function: that is, social work is given a mandate to perform certain roles and to refrain from performing others. It is also assumed that the resources an occupation requires are dictated by its purpose and domain rather than that such purpose and domain are determined by available resources.

1 Social Work as Society’s Safety-Net

Human societies have developed intermeshing networks of informal, private (commercial and voluntary), and public institutions, which, together with personal effort, are expected to meet all social needs. Yet even in the most advanced and organized society it is inevitable that these institutions fall short of meeting all expectations. Indeed, this could not be otherwise, unless needs were narrowly defined, resources were abundant and cost-free, and the uniqueness of the individual was denied. As a result, all societies require a back-up or safety-net mechanism to carry “the burden of failures in social policies” (Barclay Report, 1982, p. 45; see, too, Gustafsson, 1986; Pinker, 1990) to provide for those needs which they are otherwise unable to meet. Today this role is mainly assumed by what is generally known as ‘social work’.
Use of the safety-net analogy to describe social work's role is relatively common. For example, Kahn (1967) describes this role as furnishing the essential support to human welfare which is not provided by other social services. A less restrictive use of this analogy, in the sense that it frees social work from its traditional association with social services, is provided by Rosenfeld (1983). In a revealing attempt to tackle social work's concerns, he defines the profession as that societal arrangement which covers all spheres of well-being that are not provided by others. This is also the approach taken by Shlakman (1972, p. 195), who observes that social work is available "when all else fails". Yet what all these writers fail to appreciate (or are politically unwilling to accept) are the implications of this analogy for social work's concerns and for the ensuing modes of practice social workers are required to adopt or must refrain from adopting. This is mainly because it has been accepted at face-value rather than being interpreted in its metaphorical sense. In order to illuminate the differences between these two approaches and their consequences for social work, the following discussion examines the structural properties of a safety-net, and how they relate to social work.

The most obvious property of a safety-net is that its concerns are residual. The safety-net covers only those areas which are unattended or inadequately attended to by other institutions.

Second, the safety-net's concerns are fluid. Because peoples' needs and need-meeting arrangements are dynamic, the boundaries of the safety-net are constantly "moved, enlarged or expanded, shaped and reshaped" (Shlakman, 1972, p. 207). Hence, a residual institution invariably lacks attachment to any given field of activity.

Third, the safety-net's concerns are structurally determined. They are externally prescribed to the safety-net by the system it serves, and are therefore beyond its control.

These three properties of a safety-net fully apply to social work. As the previously quoted descriptions of social work's role suggest, its concerns can only be defined in the negative, by deducing them from the particular context which social work serves. This implies that we can only learn of social work's concerns from the range of needs that the present (primary)
need-meeting institutions are expected to satisfy, and from the extent to which these needs are not being met. The more effective these primary institutions, the smaller the task left to social work, and vice versa. Hence, as Rosenfeld (1983) observes, since the primary need-meeting networks and the circumstances which govern them are inherently dynamic, it is futile a priori to assign to social work finite spheres of operation. As the primary need-meeting arrangements expand or contract, improve or worsen, so social work's concerns shift and alter.

Rosenfeld goes on to argue, however, that because of this dynamism, "the particular (spheres of operation) that are or ought to be within social work's focus of attention 'here and now' is an issue to be thrashed out anew within each societal context and at each point of time" (1983, p. 187). In other words, he suggests that social work's concerns are negotiable, and, therefore, that they are at least partially controlled by the profession. This conclusion is also reached by Hanlan (1978, p. 56), although somewhat less sweepingly. Analysing social work from the perspective of social administration, he suggests that "while (this approach) does not deny that social work may initiate from within its own profession a definition of its boundaries . . . (it) does assume that the perimeters of the profession are constantly bounded and determined by events in the larger system."

Yet while Hanlan's and Rosenfeld's position can be understood in the sense that every profession seeks to determine its own field of practice, they confuse political desire with reality. For what both writers overlook is that since social work's realm is residual, it cannot a priori determine its concerns, nor can it do so in the 'here and now'. Clearly, social work can initiate how it contends with its charge; but as a residual institution, entrusted to meet all 'leftover' needs, what it is supposed to contend with is dictated by the society it serves.

Another misconception engendered by the common analogy of social work to a safety-net concerns the fluidity of this mechanism. This feature is frequently interpreted as bestowing social work with a role which will no longer be required once the primary need-meeting institutions fully mature and acquire their 'natural' capabilities. For example, one of the earliest
descriptions of social work depicts it as an endeavor which is meant to supplement other professions pending their complete development, whereupon it presumably will have outlived its usefulness (Flexner, 1915). Likewise, Kahn (1972) argues that to regard social work as a residual provision is to accept that it will soon disappear. Indeed, this notion has been so entrenched in social work, that being a finite commodity has even been idealized as its ultimate goal. For example, Tillich (1962, p. 14), categorically states that the aim of all social work is “to make itself superfluous”, and Rosenfeld (1983, p. 187) concludes that once social workers have reduced the incongruities between particular needs and the resources that meet these needs they “have worked themselves out of a job”.

The popularity of regarding social work as a finite commodity can doubtlessly be traced to a misreading of Wilensky and Lebeaux’s influential distinction between ‘institutional’ and ‘residual’ approaches to social welfare (1965, pp. 138-140). The first regards social services as a permanent social fixture, whereas in the residual approach, social services attach “to emergency functions and (are) expected to withdraw when the regular social structure is again working properly”. It should be noted, however, that at no point do these authors suggest that residual provisions are terminable. They are only expected to withdraw once institutional arrangements can take over, which implies that they have an ongoing, though perhaps sporadic, function. A residual provision can therefore not be dismantled. Like a standby football player, it must be ever present and ready to go into action when the need arises. If the game goes well, the player’s services may not be required, but he must always be available. Hence it is incorrect to conclude that “moving from one incongruity to the next characterizes what social work does” (Rosenfeld, 1983, p. 187). It must cover all incongruities at all times, though at different points in time it may more intensively intervene in particular arenas and cover other arenas only latently. Using Wilensky and Lebeaux’s terminology, this function could be labelled ‘institutional residualness’, which means that the boundaries of a safety-net must continuously encompass the entire system it serves. When translated to social work—which plays the understudy role to all society’s primary need-meeting
arrangements—this quite literally means the profession is concerned with all unmet social needs.

2 Social Work's Holistic Domain

Social work's concern with all unmet social needs also derives from its self-proclaimed domain, as determined, for example, by its generic outlook on needs.

In social work, the generic outlook on needs is interpreted in two basic ways. One suggests that practitioners should take a panoramic view of individuals, in which they address 'the full gamut' of their clients' needs (Cooper, 1980). This means that social workers should be responsible for assessing all the needs of their clients, and since, as a social service director commented recently, "if you identify any need, you have to provide a service for it" (Community Care, No. 957, 11.3.93, p. 1)—they must also attend to these needs. Thus, according to the British Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics (1975), "(a social worker must) acknowledge a responsibility to help clients obtain all those services and right to which they are entitled, both from the agency in which he works and from any other appropriate source".

Hoshino (1973) identifies the role which attaches to this panoramic view of needs as being 'functionally general', which he contrasts with the more 'functionally specific' role of other professions. For example, a person may request his lawyer to help him to meet some personal financial need, but the lawyer is not obliged to assist him; she is only required to serve her clients' legal interests. In contrast, social workers, are responsible for meeting all of their clients' needs. This is clearly expressed in their agencies' open-door policy, which, in effect, is an offer to help any person with any type of need (Weissman, 1976). Moreover, according to this interpretation of genericism, social workers also bear responsibility for 'concealed needs', which means that they are not only potentially concerned with all social needs, but actively seek them out.

The second interpretation of genericism suggests that social workers should holographically focus only one or two needs. Social phenomena, according to this approach, are intertwined with their entire environment, so that none can be dealt with
in isolation. Social workers must therefore "take into consideration any and all aspects of life that concern the individual with whom (they) work" (Dean, 1977, pp. 370-71), which once again requires them to attend to all of life's elements, even when dealing with only one particular need.

To summarize, the foregoing discussion demonstrates that social work's long-standing attempt to stake out specific boundaries of practice has been inappropriate. The profession's social role, and its self-proclaimed ideology on how needs should be met, both indicate that social work's concerns are the totality of unmet social needs. This also explains why the definition and description of social work are so baffling. Attending to 'everything' lends itself neither to description nor to definition, the very purposes of which are to differentiate between phenomena. "Social work", as Howe (1986, p. 160) remarked, simply "has no essential nature"; its uniqueness lies in its lack of defined contours.

Social Workers' Command of Societal Resources

If social work, which is "a very practical activity" (Jordan, 1984, p. 1), is concerned with all unmet social needs, its objective must be to meet these needs to the best of its ability. This it can accomplish in one of three ways: by meeting needs directly (for example, by providing people with accommodation), by meeting needs indirectly (for example, by teaching people how to acquire accommodation), or by some combination thereof.

In order to meet needs directly, social workers must have the effective authority to dispense the resources their clients require. They must either personally control these resources, or be able "to commit resources without the prior consent of those who will be called on ultimately to supply (them)" (Gamson, 1968, p. 43). In the absence of either of these preconditions, direct need-meeting is impossible practitioners must resort to indirect need meeting, the essence of which is to prevail upon others to help their clients, or help their clients to help themselves. Hence how social workers go about achieving their ends depends on the need-meeting resources they control, or whose allocation they are able to influence.
In general, social work agencies control few resources other than labor. Organizations become the recipients of resources on the basis of prescribed spheres of action and normatively approved modes of intervention (Benson, 1975). Social work agencies, with their residual function, lack such independent bases on which to sustain resource demand. Also, given that the effectiveness of a need-meeting provision is usually positively correlated with the level of resources with which it is provided (Sutherland, 1977), other institutions’ resource demands will take precedence over the demands of social work. They will justifiably argue that it was society’s failure to provide them with sufficient resources from the outset that precluded their ability to meet their charge. Hence, by their very function, social work agencies can command but a residue of societal resources, and must therefore resort mainly to indirect modes of intervention.

For field-grade social workers, the effect of their agencies’ lack of command of resources is even more pronounced. Carrying a functionally general role, social workers master technologies with which they can directly meet only few of the needs they encounter. In this, they differ from other professionals whose more limited purviews enable them to use more specific technologies, and to execute most of their tasks within the confines of their own occupations. For example, physicians can perform substantial parts of their job on their own, and they mainly rely on other medical personnel to complement their work. In contrast, social work’s current technology mainly consists of various therapeutic skills. When these fall short of helping them to attain their objectives, they must rely on others. “Having localized his problem”, as Flexner (1915, p. 585) wrote long ago, “... is (the social worker) not usually driven to invoke the specialized agency(?)... There is illness to be dealt with - the doctor is needed; ignorance requires the school; poverty calls for the legislator, organized charity, and so on. The very variety of the situations he encounters compels him to be not (an independent) agent so much as the mediator invoking this or that professional agency”.

Another reason why field-grade social workers are largely unable to assist their clients directly is that even when their
agencies control resources, they are rarely given the effective authority to use them. In order to provide their clients with even the most minute of these resources, field-level workers must generally receive prior authorization, and are often even curtailed in appealing to other agencies by having to get their letters counter-signed by a superior (Hill, 1979; Simpkin, 1983). It is therefore inevitable that the primary strategy they adopt is meeting needs indirectly.

That social workers must mainly intervene indirectly is also indicated by their social role. As we have seen, a safety-net’s role is residual, it is neither a primary need-meeting institution nor a substitute for these institutions’ endeavors. Indeed, should it become such a substitute, it would itself fulfil a primary need-meeting function, whereupon another safety-net would have to be established to deal with whatever needs the previous occupier of the role has left unmet. A typical example was recently provided by the murder of an Israeli social worker by a psychotic client. In the ensuing discussions, it was suggested that in order to avoid similar incidents, social services departments should no longer assist such people. Yet should this occur, another agency would inevitably have to be established to assist all who would now be barred from social services departments. As this is clearly a contradiction, social work is a priori precluded from meeting needs directly. This was fully recognized by the Barclay Report (1982, pp. 105), which asserted that social workers’ “primary task (is) to motivate others to care, and to enable them to take part in the caring process, rather than to take on themselves the responsibility for action and intervention”.

It was mainly to emphasize this structurally determined indirect mode of social work intervention—which clearly distinguishes it from personal social services, whose function is to provide direct practical aid—that social work’s safety-net role is being examined in this article metaphorically. This is because the face-value analogy of social work as a safety-net leads to a quite different mode of practice.

The face-value conceptualization of a social safety-net regards society’s need-meeting institutions as hierarchically superimposed in an inverse pyramid, with each layer attending to needs which remain unsatisfactorily met by the institutions
immediately above it. The broadest and uppermost layer consists of all individuals and their informal care networks. This is followed by market economy. Together, these institutions are assumed to be people’s ‘natural’ need-meeting channels. Third in line is the public sector. These agencies, and especially “those which provide direct services to meet immediate consumption needs of individuals and families” (Wilensky & Lebeaux, 1965, p. 139), cover the structural failures of the preceding institutions. Finally, at the bottom of the inverted pyramid, are mutual-aid and charity organizations which are expected to provide for the residue of needs which have remained unmet by the other, more institutional, organs above them.

In this configuration, social work is lodged somewhere between the last two layers. Its exact position depends on whether it is primarily regarded as a public service, or as a voluntary enterprise. This positioning also determines whether social work plays an ‘end of the line’ role to all of society’s need-meeting schemes, or merely to some. But by the very nature of this analogy, social work is misleadingly held to perform a direct need-meeting role, rather than the indirect need-meeting role which its social function dictates.

Need-Meeting and the Field-Grade Social Worker

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, social workers can help their clients by using only one of the following strategies, or combinations thereof. They can either:

- Restore, enhance, or promote people’s independent need-meeting capacities;
- Restore, enhance, or promote the need-meeting capacities of the primary institutions; or
- Expedite required resources from their controllers, and negotiate that they be utilized by their clients directly.

The first strategy assumes that removing personal constraints in the need-meeting process is sufficient to satisfy all unmet needs. This is the market economy solution to need-meeting, where competent, fully-informed citizens are expected to navigate their own way through life after receiving adequate advice or rehabilitative therapy (Ringeling, 1981). In other
words, individual consumers are assumed to be their own need-meeting guarantors. Likewise, the second strategy assumes that needs can be met simply by removing obstructions in service delivery, only here one opts for an administrative need-meeting model which relies on organizational, rather than personal, accountability as the need-meeting guarantor.

Each of these two assumptions and their respective courses of action may, under certain conditions, yield positive results. Yet it is improbable that either can suffice to meet all, or even most, unmet needs due to the fact that both individuals and society's primary need-meeting arrangements are inherently fallible. Hence, if social workers are to attempt to ensure that all of their clients' unmet needs are satisfied, they must primarily rely on the third strategy, namely prevail on others to attend to their clients' needs. In operational terms, this means they must primarily be brokers and advocates who intercede with society's direct need-meeting institutions on their clients' behalf.

Implications

The fact that social workers mainly have to rely on indirect modes of practice implies that their primary targets of intervention are not their clients but other resource providers. This does not mean that social workers cannot try to help their clients directly, or that such help would not satisfy particular types of unmet needs. For example, they might assess that all that is required in a particular case is psychological support or practical advice on how to approach a third party who is both able and willing to meet the client's needs. Rather, what indirect practice means is that social workers are likely to be far more frequently involved with persons who are not their clients than with persons who are. Indeed, mounting evidence which demonstrates that working with clients face-to-face occupies but a third of most social workers' time or less, amply attests that this has always been the case (Goldberg & Warburton, 1979; Austin & Caragonne, 1980; Jones, 1983; Bar-On, 1990).

A second implication of indirect practice is that social workers are heavily dependent on other resource controllers (Bar-On, 1990). If the resources were easily accessible, this would hardly pose a problem. However, since perfect resource accessibility
rarely exists, social workers are critically handicapped by the uncertainty of whether or not the resources they and their clients require will be made available. Consequently, one of the most essential tasks of social workers face is how to manage this dependency, that is, how to prevail on others to dispense their resources in such a way that they will meet the needs of the social workers’ clients.

Conclusions

The foregoing analysis of social work’s social role leads to at least two fundamental conclusions. First, social workers are not akin to the personal social services as teachers are to schools, or lawyers to courts. The personal social services are charged with providing direct assistance in identifiable fields, and therefore need to control as many societal resources as the economy allows. In contrast, social work has no a priori definable boundaries, and since its practitioners are structurally destined to rely mainly on indirect strategies of intervention, social work agencies require few resources other than labor and supporting administrative services. Politically, this still leaves open the question of locating social work’s organizational base, but clearly the answer does not lie with the personal social services.

Second, social workers have to accept that their essential job is advocacy and brokerage, where they represent their clients’ unmet needs before other non-client resource controllers. Social work education must therefore moderate its traditional focus on client-centered interventions, and strengthen the teaching of applied sociology and political science, which can better equip social workers with techniques of intra- and inter-organizational resource mobilization. As Wootton (1959, p. 296) observed, the “middleman function is itself now so expert a service as to qualify for professional status in its own right. The range of need for which public and voluntary services now provide, and the complexity of relevant rules and regulations have become so great, that . . . the service rendered by those who are masters of all of this and much more beside, and who can mobilize these facilities intelligently and efficiently to suit the requirements of particular individuals, is both skilled and honourable.”
References


Public Child Welfare Professionals—Those Who Stay

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Public child welfare workers—especially those working in the “trenches”—are the life blood of child protection. Yet, the ever present challenge is keeping committed and talented professionals in the field. This article is based on a 1990 study which examined the phenomena of staying in the field through the eyes of the professionals who have done so. The study investigated the life histories and work experiences of 18 selected child welfare workers in a mid-western state through data gathered from in-depth written and oral life histories. Findings provide insight into the world of the child welfare worker.

Introduction

Over the last decade, the field of public child welfare has experienced a dramatic and simultaneous change in the scope of services delivered and the personnel delivering them. While the scope of services demands greater social work intervention, the field has experienced a decrease in employment opportunities and reclassification of positions to delete professionally desirable educational requirements for entry level positions (Kadushin, 1987). A 1988 study conducted by the National Child Welfare Resource Center on Management and Administration, University of Southern Maine, showed that only 28% of the child welfare staff sample had a BSW or MSW degree (Lieberman, Hornby and Russell 1988, p. 487).

While public child welfare professionals are concerned with maintaining professional credibility and proficient staff at this time of increased need, the “routine” demands of the job make it difficult to take vacations, “flex time” and time away for training. During the late 1970’s and early 1980’s focus on burnout
in human services, public child welfare received a great deal of attention for these reasons (Cherniss, 1980; Daley, 1979; Farber, 1983; Jayaratne and Chess, 1984; Maslach, 1982; Pines et al. 1981) and the concern continues today (NASW, 1989) as turnover rates reach crisis proportions as high as 40% in some states (PCSAO, 1990).

Yet even in combination with adverse working conditions, increasing liability and high caseloads—some practitioners do not leave the field. The University of Southern Maine study revealed that nearly half of the sample (N=2438; 46%) had worked at their current agency for 5 years. When the work experience at current and previous settings were combined, respondents had worked an average of 9.13 years with the median of 7.5 years (Lieberman, Hornby and Russell 1988, p. 487). Obviously some of them find satisfaction in what they do, make a career of it and find ways to cope. It is this group on which this study is focused.

Study Design and Participants

The study undertaken was a naturalistic study of public child welfare workers who chose to remain in the field. Several questions provided focus to the research. What led participants to public child welfare? What experiences have had an impact on their lives? How have the participants seen themselves in the organizational context? What is the relationship between burnout and staying? The research questions were designed to evoke the telling of life stories and work experiences of these professionals and, ultimately why child welfare workers stay in the field.

The naturalistic paradigm (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) was selected to answer the research questions, because it was important that the paradigm fit the humanness and sensitivity of the topic. Similarly, the flexibility of a human instrument (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Denzin, 1989) was needed to respond to and sense the many personal and environmental cues that came to light in the study.

The study employed a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) because existing theory has only looked at
the “leaving” phenomena of public child welfare workers. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that a distinction must be made between investigators who know by existent theory what they must find out (conventional research) and investigators who do not know by existent theory what they must find out (naturalistic research). The two situations require very distinctive forms of theory utilization and research design. There have been many attempts to look at the bureaucratic setting of public child welfare practice, burnout and the professional’s exodus from the field. These have been quantitative encounters with the phenomena and lack the personal explanations that only individuals can give.

The participants in this study were recruited from a pool of child welfare practitioners actively working in public child welfare agencies in a midwestern state. The participants were identified through several methods: identification through a statewide network of Children Services administrators; a written request sent to agency executives; formal and informal networks available to the inquirer, and; “word-of-mouth” identification by other participants. Utilizing these different methods of identification, and a maximum variation sampling (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Bogdan and Biklen, 1982), where the inquirer expanded the sample until informational redundancy was reached. At this point, sampling was terminated.

The sample for this study consisted of eighteen child welfare professionals from across the state of Ohio. The participants were evenly distributed among metropolitan (n=5), mid-size (n=7) and rural counties (n=6). There were fifteen white females, one African American male, one African American female, and one Hispanic female. The mean age of the participants was 37 years (Brode, 1990).

The participants met several criteria. They had attained a BSW or related degree in the course of their career, or were license eligible in the State of Ohio. They had practiced in the field of public child welfare for a minimum of five years, having not practiced in an area outside of child welfare for a period exceeding two consecutive years. They currently performed some degree of direct service and had not returned to the field within the last year after practicing in another area of social work.
Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher adopted a primarily biographical inquiry for this study. The biographical method assumes that human behavior can be understood from the perspectives of the people involved. The researcher was also interested in looking at the relationship between the participants' personal experiences and the total child welfare experience. The participants' individual stories and interpretations were the central data for this study. The researcher collected data from participants in three different ways: a written, guided life history, completion of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach, 1982), and a follow-up, audio-recorded interview. The written life history was used to guide the oral interview which followed and captured biographical data in five areas: general background information, self-description, relationships, education and professional experiences. The MBI was administered to supplement the life history data and measured three aspects of the burnout syndrome using the Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment scales. The oral interview data refined the life history information and explored the issues involved in the relationship between current employment and the life history. Transcripts of the interviews were used to corroborate and integrate the data for the final report.

The compiled data were reviewed using the constant comparative method until a pattern emerged. The findings were consistently checked against reality through consultation with a three member oversight committee, a panel of experts and the participants. Following the principles of grounded theory, data analysis really began while the data were being collected. Each participant’s information was analyzed as it was returned and compared with each previous set of data to ascertain the existence of data patterns.

The final analysis addressed the “how” and “why” question of the staying phenomena. Meaningful “staying” experiences appeared to occur in epiphanies or turning point episodes. Personal and professional lives were shaped in these experiences.

The “turning point” model developed by Denzin (1989) was a useful analytic tool. There are basically four experiential
structures or epiphanies in the lives of individuals which can occur in times of crisis. They may be positive or negative, yet they will alter the fundamental meaning structures in a person's life. Meaning is only given to these turning points in retrospect. The life history questions in this study gathered retrospective data which focused on the participant reliving and re-experiencing selected life events which had affected them personally and professionally.

Findings

The participants characteristically came to the field directly from undergraduate school. For many this "first job" will be the job from which they will retire. One gets an overriding sense of altruism from these professionals. They describe themselves in terms of their personal need to be needed, to make a difference and to be quiet contributors. In a sense, working in public child welfare fulfills a psychological need for the participants.

All of the participants (n=18) in this study experienced crisis, or epiphany experiences, in their lives. Nearly all of the informants (n=17) experienced victimization, death, illness or physical disability that led them into the field (Brode, 1990). Participants felt that as child welfare workers, they could attempt to make it "better" or at least "different" for other children and families who have difficult experiences. In a sense, they see themselves as rescuers.

Study participants have incorporated the field of public child welfare into their personal identities. The connection between their work, their life histories and personal identities makes it problematic for these workers to leave the field. One participant explained leaving as a type of identity crisis.

Several participants came to the field as a result of a religious or spiritual calling (n=4) (Brode, 1990). These child welfare workers had pleasant childhoods in which they felt valued, supported and encouraged by strong parental and family figures. For them, religion and the organized "church" played a major role in shaping their lives. Grateful for all they had received, and propelled by religious values, they felt a need to carry out their spirituality through serving others.
Regardless of their experiences in childhood or their sense of calling or the need to be needed, these professionals clearly find meaning in their work. As indicated by their scores on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Personal Accomplishment=35), they feel a strong sense of personal accomplishment in what they do. The successes, whether they are major or minor, outweigh the effects of depersonalization and emotional exhaustion resulting from the job. To the outside observer, the experiences the participants shared about their professional lives may seem overwhelmingly negative. But for the participants, the successes they experienced with extremely demanding cases, "made it all worthwhile."

Participants talked in detail about the difficulty in trying to balance the needs of the client(s) and the requirements of the organization. Increasingly, they are practicing in a system that exists on a dichotomous continuum that consists of bureaucratic values at one pole and social work values at the other. They report in order to maintain an equilibrium, they are constantly trying to balance the roles of caseworker and bureaucrat, while the environment around them is in a constant state of chaos. They feel the chaos is endemic to the field of public child welfare, which is always at risk of unplanned change through legislative mandate, public outcry or change in federal or state regulations.

It is pertinent to note here that the study participants, while definitely experiencing conflicts between the roles of bureaucrat and professional, have not chosen to leave the field as a way to cope with the frustration. On the contrary, they have chosen to cope within the system. Blau and Scott (1962) would characterize this selection as choosing the bureaucratic orientation over the professional. Indeed, the participants' remarks support this concept. They see themselves as getting their support from colleagues in the system, and seek to carry out their functions as creatively as the formal organization will allow them.

The majority of the participants do not see themselves as risk takers, even though their jobs require that they make risky decisions every day. They do not perceive themselves as "stand outs" but rather describe themselves as "quiet doers." As such, they draw on the intrinsic rewards that come from working
with children and families. Some believe that remaining with the system will keep it honest. Others believe that longevity with the organization affords them expertise and vision. Even when extremely frustrated by the system, there is fulfillment and comfort in serving clients and using professional skills.

The experiences they have had and continue to have with clients point to the fact that their jobs will never be done. For many, this fact in and of itself, as well as the impact they can make on clients' lives, is enough to keep them in the field. As one participant indicated there is never going to be a point where the job is not there anymore because everyone is taken care of. There is always going to be something happening that should not have been happening.

Accepting change on a small scale, or incrementally over a period of years, is also important to these professionals. They do not need to see radical or dramatic changes to accept that their clients have done something positive. They believe a child welfare worker can make a difference in clients' lives in ways that are not especially recognizable or obvious to the rest of the world. Motivated by a desire to help children and understand family situations, they accept clients as they are, where they are. Over half of the participants (n=10) experienced the 1960's as part of the "front line troops" (Brode, 1990). In a sense, they will espouse the values of that era—peace, love, protection of human rights and service to fellow human beings. They describe themselves as people on a journey, sometimes at a crossroads in making meaning of their lives. They see themselves as constantly growing and learning. Although the government was viewed as the perpetuation of injustice during the 1960's, the participants in this study have chosen to carry out their journey within the system. They have chosen to carry out their callings in a setting where significant social problems converge and where they feel constantly challenged to make a contribution.

This research pointed out that there really is a very fine line between staying and burning out. The study participants all reported experiencing burnout at some level. They felt with maturity, coping has become easier, as had being in the system. The participants obviously get something for themselves from the work they do, yet they must remain ever vigilant lest they
lose sight of the meaning and significance in their work and tip the balance to the other side. For them, burning out is just one small step away from staying. Instead of being opposite, it is really only different in terms of the way the individual processes his/her daily experiences within the system. An experience that would burn a worker out one day, may be the very thing that would keep him/her in the field the next day.

Study Implications and Recommendations

The study participants had a great deal to say about what would make it easier and more attractive to stay in the field of public child welfare. The first and most obvious recommendation is for state and federal legislative and regulatory agencies to look at the impact of proposed policies and rules on the direct service function before they are mandated for implementation. Policy changes have appeared to be positive for children and families in this mid-western state but their implementation has created confusion for clients and has been overwhelming for practitioners.

On a similar note, public child welfare agency administrators must be challenged to create systems that balance "paperwork" with "peoplework", a balance that would appear to contribute to the retention of seasoned, committed professionals. Furthermore, agencies should have clear parameters for child welfare practice at the community level and provide the supervision and training to explain and reinforce the parameters. Staff members gain a feeling of support and guidance from agency policy that indicates to them, and to the community, what is expected as a standard for service.

The participants indicated a very strong need to feel valued, rewarded and appreciated in their positions. They felt this could be done in monetary and in more important intangible ways, such as creating new programs that use the workers' specialized knowledge, job rotation, and the provision of specialized learning opportunities. Participants felt this would give them an opportunity to feel success and achievement on a different level than service provision and would offer a welcome diversion from the daily trials of public child welfare. The participants
also indicated that direct line supervisors who encouraged and supported them in these efforts and maintained high standards of practice challenged them and gave them the incentive to achieve at a higher level.

The final area acknowledged by the participants as needing attention was recruitment/retention. The data suggest that agencies may be erroneously seeking out younger, less skilled workers to fill their child welfare positions. Although youthful energy and enthusiasm are desirable, a critical balance needs to be maintained between youth and maturity. Mature workers have accrued experience and wisdom that give them vision and perspective. These workers can serve as mentors and supports for the younger, more impressionable workers.

To further support staff, agencies need to start looking at ways to safeguard workers' mental health. Many of the study participants are responsible, in addition to their caseloads, for "after hours" duty without direct or indirect compensation. This addition to their already demanding caseloads encroaches on their personal lives which are a source of respite and revitalization to many workers. Administrators could head off burnout by looking at ways to compensate staff for their emergency duty time, either through paying them for it or through the use of an "after hours" staff. That feeling of protected time maintains staff stability.

Conclusion

Public child welfare has long been researched as a field of practice. Much has been studied and researched regarding how the system affects its clients. Information exists on the trials, the triumphs and the dysfunction of its services and its personnel. It is hoped that with studies such as this one, more energy will be put into examining the reality of the system from inside the system. More needs to be known about the daily experiences of child welfare social workers, how they make sense of their experiences and how they integrate their experiences into their personal functioning. This study offered the springboard for such research to occur, with emphasis being given to seeing the field through the eyes of its participants.
References


For a small sample of Indiana families that had recently experienced unemployment due to a plant closing, perceived economic strain was related to a larger number of academic and interpersonal problems for their oldest child at home, average age thirteen. The relationship between parental economic strain and children’s difficulties lessened with the introduction into the analysis of selected parental psychological resources and coping strategies. Family structure was also related to children’s problems, despite parental resources and coping strategies.

During the 1980s large numbers of otherwise stably employed Americans experienced involuntary job and income loss through layoffs and entire plant closures (OTA, 1986). The effects of such losses on individuals, especially men, have been addressed by diverse social science literatures. However, research on family coping with adversity seldom has unemployment as its context (McCubbin et al., 1980). And, although involuntary unemployment and income loss has been especially likely to occur among families with children (Moen, et al., 1983), there has been relatively little attention paid to impacts on children (for reviews see Madge, 1983; McLoyd, 1989, and Targ and Perrucci, 1991).

The present study placed income loss within the context of negative life event research and explored the relationship between economic strain subsequent to parental unemployment through a plant closure and family structure and selected characteristics of parents and their children for a small sample of Indiana families. The model of the stress process examined as possible stressors the level of economic strain perceived by the worker and the presence of only one parent in the family (Voydanoff, 1983). It was expected that all workers and their children were not equally vulnerable to negative life events because of
moderating variables; children were expected to be affected indirectly through their parents' responses to economic strain. For example, studies of income loss during the Great Depression documented the importance of changes in the father's disposition and disciplinary behavior for the child's development. The effect of such income loss on parent-child relations, moreover, appeared to vary by parental and child resources and family characteristics (Elder, et al., 1985; McLoyd, 1989). In the present study the research question is the relationship between perceived economic strain and family structure, moderated by the variables of (parental) psychological resources and family coping strategies, and negative experiences of displaced workers' children.

In almost all extant plant closing research, public notice of a shutdown was not given by the company beforehand so that researchers could collect adequate baseline data for comparative purposes. Such was the case for this closing. The focus of the larger study was to examine changes over time in displaced blue-collar workers' family cohesiveness in response to economic distress. Unfortunately, there was no control group or repeated measures of the variable "problems with children." However, economic strain was measured at the time severance pay was depleted and prior to problems with children (five months versus nine months after the closing).

In a similar plant closing study in a nearby community which did have a control group, displaced blue-collar workers were more economically distressed nine months after the shutdown than the comparison group of continuously employed workers at another plant, and reemployed workers continued to be as economically stressed as those still unemployed (Perrucci, et al., 1988). In addition, that displaced blue-collar workers have tended to suffer economic losses in comparison to others, losses that were usually not recovered by reemployment, has been well-documented nationally (OTA, 1988). Economic strain, in turn, was the main mechanism through which unemployment affected displaced workers' psychological and physiological health (Kessler, et al., 1987).

Thus, whereas direct evidence was lacking, it seemed quite reasonable to presume that a considerable amount of the
economic strain being expressed by the displaced workers in this study was due to their unemployment and/or reemployment in lower-paying "new" jobs. And, given the paucity of information about economic strain in relation to contemporary children's lives, the present data were considered theoretically interesting.

Methodology

This paper reported part of an ongoing study of effects of a plant closing on displaced blue-collar workers and their families. About 240 midwestern workers lost their jobs on November 4, 1983, when a candy-producing plant that had been in operation for twenty-five years (since 1958) closed. A list of workers displaced by the closing was obtained from the president of the plant's union, Local 1976 of the Retail Wholesale Department Store Union AFL/CIO. After the shutdown, three waves of questionnaires were mailed to the 200 individuals who were still thought to be residing in the community, resulting in responses from 75 people (38 percent). These respondents were similar to the larger group on the two characteristics for which comparative information was available. This included tenure with the factory that closed and gender, which could be accessed relatively unambiguously from given names.

The Subjects

About half of all respondents (N=38) were parents, including those who were presently single (N=2), separated or divorced (N=8), and married (N=28). This parental group, the focus of this paper, was somewhat younger (36 vs. 40 years) but otherwise similar in composition to the larger respondent group. Four-fifths were women. On the average, they had a high school education and stable work careers. They were long-term residents of the county (30 years), and relatively long-term employees of the factory that closed (15 years). Their responses to the third and final questionnaire mailed almost nine months after the closing provided most of the individual and family data reported here. The exceptions were the following two variables: economic strain, which respondents reported in the
second questionnaire mailed five months after the shutdown; and family financial management, measured in an initial questionnaire one month subsequent to the closing.

Indices of Independent Variables

Economic strain was the sum of eight items which asked whether workers had difficulty acquiring both necessary and more optional consumer items—food, clothing, housing, furniture, car, leisure—as well as paying bills in general (Pearlin, et al., 1981). Scores ranged from 0–8, with higher scores indicating greater economic strain. Cronbach alpha was .86.

Family structure referred to parents' self-reports of their marital status as to whether they were currently single, divorced or separated, on the one hand; or married, on the other. Family structure was constant over the nine month period of study.

Moderating Variables

Two family coping strategies were considered as potential moderating variables. An economic coping strategy, family financial management, was measured using a subscale of ENRICH (Olson, et al., 1982). Ten items, each scored 1–5, had a possible range of 10–50, with the higher scores indicating more attempts at handling financial matters. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with ten items such as the following: "We are both aware of our major debts, and they are not a problem for us." Cronbach alpha was .74.

The second, an internal family coping strategy through redefining or reframing the situation was measured using a subscale of F-COPES (McCubbin, et al., 1982). Eight items, scored 1–5, assessed coping through redefining the situation. The range of possible scores was 8–40, with higher scores indicating more efforts at reframing. Respondents were asked to assess their families on items such as the following: "Defining the family problem in a more positive way so that we do not become too discouraged." Cronbach alpha was .88.

Three parental psychological resources were considered as potential moderating variables. First, to assess parental well-being, the depression scale was adapted from research by Pearlin and associates (1981). This was a nine-item scale with a possible range of scores from 9–27, in which high scores indicated...
greater depression. Respondents indicated, for example, "During the past week, how often did you feel bored or have little interest in doing things?" Cronbach alpha was .89.

A second psychological well-being variable, parental hostility, was measured using a subscale of the SCL-90 (Derogatis, 1977). The six items to which displaced workers responded, scored 1–3, measured frequency of occurrence of hostile thoughts, feelings, and actions. The possible range of summary scores was 6–18, with the higher scores indicating greater anger-hostility. Cronbach alpha was .84.

Third, to measure mastery, or a feeling of control over one's future, displaced workers were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with seven questions developed by Pearlin and associates (1981) such as the following: "There is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life." Summary scores for these items, each scored 1–4, had a possible range of 7–28, with higher scores indicating higher sense of mastery. Cronbach alpha was .81.

Dependent Variable

Displaced workers were asked to recall whether each of seventeen specific difficulties began to be experienced by the oldest child living at home during the period from five to eight months following the plant closing. These negative experiences are most pertinent to school-age children and pertain to school performance, psychological disturbance, interpersonal relationships, and familial relationships. The children were typically school age, the range being five to nineteen years, and the average age being thirteen. Cronbach alpha for the difficulties was .7.

Table 1 shows Pearson zero order correlations, means, and standard deviations for all variables in this study.

Findings

Economic strain has been related to a number of negative impacts for displaced workers' families (Perrucci, et al., 1988). In this study the greater the workers' perceived economic strain, the more problems they reported for their oldest child ($r = .49, p < .004$). When the data were examined for the six items for which at least one-fifth of the children had the problem,
economic strain was highest in families in which there were problematic relationships between the oldest child and its siblings ($r=.42$, $p=.01$). Economic strain was less strongly related to the child's problems with his/her mother ($r=.28$, $p=.04$); to the child's failure to keep up with school work ($r=.08$, $p=.32$); the child's failure to accept parental rules ($r=.22$, $p=.09$); the child's short temper with its father ($r=.14$, $p=.22$); or the child's teasing of other children ($r=.18$, $p=.13$). Such characteristics of children cannot be attributed unambiguously to problems from economic stress *per se*. Nevertheless, these data do tell us something about the quality of family life for children of these blue-collar workers.

Previous research has shown that whether and to what extent economic strain adversely affected displaced workers *themselves* depended importantly on the presence of individual and familial resources and coping strategies (Perrucci and Targ, 1988). In this study, ideally, the association between parental economic strain and children's problems would be examined by step-wise multiple regression in which main and interacting effects could be determined independently. Unfortunately, interaction terms were so highly intercorrelated with other variables (.9) as to preclude such an analysis. Alternatively, the potentially moderating variables were added to the multiple regression equation one at a time to assess their contribution.

When children's problems were regressed on parental economic strain, the beta was .49 ($p < .004$), adjusted $R^2$ being .22. When the parental psychological resource of lack of depression was added to the equation, its beta was .36 ($p = .04$) and $R^2$ increased to .30. In this expanded equation the beta for economic strain and difficulties of the oldest child dropped from .49 to .32 ($p = .07$).

A second potential modifying variable was angry-hostile thoughts and actions, which have been found among individuals' reactions to unemployment and economic strain (Ridley and Wilhelm, 1988). There have been suggestions in the literature, for example, that some unemployed men became abusive husbands and fathers (Parke and Collmer, 1975; Broman, et al., 1989).
Displaced Workers

On average (mean), the level of hostility among the displaced workers in this study was eight on a scale ranging from six to eighteen. According to their self reports, fewer than 10% often or occasionally had "urges to beat, injure or harm someone"; or "urges to break or smash things." Fifteen percent shouted or threw things. About one-fifth (21%) got into frequent arguments; and one-quarter (25%) had temper outbursts they could not control. On the other hand, almost two-thirds (62%) often or occasionally felt "easily annoyed or irritated." These percentages were similar to the formal norms regarding percentage reporting each symptom for a non-patient normal sample of males (N=493) and females (N=480), a stratified random sample from a single county in a large eastern state (Derogatis, 1977:30-31). On the other hand, these levels of general hostility were higher than scores on a similar measure of hostility which was directed specifically at spouses and children according to self-reports of blue-collar auto workers in Michigan (Broman et al., 1989).

Hostility was related to worker's economic strain; the greater the perceived economic strain, the more angry and hostile the displaced workers were (r=.39, p=.03). Parental hostility was also related to children having problems; the more hostile the parent, the more troubled the oldest child at home (r=.56, p=.001). This is consistent with findings of Great Depression era research regarding the negative impact on children of fathers who became punitive as a result of income loss. When parental hostility was added to the regression of children's problems on parental economic strain, the beta dropped from .49 to .32 (p=.04), with adjusted $R^2$ increasing from .22 to .36.

Family Structure and Children's Problems

Job and income loss have been found to influence family structure, particularly if the marriage was already weak prior to a spouse's unemployment (Moen, et al., 1983). This sample of displaced workers reported a high level of marital happiness, and such happiness and stability in family structure over the nine month period subsequent to the plant closure (Perrucci and Targ, 1988).
Rather than conceptualizing family structure as a moderating variable, it was treated as an independent variable in this study. Of the thirty-eight respondents who were parents, twenty-eight lived in two-parent households. For both the women and men, previous employment had had similar meaning and their unemployment had had similar individual impacts (Perrucci and Targ, 1988). Therefore, to the extent that children's responses to unemployment were conditioned by their parent's responses, children were expected to be similarly affected by maternal and paternal job loss. Indeed, among the married workers with children there was no difference in problems for oldest child for displaced women's families ($M = 2.7$) in comparison to displaced men's ($M = 2.7$).

Among the single parent families in this study, as nationally, ninety percent were headed by a woman (i.e., only one was not female-headed). Interestingly, these single parents' children experienced more problems ($M = 5.3$) than did married parents' children ($M = 2.1$), on the average [$t(31)=2.71, p<.05$].

Conditions of life in female-headed families have often included fewer financial resources, greater economic strain and greater psychological strain following job and income loss (Rosen, 1988; Schlozman, 1979). For the respondents in this study, economic strain was perceived to be greater for displaced workers living in single in contrast to two-parent families ($r=-.54, p=.001$). When workers' children's problems was regressed on family structure, the beta was $- .41$ ($p=.02$), with adjusted $R^2$ being .14. The beta changed to $- .28$ ($p=.09$) by the introduction of the parental psychological resource of lack of depression, and adjusted $R^2$ increased to .29.

Another psychological resource which was examined in relation to children's problems was parents' sense of mastery over their fate in general (beta was $- .35, p=.05$). When added to the regression of children's problems on family structure, beta dropped from $- .41$ to $- .26$ ($p=.14$), while the adjusted $R^2$ increased from .14 to .22.

Regarding a third psychological resource, there was no significant effect of entering a coping strategy whereby the family redefined or reframed the situation to the regression of children's problems on parental economic strain.
Table 1

Correlations, Means And Standard Deviations Of Study Variables (N=38)

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<td></td>
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<td>-.54&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.32</td>
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<td>.47&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Problems with child</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.49&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.51&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.23</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.56&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-.45&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.52&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.56&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>5. Economic Strain</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>.48&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.35</td>
<td>-.48&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.39&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.80&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>7. Financial management</td>
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<td>8. Reframing</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.42&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Depression</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
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<td>9. Depression</td>
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</table>

<sup>a</sup> P < .05  
<sup>b</sup> P < .01  
<sup>c</sup> P < .001
Summary

For a small sample of Indiana families that experienced unemployment due to a plant closing, parents' perceptions of the amount of economic strain they were undergoing was related to a larger number of problems (with schoolwork, parents and siblings) for their children. Children's difficulties were reduced if the parent had a low level of depression and hostility. Parental use of a financial management strategy, however, did not affect difficulties of children.

Family structure was also related to children's problems, with children in single-parent households experiencing more problems than those living with both parents. In two-parent families, children were equally troubled, whether it was the mother or the father who was unemployed. For children living with only one parent, their greater disadvantage was reduced if the parent (usually the mother) was not depressed, or had a sense of control over her life in general. Her attempts to define the situation in a more positive way, however, did not affect her perceptions of her children's problems.

Third, there was no significant effect of entering a family financial management variable, ENRICH, to the regression of children's problems on parental economic strain. Apparently, parents' efficacious handling of finances does not mitigate deprivations to which children are responding.

This research suggests that children of the 1980s, like children of the Great Depression, can suffer from the transformation of the American economy which is entailing mass unemployment and income loss (see, also, Flanagan, 1988a, 1988b). Such effects on children are also affected importantly by parental reactions to their situation. This study, in contrast to Depression-era studies, suggests that in contemporary two-parent families income loss of either the mother or the father can impact on the child.

There is reason for approaching these findings as preliminary. It is difficult to know with any certainty how closely the respondents represent the original population. The small number of respondents also limits the nature of data analysis that can be done.
Longitudinal studies with larger samples and control groups are needed to better determine causal effects of job and income loss on families. The nature of impact of maternal unemployment especially warrants further research as more mothers enter the labor force and are subsequently subject to insecure work, layoffs and plant closures. Moreover, as the number of single parent households continues to grow, (Moen et al., 1983) through economic insecurity, divorce or other routes, research is needed to understand factors that improve the quality of life for both the parent and her children.

Notes

1. A full listing of the items is as follows: doesn't keep up with school work; poor grades; has trouble getting along with others; often blows up easily with mother; often blows up easily with father; has money fears; often wakes up in a panic; doesn't get along with brothers and sisters; doesn't accept rules set by parents; chooses friends that parents don't approve of; teases other children; doesn't get along with other children at school; smokes; plays hookey from school; often plays alone; doesn't keep a friend very long; and trouble with the police.

2. Marital happiness was measured by a single item with response categories ranging from "Extremely Unhappy" to "Perfect" (dyadic satisfaction subscale of Dyadic Adjustment Scale developed by Spanier, 1976).

3. As was the case in this study, single-parent families are usually families in which divorce has occurred. Although no norms exist, children in such families typically have been found to experience more of a variety of problems, including psychological and interpersonal problems, than children in intact families. Such difficulties are hypothesized to arise for multiple reasons, including the usually greater economic hardship of single-parent families. Additional causes are thought to include the absence of one parent from the home and discord between the child's parents (Krantz, 1988).

References


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The research reported here was part of a project conducted by the Labor Studies Research Group which includes Robert Perrucci, Dena B. Targ, and Harry R. Targ in addition to the author. Gratitude is expressed to Jennifer Crew Solomon, Chien-ju Huang and Eun-Jung Lee for assistance with data analysis and to Harry R. Potter and Dena B. Targ for comments on an earlier version of this paper.
Survey of Social Work Educators: Qualifications and Compliance Criteria

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Tulane University

In its Criteria for Accreditation (1987), the College Commission of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) implemented faculty qualifications standards that were strictly defined. Compliance with these standards in undergraduate and graduate schools of social work was the focus of this study. Data were gathered on 137 social work programs and include faculty qualifications information on 874 social work educators teaching in private and public institutions of higher education in the southern region. The findings indicate that baccalaureate programs in social work were more likely to be in compliance with SACS criteria than graduate schools. Strict compliance rates across all programs was low.

Introduction

An issue that is rarely overlooked when discussing accreditation standards is that of faculty qualifications or how much and what kind of professional and educational experiences are necessary to teach at the undergraduate and graduate levels (Berengarten, 1981; Brasse, 1979; Feltner & Savage, 1970; Evangelau, 1989; Finklestein, 1984; Galbrath and Gilley, 1985; Millard, 1983; Rock, Centra, & Linn, 1970; Scales, 1969; Troutt, 1979; Tully & Walker, 1991; Young, Chambers, Kells & Associates, 1983). Every accreditation body has specific accreditation standards dealing with faculty qualifications; yet, while frequently mentioned in the literature as an important issue, few researchers have collected data on the actual faculty qualifications of those teaching in baccalaureate and graduate level programs (Feltner & Savage, 1970; Millard, 1983; Scales, 1969; Tully & Walker, 1991; Young, Chambers, Kells & Associates, 1983). In an attempt to examine the faculty qualifications of those teaching
in baccalaureate and graduate professional schools in relationship to the then recently revised 1987 faculty qualification standards of the College Commission of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), in 1987-88 every undergraduate and graduate program in accounting, business administration, computer science, library science, nursing, social work and visual and performing arts within the SACS geographic region was surveyed (N=1941). This paper presents the findings of the portion of the research that examined the credentials of those teaching in undergraduate and graduate social work programs.

Rational and Methodology

In 1993 the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) issued its first draft of newly revised baccalaureate and graduate standards for accreditation (CSWE, 1993) that stipulate a program director for a master's program "... shall have demonstrated leadership ability through academic and other experience in the field of social work and shall provide educational and administrative direction to the program. Usually, the educational credentials of the chief executive officer include a master's degree from an accredited program in social work or a doctorate in social work" (p. 9). So it would seem that the educational requirements for the chief executive officer of a master's program in social work, as mandated by CSWE, do not have to include either a master's or doctoral degree in social work or anything else. In master’s programs themselves, "the program shall have full-time faculty adequate in number, qualifications, competence and range in experience, based on educational background, teaching and educational administrative experience, and experience in professional practice, to achieve its specified goals" (p. 10). And, although there are no other specified degree requirements delineated in the standard, "faculty who teach required practice courses or direct the field practicum shall hold credentials that include a master's degree in social work and shall have had two years or more post-social work master's degree experience in professional social work practice" (p. 11). At the baccalaureate level, there are no
specified credentials required for the program director but, the undergraduate program "... shall have a minimum of two full-
time faculty members with master's degrees in social work..." (p. 11).

The 1993 SACS faculty qualifications state "each full-time and part-time faculty member teaching credit courses leading
toward the baccalaureate degree... must have completed at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline and
hold at least a master's degree, or hold the minimum of a master's degree with a major in the teaching discipline. In exceptional cases, outstanding professional experience and demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline may be present in lieu of formal academic preparation. Such exceptions must be justified by the institution on an individual basis" (SACS, 1993, p. 37). Further, for institutions offering the master's degree, "each faculty member teaching courses at the master's degree level
must hold the terminal degree, usually the earned doctorate, in the teaching discipline or a related discipline. In some instances, the master's degree in the discipline may be considered
the terminal degree, such as... the M.S.W... in others, a master's degree in the discipline coupled with a related doctorate, as the terminal degree for faculty members teaching in those disciplines" (p. 37).

However, at the time this study was conducted, both the SACS criteria and CSWE standards had language that provided stricter guidelines for faculty credentials. And while this study was originally conducted to provide data related to upgrading the terminal degree in social work to the doctoral degree, what has happened in the interim indicates a move toward more liberal application of guidelines related to faculty credentials at both CSWE and SACS.

An assumption made by the SACS criteria in 1987 (and also in 1993) was that an educator with a doctoral degree was better qualified than one without. As little empirical data refute or substantiate this, this study made the same assumption. It was conducted in an effort to gather data on the level of compliance with the 1987, revised SACS accreditation standards dealing with faculty qualifications in professional programs and to
determine if exceptions to SACS Criteria . . . (1987) would impact compliance levels. Further it sought to examine differences in faculty qualifications in programs accredited and not accredited by various professional accreditation organizations (in the case of social work—the Council on Social Work Education). An important outcome of the study, specifically related to social work, was the collection of data that could be used to encourage the Council on Social Work Education to reconceptualize its current standards regarding faculty qualifications (CSWE, 1993) and was used by SACS to lower its faculty qualification standards in the early 1990s.

In an attempt to define the academic credentials of social work educators employed by schools in the southern region, this cross-sectional study utilized a questionnaire that was mailed to undergraduate programs in social work. The sample consisted of all social work educators (N=874) who were teaching courses in undergraduate or graduate programs in the 11 state SACS region (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia) and included both CSWE accredited programs and those programs not accredited by CSWE. The schools selected for inclusion in the study were drawn from the official membership files of the SACS' Commission on Colleges. The data collection instrument was a modified version of the ones used, in similar studies, by Feltner & Savage (1970) and Scales (1969). The variables included the academic degrees earned, the field in which the degree was earned, the number of course credit hours taught for the most recent term (Spring 1987), and whether or not the program was accredited by CSWE. Other variables obtained included the level (II-IV where Level II schools offered the baccalaureate degree as the highest level; Level III schools the master's degree; and Level IV schools the doctoral degree) and type (public or private) of institution, the number of full time equivalent (FTE) students in the overall institution and the geographic location of the institution. Mailed during the fall of 1987, the questionnaire was designed to be easily completed, and was mailed with an explanatory cover letter to n=180 programs in social work (n=153 undergraduate programs; n=27 graduate programs).
Results

Baccalaureate Programs in Social Work

Of the institutions contracted, 119 (70%) returned the survey and were included in the data analysis. Eighty-two (69%) were accredited by CSWE at the time of the study. Individual data on faculty included in the analysis were from six, Level II public institution educators; 57 Level II private institution educators; 159, Level III, public institution educators; 20, Level IV, private institution educators and 232, Level IV, public institution educators or a total sample of 474 social work undergraduate educators.

SACS Criteria (1987) standards related to faculty qualifications specifically stated that, "In each discipline in which an undergraduate major is offered, at least 25% of the course credit hours taught must be taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree, usually an earned doctorate, in that discipline" (p. 22). Further, the minimum credential for teaching in a baccalaureate program is a master's degree and 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching field. Because of widespread difficulties in implementing this accreditation standard, SACS proposed a grid of exceptions. The following exceptions related to faculty qualifications in social work. To meet the SACS criteria for the 25% Requirement, 25% of the course credit hours taught had to be taught by faculty holding a doctorate in social work—Exception 1 expanded this to include those with a Master's of Social Work (MSW) degree and an earned doctorate in related field; Exception 2 further loosened the standards to include those with a master's degree in social work. To meet the minimum SACS credentials to teach in an undergraduate social work program, educators must have an MSW or a master's degree and 18 graduate semester hours in social work.

With these specific standards in mind, one third (n=39, 33%) of those institutions responding reported that indeed 25% of the course credit hours being taught were being taught by faculty who possess a doctoral degree in social work. Of the total number of social work educators on whom data were gathered (N=474), 2 (7.4%) Level II, private institution educators;
Table 1

Social Work Returns by Level and Type of Governance

<table>
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<th>Program</th>
<th>Mailed</th>
<th>Returns Returned</th>
<th>Useable</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
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<td>100</td>
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35 (22%) Level III, public institution educators; 4 (20%), Level IV, private institution educators and 59 (25%), Level IV, public institution educators had an earned doctoral degree in social work. Thus, 100 (21%) of those teaching in social work undergraduate programs had an earned doctoral degree in the social work. These data mirror Spaulding’s (1990) data that demonstrate 21% of those teaching in CSWE accredited programs had an earned doctorate in social work. When Exceptions 1 and 2 were included in the 25% Requirement, virtually all the insti-
Educators Survey

Institutions would have been in compliance with the SACS Criteria (1987). However, 28% \( (n=33) \) of the institutions responding to the survey reported having some faculty who were teaching in their baccalaureate social work programs without an earned master of social work degree. Of those, 1 (2%) were Level II, public institution educators; 7 (12%) were Level II, private institution educators; 24 (15%) were Level III, public institution educators, 1 (.05%) were Level IV, private institution educators and 11 (.04%) were Level IV, public institution educators. The total number of social work educators who were teaching without a master's degree in social work was 44 (9%). This total is somewhat higher than Spaulding's (1990) data that indicate only 5% of those teaching in CSWE accredited programs were teaching without the MSW degree.

No clear patterns emerged when examining compliance rate with the geographic distribution of institutions or when looking at FTE enrollment rates. As was expected, those institutions whose undergraduate social work programs were accredited by the Council of Social Work Education were more likely to be in compliance than those programs not so accredited.

Graduate Programs in Social Work

Of the surveys that were mailed, 62% \( (n=18) \) were returned and were included in the analysis. As with the baccalaureate data, virtually every state in the SACS eleven state area was represented in the analysis. Data included in the analysis were from 10, Level III, private institution educators; 46, Level III, public institution educators; 22, Level IV, private institution educators and 322, Level IV, public institution educators or a total of 400 social work graduate school educators. There was a significant difference in the return rate based on the type of governance where there was a 33% \( (n=6) \) return rate from private schools and a 76% \( (n=21) \) return rate from public institutions (see Table 1). Of the 18 graduate programs that are included in the analysis, 17 of them were accredited by CSWE at the time of the study.

SACS Criteria (1987) stated, "faculty teaching graduate-level courses must hold the highest earned degree in their disciplines,
although in some cases experience and/or scholarly or creative activity may substitute for the doctorate” (p. 26). So, in order to meet the strict interpretation of the SACS Criteria (1987), all faculty teaching at the graduate level must have a doctoral degree in the teaching field—in the case of social work a PhD in social work or a doctor of social work (DSW) degree. As with the undergraduate programs, compliance with this standard proved difficult. Thus, the SACS grid of “Proposed Exceptions and Clarifications to Faculty Qualifications and Preparation” included the exception that all graduate social work faculty must hold either a doctoral degree in social work or a master’s degree in social work and a doctorate in a related field.

The results of this study are similar to Spaulding (1990) and show that while 162 (41%) of those educators teaching graduate level social work did hold an earned doctorate in the field, and 73 (18%) held the MSW and a doctorate in a related field; 132 (33%) of those teaching graduate level social work held only an MSW and 33 (8%) did not have an MSW. Thus, while 235 (59%) of all graduate social work educators in the sample held either a doctorate in social work or an MSW with a doctorate in a related field, not one institution surveyed reported meeting either the strict requirements of the Criteria (1987) or even meeting the requirements utilizing the exception.

Social Work and Other Professional Programs’ Compliance

As noted in the introduction, this study included data from seven different undergraduate and graduate professional schools—accounting, business administration, computer science, library science, nursing, social work and visual and performing arts.

At the undergraduate level, virtually every program surveyed would have been in compliance with the SACS requirements if the exceptions were utilized. Further, 80% (n=8) of the programs in library science and 59% (n=150) of the programs individual and performing arts met the SACS criteria without utilizing exceptions. Interestingly, social work, with more doctoral degree programs than either library science or visual and
performing arts (Tully & Walker, 1991), had only a 33% \((n=39)\) compliance rate without utilizing proposed exceptions.

Findings of graduate level programs show that all the programs in this study had difficulty meeting the strict SACS requirement that each and every faculty member teaching at the graduate level hold a doctorate in the teaching field (see Table 2). Business administration (13%, \(n=19\)) and accounting (12%, \(n=6\)) programs lead the compliance rate while library science and social work have no programs that met the strict interpretation of the SACS standard. Even when utilizing proposed exceptions, graduate level programs had difficulty being in compliance with the SACS requirements. However, with not one program being able to meet the standards even utilizing the proposed exception, social work was more out of compliance than other professional programs surveyed. Again, this is undoubtedly related to the accreditation mandates of CSWE;
however, do the CSWE requirements mirror the hiring practices in undergraduate and graduate programs of social work?

Discussion and Educational Implications

CSWE Standards v. SACS Criteria

Undergraduate Education

When the 1993 SACS baccalaureate faculty qualification accreditation criteria are compared to the criteria mandated by CSWE (1993), it becomes clear that there are only a few differences between the two accreditation organizations. This was also true in 1987 before the SACS criteria were revised.

CSWE requirements state that at the undergraduate level, the social work program shall have a director whose educational credentials include either a master’s degree in social work or a baccalaureate degree in social work and a doctoral degree in social work (CSWE, 1988, pp. 4; 8; CSWE, 1993, pp. 2; 9). CSWE also requires that for faculty teaching social work practice and for those who coordinate the field instruction program an MSW and two years post-master’s degree experience are the required credential (CSWE, 1988, 1993). Furthermore, CSWE (1988) stated that “there shall be...a core of full-time faculty who hold master’s degrees in social work...” (p. 7), but by 1991 this was changed to “the [undergraduate] program shall have full-time faculty adequate in number and in range of expertise, based on educational background and experience in professional practice, to achieve its specified objectives” (CSWE, 1991, p. 10).

No where is there a requirement that faculty reaching at the undergraduate level need a doctoral degree. The only doctoral degree in social work required by CSWE was for the undergraduate program administrator who holds a BSW but not an MSW (CSWE, 1988, p. 4; CSWE 1993, p. 2).

While the 1987 SACS standards required that 25% of those teaching at the undergraduate level hold an earned doctorate in social work or an MSW and a doctoral degree in a related field, data indicate that a third of those institutions surveyed did comply with the strict interpretation of the SACS mandates, and that only if the exceptions were utilized virtually every under-
Graduate program in social work would have complied with the SACS criteria. The exceptions to the 1987 standards became the requirements for the 1993 standards meaning that every undergraduate program surveyed would be in compliance with SACS less rigid requirements.

Graduate Education

The 1987 SACS requirements and the exception for graduate faculty (an doctorate in social work or an MSW plus a doctoral degree in a related field) were significantly more stringent than the 1987 CSWE standards or 1993 standards. While the issue of the terminal degree in social work is not a new one (Crow & Kindelsperger, 1975; Wodarski, 1979), CSWE still does not recognize the doctoral degree in social work as the terminal degree (N. Randolph, 1992, 1 March 1993, personal communication). CSWE's 1988, 1991, and 1993 standards require that graduate programs must have a full time dean or director who has demonstrated leadership ability through academic and leadership experience in social work and, that usually, her/his educational credentials include a master's degree in social work or a doctorate in social work. Further, as with the undergraduate requirements, faculty who teach required practice courses or direct field practicum shall hold credentials that include a master's degree in social work and two years post-master's degree social work experience (CSWE, 1988, pp. 16-17; CSWE, 1991, pp. 64-65; CSWE, 1993, pp. 9-10). As is evident, the Council on Social Work Education does not require that those persons teaching in graduate schools of social work hold a doctoral degree in social work. This explains the 100% non-compliance rate with SACS 1987 standards. However, when the 1993 SACS accreditation standards are applied (accepting the MSW as the terminal degree), 92% of the schools would meet the requirements.

Is it time for CSWE's Commission on Accreditation to accept and require (as most professional schools do) the doctoral degree in social work as the terminal degree in the field for those wishing to teach at the graduate level? While it can be argued that in schools of social work it is important to have diversity, it can also be argued that infusion into schools of social work by those without MSWs and doctoral degrees in social work create
an ill defined base for the profession. Further, while doctorates in social work might have been few in number in the 1970s, that is no longer the case. Can we as a profession with an adequate number of appropriately trained doctoral level educators afford to continue to employ those with only related degrees? Does hiring those with related degrees dilute or enhance the profession? Should social work education continued to be classified as an exception to the SACS standards or should we as a profession change our out dated views on the MSW as the terminal degree? And although CSWE does not seem to value the doctoral degree, increasingly universities do.

Employment, Promotion and Tenure in Social Work Education

An analysis of the advertisements for social work faculty in *The Chronicle of Education* from 1987–93 reveals that in fact, both undergraduate and graduate programs in social work are recruiting faculty who have not only an MSW but, too, a doctoral degree in social work or a related field. While some smaller institutions may be willing to interview candidates who are ABD, recruitment of persons with only the MSW is not being done in either undergraduate or graduate programs of social work.

Equally vital is the issue of promotion and tenure in undergraduate and graduate programs of social work. The general standard for promotion and tenure in higher education institutions is the assurance that the candidate holds the highest possible degree in her/his field. Speaking of social work educators, Spaulding (1990) states, “At the graduate/joint level, doctorates are held by the majority of faculty in the top three ranks” and “full professors are more likely to have doctorates than master’s degrees” (p. 11).

Because in schools of social work it is no longer the practice to hire, promote, or tenure faculty with just the master’s degree, the accreditation standards of social work’s professional accreditation body need to reflect the pragmatic reality in higher education. In social work, the highest degree or terminal degree is the PhD or the DSW. It seems to be the required credential for employment, promotion and tenure and should become CSWE’s standard.
Although subsequently changed, partially because of the results of this study and the outcry from CSWE to SACS around the issue of non-compliance, the College Commission of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is to be commended for its willingness to identify the reality of higher education by requiring a strict interpretation of its Criteria (1987) section dealing with the credentials of undergraduate and graduate educators. With regard to faculty qualifications, the 1987 SACS standards seem to better reflect the reality of the marketplace, and the faculty qualification definitions as in the Criteria (1987) also tend to support the guidelines for promotion and tenure at major universities (Tulane University, 1986; University of Georgia, 1989; Virginia Commonwealth University, 1983; West Virginia University, 1986). Because doctoral programs in social work and persons with doctoral degrees in social work are no longer scarce (Spaulding, 1990) and because it is increasingly difficult to be hired into a social work baccalaureate or graduate program without a doctoral degree in social work or an MSW with a doctorate in a related field, it is now time for the Council on Social Work Education to join with the College Commission of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and upgrade the CSWE standards to accept the doctoral degree in social work as the terminal degree necessary for teaching in higher education. Toward this end, research is needed that substantiates or refutes the idea that having the doctoral degree, in fact, provides a better credential than not having one, and that having a doctoral degree in one’s specific field versus a related field makes one a better educator in that field.

References


Designing Community Social Services

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The literature is reviewed on the qualities of integrated and non-integrated organizational systems. Social service delivery has changed in recent decades such that organizational strategies and structures that may have once been successful no longer appear to be so. As tasks have changed, so too have the technologies that might assist in the more effective delivery of social services. A discussion of how organizational strategies might be designed, so as to link emerging tasks requirements with the ability to effectively use existing and potential technologies, concludes the paper.

From an historical perspective, the current vogue for collaboration and service integration cannot be described as something entirely new (U.S Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1990). Similar calls for reforming the fragmented social service system have been made in both recent and distant history. The New York City Youth Board, for example, brought schools and social agencies together for early detection and treatment of youth at risk in the 1960s; the CETA program in the 1970s attempted to unite all the manpower planning and service agencies under one collaborative effort; and the Model Cities program tried to bridge the gulf between and among community service agencies and economic and community planners. In the more distant past, the settlement house movement was an effort to bring social and human services under the same roof covering clients in need of services (Husock, 1992). What is somewhat new about current efforts is the attempt to consciously combine a number of qualities—such as flexibility, comprehensiveness, ease of access, a family focus, customer satisfaction and choice, and early intervention—into a “reformed” or “integrated” social service system (Melaville and Blank, 1991; Bruner, 1991). While the qualities of this new collaborative model of social service delivery are all desirable individually and in the
abstract, when they are grouped together and applied in real environments, they do not suggest any one coherent or consistent organizational form. Instead, like Herbert Simon's (1978) "proverbs of administration," the new wisdom of collaboration and service integration can lead to calls for very different organizational and administrative structures and systems depending on which qualities one desires to maximize or which "proverb" is most appropriate under the circumstances. Essentially, program designers, managers, and community advocates who wish to infuse their social service systems with all the desirable qualities need to be aware that the "collaborative" interorganizational structures may not be able to deliver all that they promise and may even include tendencies to undermine some desirable values.

Qualities of Collaborative (Tightly Coupled) v. Non-Collaborative (Loosely Coupled) Models

Where Lizbeth Schorr's (1986) suggestions for more effective service delivery provide an important practice-based touchstone for the re-designing of social service systems, this article takes a more theoretical and deductive approach to the same task. That is, instead of starting from observations of seemingly effective practice in order to arrive at lessons for system re-design, I intend to move from an analysis of emerging tasks and available technologies to arrive at potentially similar (or possibly contrasting) lessons for system re-design. As a result of this approach, it may be possible to provide more theoretically based reasons for supporting collaboration among social service providers as well as more explicit guidance as to exactly how service systems need to change.

Schorr (1986), Bruner (1991), Morrill (1992) and others who have formulated a practice-based literature on collaboration often promote two contrasting system designs changes simultaneously—suggesting on the one hand that the service system should act more as a comprehensive, tightly coupled organization in terms of some activities (e.g., building rich communication channels, developing shared plans, and blending funding streams, training, and other resources), while on the
other hand suggesting that agencies should act more like independent, loosely coupled units with respect to being flexible in service delivery, responsive to client choices, competitive in delivering the best and most innovative services, adaptable to local circumstances, and entrepreneurial with respect to providing greater outreach (Schorr, 1986; Morrill, 1992; Bruner, 1991; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990, Gerry and Certo, 1992). Unfortunately, the practice-based literature: 1) tends to promote these contrasting inter-organizational designs under a single term—"collaboration"—suggesting a systems design that may be more unitary in nature than would be desirable, and 2) provides little guidance as to how to achieve an optimal balance of desirable, but potentially, incompatible organizational design features.

Models and Contexts

In the practice-based literature, the model of collaborative, integrated service provision is meant to be an alternative to traditional, loosely coupled service delivery that is provided by an ad hoc set of decentralized, independent, uncoordinated organizations interacting as occasions arise, but lacking formal ties and having a potential for competition (Perrow, 1986). Obviously, while most communities can be characterized as following the traditional model in part, these communities also have over time developed a number of coordinating mechanisms, coalitions, and interagency agreements that move them beyond the level of a pure social choice basis of organization. Roland Warren (1972) suggests that most communities fall somewhere along the spectrum from little or no prescribed collectivity orientation, which he calls a social choice context (and which typically generates a loosely coupled system of organizations) to a very highly prescribed collectivity orientation, which he terms a unitary context (and which typically generates a very tightly coupled system of organizations or organizational units). In between these extremes, he suggests the possibility for coalitional and federative contexts. Figure 1 summarizes the differences in these contexts.
Figure 1

Interorganizational Contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unitary</th>
<th>Federative</th>
<th>Coalitional</th>
<th>Social Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coupling</strong></td>
<td>Tight</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Little or None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prescribed</strong></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Little or None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collectivity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relation of Units to</strong></td>
<td>Organized for achieving an inclusive goal</td>
<td>Units with disparate goals, but some formal organization for inclusive goals</td>
<td>Units with disparate goals, but informal coordination for inclusive goals</td>
<td>No inclusive goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>an Inclusive Goal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locus of Inclusive</strong></td>
<td>At top of inclusive structure</td>
<td>At top of inclusive structure subject to unit ratification</td>
<td>In interaction of units without a formal inclusive structure</td>
<td>Within units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision Making</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Table 2 in Roland Warren's (1972) chapter on “The Interorganizational Field as a Focus for Investigation.”
Warren's continuum of interorganizational contexts provides a baseline or map for thinking about re-designing the human service system in light of a desire to provide more integrated, collaborative, and effective services. Some theorists note that no agreed upon model of collaboration exists and that the state of our knowledge is such that it is premature to establish any particular model (Levy and Shepardson, 1992). Even these researchers, however, fail to emphasize that there may exist an underlying contradiction in the use of the term "collaboration" with respect to system or inter-organizational design principles.

While those suggesting that it is premature to offer a single, comprehensive model of collaboration or service integration are correct, an analysis of the emerging tasks that this system is designed to address and an understanding of the capabilities of emerging organizational and material technologies should expand our ability to envision an "appropriate" system, one that provides the most adequate fit of technology to task and that is informed by an awareness of the particular strengths and weakness of certain organizational features such as loose versus tight coupling or federalist versus other governing principles. In terms of Warren's typology, the objective is to explore within the context of emerging tasks and technologies some notions of how and where organizations can effectively collaborate or integrate services and should therefore move toward federative or unitary structures, and how and where organizations and communities might be better off if the organizational context remained coalitional or even more loosely coupled.

The Emerging Task: "New" Poverty: Although the full extent of the problem of poverty may not be evident in data that use the current government definition of poverty, it is nevertheless true that most social service agencies are generally confined to providing services to those who can establish need based on a government-set, poverty line benchmark. If Schwarz and Volgy (1992) are correct, changes in the way poverty is defined have resulted in a smaller pool of individuals being eligible for services. Poverty, thus defined, limits the overall scope of service delivery to those who are generally most in need, and it is these most-in-need, economically and socially isolated individuals and families who now form the context for understanding
the "new" poverty. Whereas poverty was once thought to be largely treatable through economic supports alone, the "new" poverty seems to be relatively immune to such treatment and demands stronger and more continual social supports and intervention.

While designing a service delivery system to serve all groups of children and families is an important goal, the scope of this article and of most reality-based human resource planning is much narrower: to provide some suggestions for the re-design of the current service delivery system based on the assumption that this system, being continually resource-poor, will be forced to focus its concerns overwhelmingly with families who are in the highest risk categories. These "new poverty" families are typically characterized by multiple problems, disintegrating and stigmatizing social and neighborhood contexts, the lack of employment opportunities, work incentives and sanctions, and role models, and by contact with multiple, fractured service agencies—each with their own eligibility rules, some of which are at cross purposes with other providers' rules (Mead, 1992; Kaus, 1992; Lemann, 1991 Bruner, 1991). Additionally, research suggests that these families often have a difficult time navigating the complicated social service network. One study suggested, for example, that most of the families who are referred to other agencies for service never receive these services (National Council on Social Work, 1977). Unfortunately, the social service system with its multiple points of entry, uncoordinated and obscure eligibility requirements, patterns of abrupt gaps in service followed by "over-servicing," and cumbersome paperwork requirements seems at times to have been designed on purpose to frustrate the meeting of these families' needs.

The system design implications of "new poverty" challenges are fairly obvious. Simply put, these families would seem to benefit from a much tighter coupling both within and between social service and educational agencies. This tighter coupling will involve a number of features, including:

- a focus on the whole family. This focus is key to addressing problems that are multi-generational in nature and that have their origins in family systems. Research on case
records of juveniles who have had contact with the social service and correction systems suggests that troubled children are generally part of a larger troubled family system (Herrman and O'Looney, 1989-1990).

- a much stronger eligibility linkage among programs that serve the same family or neighborhood. This linkage is needed to assure that families get all the resources they need, that signals about what is appropriate assistance are clear, but also that public assistance does not become viewed cynically as a degrading and labyrinthine system that can nevertheless be "beat" if one is clever and opportunistic enough.

- a much stronger communications and program planning linkage. This linkage will be needed to insure that programs or services are complementary and provide fool-proof channels of access that lead to appropriate service utilization.

- a shared (interorganizational) responsibility for monitoring family and community progress. Just as workfare is more costly than welfare because of the supervisory demands of monitoring work cost more than simply sending a check, so too, tracking of family development and well-being will cost more than assuming that if clients do not return that they are doing fine. The added expense for outcome evaluation might be paid for in part by the elimination of duplicative, ad hoc, and ineffective interventions found through monitoring family progress.

While an agenda for addressing the "new" poverty would appear to call for much tighter interorganizational coupling along some lines, it would also seem to require a looser coupling along other lines. In particular, it would seem to involve:

- a high level of human discretion. While we know more about changing a dysfunctional family and community system than we have known in the past, our knowledge is far from exact or comprehensive. Because as Tolstoy remarked, every unhappy family is unhappy in their own peculiar way, knowing what resources and services are
needed when and with what families is still an art rather than a science. Addressing the peculiarities of "unhappy families" requires time, ingenuity, judgment, and tenacity in combinations that cannot entirely be predicted, planned for, or systematically applied.

- a high level of sensitivity to the stigma of being associated with a culture that is viewed as impoverished. Like great teaching, judicial use of discretion or sensitivity cannot be programmed. Rather, it must be rewarded when it is discovered. Unfortunately, more tightly coupled organizational systems, because they must be based on rational, technologically-driven criteria, usually do not have the capacity to discover or the discretion to reward this type of sensitivity.

Changing Tools

As the task faced by contemporary social service providers has changed, the technology assisting the accomplishment of this task has changed very little. However, emerging information and expert system technologies suggest that this will not be the case for long. Because technologies change, successful system or organizational design approaches are also likely to change (e.g., the introduction of cable and fiber-optic technologies tend to support a more loosely coupled approach to programming because of the fragmentation of the market).

Social services, like most service fields or tasks built around human expertise and judgement rather than rote behavior, have traditionally been immune from changes in technological capabilities. However, the third wave of information technologies is likely to change this situation. Shared data bases, for example, can assist case managers in reducing the fragmentation of services, increasing the speed and comprehensiveness of risk assessment and eligibility certification, and eliminating duplication of information gathering. Additionally, expert systems can guide minimally experienced or skilled social workers toward higher standards of practice. The experience of social service departments with expert systems is still limited; however, in the places such as Tulare and Merced counties in California evidence to date suggests that these systems have
enabled fewer eligibility workers to process more cases with no increase in wait time. Additionally, these systems have enabled workers with comparatively little experience to effectively navigate complex Medicaid rules and regulations. As will be explored below, however, the potential benefits of these systems will only be fully realized by service delivery systems that have re-designed their work or organizations to take advantage of these technologies.

Fitting Organizational Approach to Emerging Technologies

The dramatic decrease in the cost of storing, retrieving, manipulating, and organizing information should have resulted in a productivity boom and cost savings to information intensive organizations such as insurance, general business, and social service organizations. Unfortunately, the expected productivity boon of the computer age has for the most part not been achieved and will not likely be achieved as long as computers are used chiefly as typewriters that store text. As Hammer (1990) and others have suggested, in order to capture the expected benefits of low-cost information systems, work will have to be restructured around new principles that will redefine the roles and organizational structures through which individuals work. These principles, often called "flexible specialization," were first developed in a production context to describe how highly skilled workers using flexible machinery and software could produce short runs of precision, customized goods with only small re-tooling costs. However, these principles also can be applied to the aspects of service delivery or education that are information intensive (O'Looney, 1993).

In essence, flexible specialization suggests that information technologies, properly designed, will allow ordinary workers who are trained to use these technologies to perform jobs that once were the province of certified "experts" or "specialists." That is, instead of using technologies to de-skill ordinary work as often occurs in the design of mass production systems, technology is designed to empower ordinary workers to act more skillfully and more like specialists than would otherwise be the case. Just as important, however, it allows these ordinary workers and narrow specialists as well to work in a number of areas
and to flexibly move from one area to another. The notion is to raise the general problem-solving and information access skills of average workers so as to allow them to act as if their skills were in fact much more specialized, and to allow someone who has specialized in a narrow field to become more flexible in using these skills and in acquiring others that are more appropriate to environmental demands. The idea of flexible specialization should not be confused with a movement toward deprofessionalization and its attendant problems (Hasenfeld, 1985; Dressel, Waters, Sweat, Clayton, Chandler, 1988); in fact, as Stein (1982) suggests, the promotion of information technology skills (i.e., the basis for flexible specialization) among case workers is probably the best strategy for combating the movement toward deprofessionalization and increasing the skill level of the average social worker, though along fewer categorical lines. For example, a flexible specialization case worker would be trained to both diagnose problems and to treat the majority of problems that can be handled by a someone with good communication, mediation, and problem-solving skills. As such, this case worker would not unnecessarily refer clients who needed only minimal to moderate levels of counseling, parent education, or similar common treatment modality to costly specialists.

Flexible specialization requires that service agencies begin to re-think their current use of low skilled workers such as those who may be filling gate-keeping or record-keeping positions. In a re-designed service system, these individuals, assisted by expert systems, would be trained to work at a much higher level of skill and would approach the skill level of today's generic case worker. On the other hand, many social workers who currently specialize in narrow sub-fields and sub-professions might find that they will be asked to assume greater responsibility for a larger spectrum of inter-connected problems, while only occasionally being called on to provide specialized services. This more generic and holistic approach should not be confused with a de-skilling of professional work or a lowering of the level of professional service; rather, it should be seen as a re-forming of the helping professions so as to make them more effective by making them part of a flexible service delivery team. In this regard, social service providers will no longer be able to ignore
systemic problems (in the family or in the service system) simply because they fall outside of one’s specialty. Instead, these providers will use information systems within redesigned organizations to identify and treat—with skill mimicking that of a specialist—a number of problems that might otherwise have been ignored, being “outside” of one’s specialty.

This greater flexibility of roles would be made possible through the use of expert systems that would guide new or inexperienced service providers toward decisions and patterns of behavior that echo those of a more experienced or expert provider. While some existing computer programs that provide “counseling” to users seem a bit contrived, more sophisticated information systems, such as those being created through the Baylor-Howard Universities’ Community Work Station Project, are in the works. This “work station of the future,” for example, will include handy expert protocols (e.g., in the areas of elderly or child abuse) for handling particularly difficult or legally sensitive cases. Similarly, a number of universities and private vendors have developed outreach, intake, and eligibility software that can assist a natural helper, such as a teacher, nurse, or school counselor, to provide the kind of guidance, information, and referral that one would only expect from a professional social worker. Obviously, programs developed to assist ordinary helpers in the treatment of minor emotional or mental illnesses could go a long way toward filling the gap in mental health services for those whose illness is not severe enough to qualify them for free or subsidized treatment or after care. Although no technology will be able to duplicate the abilities of highly perceptive and intuitive service providers, expert systems should be able to raise the average level of practice to something approaching the best of human performance and provide average and below average service workers with heuristics for adapting their service-related behaviors to the specific needs of specific families.

However, in order for the promise of flexible specialization and expert system in service delivery to occur, the system as a whole has to be reorganized. Hammer (1990) has outlined a number of principles of re-organizing for flexible specialization, including:
**Principles of Flexible Specialization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Principle</strong></th>
<th><strong>Example</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) a cross-functional perspective</td>
<td>a nurse who also can conduct a mental health needs assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) a tighter connection between those who use the output of a process and those who perform the process</td>
<td>employer and workers design the training for youth on a vocational education track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) a tighter connection between information processing work and real work</td>
<td>a youth’s (or group of youth’s) grades, attendance, behavior and social history information is easily available to all who enter the information (e.g., teachers, probation officers, parents, counselors, and outreach workers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) a use of information networks to pull together resources from larger geographical areas</td>
<td>scarce or geographically distant experts/vendors are accessed through teleconferencing, on-line bulletin board Q&amp;A sessions, national data bases, or educational software.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) a linking of parallel activities rather than integration of the results of these activities</td>
<td>pre-natal care workers, parenting educators, public assistance providers, etc. work together to design the intervention with high risk pregnant teens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) a location of decision points closer to where the work is performed while building control into the process</td>
<td>allowing a school nurse to purchase needed supplies directly through an on-line purchase/budgeting system without having to go through other offices. The system itself has approved vendor lists, purchasing, budgeting, and accounting functions that limit the discretion to acceptable levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) a capture of information once and at the source</td>
<td>several social service agencies share the same planning and client (e.g., income, social history, eligibility, etc.) information data base, with each agency responsible for complete information gathering on first encounter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyzing these principles from the standpoint of the tightly v. loosely coupled design parameters, it appears that applying the principles calls for a tighter coupling of informational channels, while allowing a looser coupling of the people who work within a system or network of organizations. Standardized, inter-connected highways offer a good illustration of the type of coupling that is suggested. While development of such a highway system calls for greater central authority to standardize grades, intersections, traffic flows, etc., the system itself allows for much greater freedom on the part of the end-users of the system.

A number of Hammer's (1990) principles of flexible specialization are fairly clear as to whether or not they would involve more organizational or inter-organizational coupling. That is, organizational systems will have to become more tightly coupled if they are to more effectively "connect the output of a process and those who use the process." The fracturing of human service delivery into categorical specialties tends to undermine this process. For example, in our vocational education and rehabilitation systems, potential employers (i.e., those who will use the output of the vocational education process) have a minor, if any, role in developing the training curriculum or treatments for those who will emerge from the system. This stands, for example, in stark contrast to the highly praised German vocational education system (Streeck et al., 1987).

Hammer's principle of building a "tighter connection between information processing work and real work" is also likely to involve creation of tighter linkages among an organizational system's components. In the long run, however, as systems approach tighter coupling in this regard, the workers who have traditionally been engaged in the "real" work of the system should become empowered by their new information processing skills to act with greater discretion. As described above, both support staff and more professional staff would enjoy greater discretion in areas of work that were congruent with their service mission. While an increase in such discretion implies a more loosely coupled system, this discretion is actually based on a system that is more tightly coupled to a common information base, diagnostic and triage procedures, and intervention
sequences. The highway metaphor is appropriate in understanding this phenomenon, and the notion is more explicitly suggested in Hammer's principle of "pulling together resources from a larger geographical area by use of information networks."

Another of Hammer's flexible system-design principles states that organizational systems should "link parallel activities rather than integrate the results of those activities." This principle also suggests a more tightly coupled system. In the social services, such a system might involve linking together: day care personnel, child health professionals, early childhood educators, special education and early intervention services, and parent education programs—all into one seamless system that encompasses parents at any point of contact. Such a linkage could enable the system to enact another of Hammer's flexible design principles: "capture information once and at the source." In terms of human service delivery, this principle suggests that all human service providers share in the same informational data bases related to both client and program planning data and individual and family well-being. The purposes of such a data base are several, including: to serve families in crisis in a manner that does not further traumatize these families or place obstacles in the way of service delivery, to support a strategic and systemic approach to family system problem-solving, and to develop accountability for the service system as a whole. (Currently, single service providers are accountable only for the effects of the services they provide to individuals in a short-term time frame, rather than for the long-term effect on the whole family's well-being).

With respect to Hammer's idea of developing a cross-functional perspective, loosely coupled networks of organizations would seem to be more philosophically supportive of this idea. Loosely coupled individuals or groups of workers can move more easily across functional or bureaucratic boundaries (or perform several functions in the delivery of service to families). The cross-functional perspective actually harks back to the craft tradition where workers tended to perform more steps in a production (or service) process than is true in modern work arenas were the division of labor into its smallest elements is the predominant approach.
A Flexible Craft vs. Mass Production Approach to the New Poverty

While development of a cross-functional perspective does not necessarily mean a return to products or services produced by a single craftsman, it does mean that a high degree of parallel coordination exists among those persons who work with the same family such that the same craft-like approach is taken and a customized service plan is fulfilled. This stands in contrast to standard “mass production” or Fordist modes of service that characterize the design of our service delivery system. In mass production, the final product is assumed to be a standardized one (e.g., an independent healthy family) that can be produced in high volume using standardized categories of inputs (e.g., so much AFDC, so much Food Stamps, so much counseling). Because work has been divided into its simplest parts, the skill required of most service workers (outside of the small number of managers and licensed professionals who deal with the difficult cases) is minimal. As in mass production factories, once the assembly-line of service delivery has been completely designed, there ceases to be any need for craft-like skills.

While it seems obvious to some that service delivery work should not be accomplished through a mass production delivery design, this insight is in fact relatively new and based on both a realization of the potential of emerging technologies and an understanding that the tasks presented by the “new poverty” are not very amenable to a “Fordist” or production line approach. That is, whereas the typical separation of services specialties, (and within these specialties, separation of outreach, intake, diagnosis, treatment, case management, and after care) was once the most efficient and effective model of service delivery, the greater precision and customization of service delivery demanded by high-risk families and the potential, due to emerging information technologies, for providing customized services makes this “wisdom” obsolete.

Organizational and Inter-Organizational Changes to Address Task & Technology Mis-Match

In terms of system design, as the task of poverty elimination has become less linear and more complex, organizations within the service delivery system will need to change both at
the organizational and inter-organizational levels to more effectively model flexible specialization approaches and take advantage of emerging technologies to address "new poverty" problems. Currently, the service delivery system is mis-matched in terms of its tasks and available technologies. At the inter-organizational level only a very loose coupling exists, resulting in a fragmented delivery of services to multi-problem, impoverished families. At the organization level, however, operations tend to be tightly coupled such that front-line workers are given narrowly defined tasks, strict work sequences and requirements, and little discretion to act in the broader interests of the health and welfare of a whole family system. This mis-match is the result of the Fordist approach of breaking down work into its smallest, most easily replicated, standardized steps. The principles of flexible specialization would suggest a different organizational strategy: promote tighter coupling at the inter-organizational level (thereby allowing for cross-functional and information exchange activities), some looser coupling at the organizational level (thereby allowing greater discretion at the front-line), and complex processing at both levels. This tightening at the inter-organizational level, paradoxically, should lead to a certain loosening at the level of the individual worker. Practically speaking, as separate social service agencies begin to look at whole family systems and communities, they will have to build their approach collaboratively, coordinating both their own interactions and the overall tasks within their separate organizations. However, as service providers collaborate, the scope of how each agency defines its mission will likely widen considerably and individual workers within each agency could, consequently, be assigned responsibility for a broader range of tasks. As this range widens and as agencies are re-designed around flexible principles, these workers should have more discretion to determine a particular order or style of approach that will be most appropriate given unique family conditions.

The paradox of it being possible for a tightly coupled organization at a meta-level (e.g., a centralized state) to enact policies designed to support and facilitate loose coupling at a front-line level is in a sense the Faustian paradox of technology itself: technology can be designed either as a means of control or as
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an instrument of individual or team empowerment. This notion is expressed in Hammer's sixth principle: "locate decision points closer to where the work is being performed while building control into the process." This principle suggests that more flexible systems will provide workers with larger areas of discretion and that the boundaries of this discretionary power will be marked (in Handy's (1992) terms) by two concentric circles of responsibility: an inner circle containing everything workers have to do in order not to fail, and an outer circle marking the limits of their authority. Currently, most human service systems tell their workers in too much detail what they must do, but do not outline or describe the limits of what they could do to reach the system's goals (Schorr, 1986).

Pulling It All Together

The organizational design principles that emerge from an analysis of the new poverty and those that emerge from an analysis of the new technologies are by no means perfectly parallel, but the two do appear to intersect to a considerable degree, suggesting not a simple or single answer but a few heuristics as to what approach or degree of system coupling would be most effective in re-inventing the service delivery system:

1) inter-organizational systems may need to become more tightly coupled in terms of information gathering, processing, storage, and retrieval, and with respect to breaking down service barriers erected by existing bureaucracies and professional associations. A tight coupling will be needed to negotiate within an interorganizational order new, more flexible service delivery boundaries and to obtain the political clout needed to change law or policy that is currently supporting these boundaries.

2) organizational systems may need to become more loosely coupled in terms of the discretion allowed to workers and with regard to supporting program and service innovation.

Satisfying both guidelines 1 and 2 will demand an artistic touch (and may involve a relinquishing of some of the benefits
of developing more tightly coupled linkages within an individual organization). Judicious application of these guidelines is needed because the same information technologies that can be used to provide greater discretion to ordinary workers and professionals alike, to implement a flexible specialization approach, and to devise a more "seamless" service system for clients can also be used to control and limit discretion and keep clients under-empowered, uninformed, and under-served. Fortunately, unlike many mechanical technologies that tend to foster only linear processing, information technologies have the capacity to assist in the processing of complex work in ways that mimic those who are best at this work.

Planning to Prevent Negative Side-Effects of System Changes

A tightly coupled service delivery system (especially at the inter-organizational level) is desirable because such systems have been shown to be more effective than loosely-coupled ones in promoting the introduction and diffusion of new technologies and related work processes (Aldrich, 1978; Aiken and Haig, 1972, Warren, 1972, Davies, 1979, O’Looney, 1991. However, it must be recognized that there is a danger that such tightly coupled systems could simply re-introduce at a higher level of centralization ineffective, linear, Fordist technologies that would do little to improve service delivery. Additionally, movement to a more tightly-coupled inter-organizational structure also leaves the system vulnerable to eventual staleness and rigidity, because tightly-coupled systems tend to be less innovative and entrepreneurial (Aldrich, 1978; Rogers, 1979). In this regard, loosely coupled systems, because of their smaller scale, more competitive environments, and fewer bureaucratic rules, tend to have quicker response times and are generally at an advantage.

To overcome the tendency for tightly coupled systems to promote linear and Fordist, rather than complex, flexible processing or the tendency for these systems to become technologically stale, a couple of strategies can be pursued:

1) develop organizational "pockets" that are exempt from standard operating procedures and organizational regulation. The classic example of this strategy is Bell Labs where
researchers are very loosely coupled to parent organization (AT&T) and are generally free to pursue their research interests without organizational interference. Similarly, in the educational area, some states (e.g., Georgia) have created an “innovative school” option that allows a particular school or school district to opt out of having to follow state regulations.

These limited organizational experiments are intended to be a source of innovation for the entire system. As particular innovations show positive results, the larger organization attempts to diffuse the innovation throughout the system. While this strategy can be effective, it has limited potential when the dominant organizational culture is not very accepting of innovation. A more effective and systemic strategy would be to:

2) explicitly *infuse federalist principles* into organizational and inter-organizational structures. Federalist principles as outlined by Handy (1992) include the ideas of:

- **Subsidiarity**, or the placing of power at the lowest possible point in the system and keeping higher order bodies from taking on responsibilities that properly belong to a lower order body.

- **Interdependence**, or the spreading of power around. This can occur through efforts to reserve powers at lower levels or through explicitly creating different centers of power.

- **A uniform way of understanding the results of work** through development of a common language and common standards (e.g., for evaluation of success).

- **Separation of powers**, especially the separation of management, monitoring, and governance.

- **Twin citizenship** in both a higher and lower order body.

By distributing and separating power, establishing dual citizenship and bottom-up decision-making, and creating a common language and standards that nevertheless promote “understandable diversity,” federalist principles counteract the tendency of tightly coupled organizations to become rigid,
linear, top-down, mass processing mechanisms. Infusing organizations with strong federalist structures and principles can also counteract the tendency of tightly coupled human service systems to become authoritarian, and mechanistic. The principle of subsidiarity, for example, can act as a guide to protecting against the potential for abuse of a central data base of client information. The idea of subsidiarity suggests that information about a client be as much as possible within the control of the client, that the information that is exchanged between agencies be kept to the minimum that is relevant, and that the exchange is limited to those who clearly need to know. Such guidelines have, in fact, been proposed for information sharing in interagency efforts (Joining Forces, 1992). These guidelines, especially when combined with the development of a common language and standards for human services can make it possible to “develop means of exchanging information that are effective and practical on a wide scale, while still respecting legitimate rights to privacy.” (Joining Forces, 1992, p. 2).

While a full examination of how Federalist design principles might address the concerns of the new poverty (task) theorists and those who advocate the introduction of flexible technologies is beyond the scope of this study, at a glance, it seems that these principles would meet these concerns in important ways. The Federalist principle of subsidiarity, for example, can be instructive on a number of different levels. At the level of the frontline of service delivery, subsidiarity translates into the social work principle of “never doing for others what they are able to do themselves.” At a more organizational level, subsidiarity would suggest that local communities and even neighborhood units should perhaps be responsible, and be given the resources that would enable them to be responsible, for the health, safety, and well-being of the members of the community or neighborhood group. Neighborhood organizations, for example, might be given the authority to hire and evaluate education, human service, and law enforcement personnel who are to service that area. Such neighborhood organizations could begin to address the “new poverty” problems associated with a lack of role models and middle-class resources and skills in high-risk neighborhoods by requiring that new teachers, police, and human service
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workers begin to actually live in the neighborhoods they serve. Such local control of some of the day-to-day management of human services could also insure that work processes and procedures are culturally sensitive and contribute to the goals of the local community rather than simply to the status and privileges of the agency or organization. While the principle of subsidiarity would argue for more local voice in the functioning of human service workers, the principle of common standards can act to counter the tendency for local control to become an excuse for local corruption, nepotism, or rule by powerful local factions. That is, local control can be inoculated from the tendency toward corruption to the extent that human service workers have to meet high professional standards, follow a strict code of ethics, and undergo monitoring from an independent body.

The Federalist principle of interdependence parallels the notion among many “new poverty” theorists that human services need to do more to promote responsibility (on the part of both service workers and clients) and a linkage between service benefits and the obligations. Likewise, the idea of interdependence supports building collaboratives, not just among service providers, but between service providers and beneficiaries.

Following Federalist principles, such as those related to dual citizenship, separation of powers, interdependence, and development of common standards and languages, would also seem to encourage the introduction of Hammer's flexible technologies and organizational structures such as cross-functional teams. For example, the principles of interdependence, twin citizenship, common language, and separation of powers are particularly important in setting the stage for people taking a cross-functional perspective on problems and tasks. That is, while organizational or inter-organizational boundaries of long standing are often very difficult to break down (Weisborg, 1992) and impossible to eliminate entirely, a Federalist system works against turf guarding by making it difficult to establish independent or autonomous turf in any secure manner. As Tjosvold (1986) argues, the setting up of separate, but interdependent centers of power can help system units to realize a need for other agencies or departments. Infusion of this federalist principle would likely mean that an autonomous service agency with
its own sub-units for training, eligibility, outreach, placement, etc. would contract with, for example, an education agency for training, an employment agency for placement, and so on. In addition, the management, monitoring, and governance functions of this agency would be separated, making it more difficult for the entire organization to establish hard and fast turf to guard. Similarly, if the twin citizenship and common language principles were in effect, the staff of this agency would also be socialized as employees of a larger system-level organization in addition to learning the culture and mores of their own agency, and they would share enough of a common language and service standards with persons from other professions to be able to effectively communicate and work as a cross-functional team.

Hammer's idea of "linking real tasks and information processing" can also be seen as being furthered by adoption of Federalist governance principles (i.e., because real tasks and information processing tasks are logically interdependent operations that can be more effectively carried out if they are linked by a common data language). The flexible technology idea of the "taking advantage of geographically dispersed resources" is also at root dependent on Federalist organization, since geographically dispersed resources will be difficult to tap if there is no common language, sense of dual citizenship, or understanding of interdependence and reciprocity on the part of the persons who control the dispersed resources.

An analysis of the emerging task and technologies as well as the organizational options available to service providers suggests that successful reorganization of social services for the next few decades will demand an understanding of the nuances of organizational design and an ability to envision hybrid, nested, and federalist organizational systems. In rushing toward more unitary or collaborative systems, it would be a shame to lose the creativity of "public entrepreneurs" or the flexibility of smaller agencies. Like the spider's web, the intricate tangle of contracts, mergers, protocols, data sharing agreements, and inter-agency associations that bind agencies together can be either a means of spanning gaps in social service delivery and tapping a flow of resources, or just another way of getting stuck in a bureaucratic snarl. Federalist principles can assist social service planners in
carefully outlining how new technologies will be engaged and how new tasks will be taken on without providers becoming mere cogs in a mechanical system or families becoming "just another case." Handy's (1992) belief in the managerial value of federal organizational design is supported by the work of political theorists such as Ostrom (1990), who has identified "collective choice" or federalist-like arrangements that appear to do a better job of managing common pool resource problems better than either loosely coupled private markets or tightly coupled centralized planning. It can be argued that families are, in fact, a different type of common pool resource, and that the best practice management of this resource would be similar to practices that work effectively with natural resources (O’Looney, forthcoming). Additionally, federalist principles provide some guidance on how to balance the need for a tighter coupling of social service delivery with the need to provide choice for clients and healthy competition among providers.

Moving Toward a New Service System: An Illustration

Currently, there are several pilot initiatives supported by the Department of Health and Human Services and by foundations such as Annie Casey, Whitehead, and Pew that are designed to promote service integration in programs that assist children and their families. These initiatives use new monies "glue" to pull educational, social, and medical service organizations together in collaborative efforts at planning, budgeting and structuring a more integrated service delivery system. The experience of these initiatives to-date suggests that the social service professionals involved are exploring many of the strategies that have been suggested in this analysis of tasks and technologies. However, as new information technologies have yet to be introduced on a large scale in the program sites, the strategic directions taken have been based more on an understanding of the emerging tasks than of the potential uses of emerging technologies.

This focus on tasks has resulted in a much higher level of inter-organizational coupling. In particular, as provider agencies began to take an holistic, cross-functional look at families, a number of strategies indicative of tighter inter-organizational
coupling were developed, including: co-location of services at places (e.g., schools) that were least stigmatizing; joint program operations; cross-training of staff; joint hiring of staff; and development and use of a common intake, eligibility, and social history taking process. Additionally, as suggested in this analysis, the tighter coupling at the inter-organizational level tended to allow some agency staff, especially those hired by the inter-agency collaborative to work in teams, to act as flexible specialists rather than as narrow specialists. That is, workers who were hired to fill some specific functions (e.g., eligibility, health screening, mental health counseling) in a Fordist model service delivery system have become more aware of the functions of their co-workers who have other specialties; these workers have in some cases begun to see their own roles as crossing the traditional functional lines. As this has occurred, they have begun to act in ways that are more flexible and that involve greater amounts of discretion. Similarly, workers acting in a gate- or record-keeping capacity are being trained to be part of the service team rather than mere processors of information.

Finally, these service integration programs have made some explicit use of federalist principles in planning for this new service system. For example, enacting the idea of subsidiarity, the state-level collaborative offered to fund any local site plans as long as key local community partners (i.e., the heads of the school, public health, and family and children service system) agreed and signed-off on the plans. This idea was extended in many sites to include participation in the governance structure by client citizens. The ideas of subsidiarity and dual citizenship were also evident in the management of the evaluation plan in which local sites within a state collaborative were able to make independent decisions about their local evaluation plan as well as participate in development of the overall (state-level) plan and make decisions about when and how to go forward with it. Remarkably, once the idea of subsidiarity was confirmed, local sites became more willing to engage in negotiations about how to develop other federalist features such as a uniform language of evaluation or the separation of various functional powers such as fiscal agency, evaluation, chairmanship of the board, and personnel administration.
Arriving Where We Started

In taking a deductive approach to the search for an appropriate design of a new social service system we have arrived, in large measure, but from a different direction at conclusions that echo Schorr's (1986) "lessons" for a renewed social service system. What is new in these conclusions is the offering of: 1) some specific guidelines and elaboration as to where collaboration and service integration might be beneficial and where these movements might be limited or even dangerous; and 2) how infusion of the principles of federalism might act as an antidote to the more threatening tendencies of service integration and collaboration.

So far, the experiences of service integration initiatives tend to confirm the broad system design principles that were deduced from an analysis of the new social service tasks and available organizational and material technologies. While practical experiences with new service delivery systems and technologies remains slight, any theory of effective organizational design for social services can only be partially confirmed. Nevertheless, as those responsible for building these new systems will need to continue to search for ever better ways to fit emerging tasks to emerging technologies—an efforts akin to “building an airplane while flying it”—there may be some value in deductive theory providing a partial map and blueprint.

References


Materials for the case study used in this research were drawn from the evaluation of the State of Georgia's Family Connection Initiative. Dr. O'Looney is the program evaluator for this initiative.
Commodification, the Welfare State and Israeli Kibbutz

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The notion of commodification refers to the degree to which the individual is dependent upon the market for the satisfaction of his economic and social needs. The welfare state has been described as having a decommodifying influence in that it provides the individual with the means to maintain a reasonable standard of living while not working. An examination of the Israeli Kibbutz is undertaken in order to understand the workings of an extreme case of decommodification. In Kibbutzim, there exists a very highly developed system of welfare services that are determined by individual needs and not by individual earning power. While the nature of these communities clearly prevent direct comparisons with the welfare state, the very fact that such highly decommodified societies have existed for over seven decades should shed light on the debate over the degree to which states can intervene with the play of market forces.

Introduction

The interrelation between the market and the welfare state in capitalist societies has been a theme that has dominated much of the literature dealing with the welfare state. At its height, the welfare state was regarded as a mechanism through which the play of market forces is modified so as to guarantee individuals and families a minimum income, to narrow the extent of insecurity by enabling them to meet certain social contingencies and to offer a high standard of social services to all, regardless of status or class (Briggs, 1961). One of the major implications of the welfare state crisis and the growth in support for anti-collectivist ideologies in virtually all the welfare states, however, has been a growing tendency to re-introduce the market into fields which, until the mid-seventies, were generally
regarded as beyond its domain. The enthusiasm with which governments of different political shades have sought to privatize various aspects of the welfare system is but one facet of this tendency (Doron, 1991).

In an attempt to understand the dynamics of the changing relationship between the market and welfare state, researchers (Rein, Esping-Andersen and Rainwater, 1987) employ the notion of commodification as a means with which to describe the varying degree to which an individual is dependent either upon the market or the mechanisms and institutions of the welfare state in order to satisfy human needs. This essay will examine an extreme case (Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg, 1991) of decommodification - the Israeli communal society called the kibbutz. This society (or, rather, this group of communal settlements), which has existed since nearly the turn of the century and today has a population of nearly 130,000, is a unique, yet not irrelevant, example of a society in which the satisfaction of the needs of the individual is divorced almost entirely from his or her market value. Indeed, it has been recently described as the "most complete model of the integrated socialist welfare principle" (Bar Yosef, 1985). Here, it will be proposed that the kibbutz is an example of a nearly totally decommodified society.

The use of the term "commodity" in order to describe the function of labour refers to the manner by which human beings in capitalist society are defined solely in the terms of their labour power. Depicting the free market economy as a stark and antagonistic dichotomy between workers and capitalists, Marx (1975) notes that the workers are totally dependent upon their ability to compete in the market and obtain wages in order to support themselves and their families. This puts them at the mercy of the laws of supply and demand and at a disadvantage vis a vis the employer, who has additional sources of income. Indeed, workers are worse off than other commodities due to the fact that the value of their labour depends upon its being constantly exchanged. It cannot be accumulated nor can it be saved. They have, therefore, no choice but to seek to constantly sell their labour power at whatever price the market sets for it.

A century later, Karl Polanyi (1957) modified this idea in his study of the evolution of the market economy in capitalist
society. The rhetoric of free market aside, he notes, social protection in capitalist countries has undermined the idea of a market in which human labour is solely a commodity. While accepting that a characteristic of capitalist society is the tendency to make one’s life chances wholly dependent on his or her disposable income, Room (1979) also emphasizes that “a progressive divorce of wage and disposable income” has taken place in welfare states due to the introduction of private, and, later on, state social security systems, the progressive income tax system and the development of state agencies which provide services for citizens at less than their market value (p. 14).

This theme is taken up, and dealt with extensively, in the writings of Claus Offe (1984) who identifies the relationship between the market and non-market governmental intervention as an inherent contradiction of the welfare state. “A supportive framework of non-commodified institutions, he notes “is necessary for an economic system that utilizes labour power as if it were a commodity” (p. 263). Offe, and Habermas before him, employ the notion of decommodification in order to describe a wide range of compensatory and market-replacing activities undertaken by the state (Keane, 1984, p. 84). As such, any non-market based state policy, be it the existence of social security transfer payments, government expenditure on infrastructure or the functioning of public health institutions, is grouped under the notion of decommodification.

Gosta Esping Andersen and his associates provide the most significant attempt to provide a formal and operational basis for the notion of decommodification. They define decommodification as “the degree to which an individual commands the means to satisfy his or her social and familial needs independently of the cash nexus” (Esping Andersen and Kolberg, 1991, p. 78). Esping Andersen (1990) describes decommodifying welfare states as those in which “the citizens can freely, and without potential loss of jobs, income, or general welfare, opt out of work under conditions when they, themselves, consider it necessary for reasons of health, age, or even educational self improvement” (p. 23).

The notion of decommodification assumes, then, that the lesser the individual’s dependence upon the market for the
gratification of individual or family needs, the easier it will be for him/her to opt out of the market. This act of freely removing oneself from the market will be possible for most individuals (except for the very rich) only because the welfare state will ensure the continued gratification of their needs despite the fact that they are not earning a living as part of the market.

Taken to its logical conclusion, this equation should enable us to create two theoretical poles on a commodification continuum upon which existing welfare states (or a single welfare state in different stages of its development) can be placed. The two ends of the continuum can be defined as a Totally Commodified Society (TCS) and a Totally Decommodified Society (TDS). The idea of a society closest to the notion of a Totally Commodified Society (TCS) would be that proposed by classical liberalism, in which there is no state intervention in the workings of the market and the individual is totally dependent upon the market value of his or her labour in order to survive. The logic of this society is obviously based on the capitalist notion that the risks and the chances of the free market are the incentives without which economic growth is impossible. Wealth will be created only when unfettered individuals compete freely in the market. Social policies, which interfere with the workings of the market by providing incentives not to to work (in the form of unemployment benefits, for example), will serve as obstacles to a successful economy. While a Totally Commodified Society would seek ways to deal with the “truly needy”, it would presumably take the form of a residual welfare system that does not threaten the market as often proposed in the works of contemporary New Right writers (Murray, 1984; Freeman, 1981).

The notion of a Totally Decommodified Society (TDS) would be one in which there is no connection whatsoever between the market value of an individual’s labor and his or her standard of living. Society, through its welfare and social security mechanisms, would ensure that, regardless of whether the individual is a participant in the market or not, he or she would enjoy a constant standard of living. The individual in such a society would work, yet the nature of his or her work would not be in
any way linked to the satisfaction of needs and desires. On the basis of the Esping-Andersen notion, an individual in such a society would be be able to freely opt out of the market safe in the knowledge that this would in no way endanger the gratification of his or her needs. Presumably, in the TDS social security programs would be devoid of the time limits, conditions of eligibility, or limitations on the levels and span of benefits, that characterize existing social security programs and that seek to limit moral hazard and discourage "scroungers" (Deacon, 1976). Obviously, the very existence of such a society, in which there is no link between effort and reward, runs counter to the accepted wisdom of not only free-marketeers but also of the more centrist economists and social policy thinkers. The need to strike a balance between social security income guarantees and privately secured incomes has long served as an iron law for those seeking to achieve economic efficiency (Okun, 1975) and maintain a willingness to work while, at the same time, ensuring the existence of income guarantees that provide a safety net for the poor, disabled, and unemployed (Burns, 1956). A TDS would appear inherently inefficient and unmanageable to such views and inevitably doomed to anarchy and bankruptcy. The Israeli kibbutz would, however, appear to undermine this accepted wisdom (Maron, 1993).

The Kibbutz

The kibbutz is a term used to describe 270 communal settlements in Israel. The first kibbutz, named Degania, was established in 1911 as a rural community (Baratz, 1945). The founders of the first kibbutzim (plural of kibbutz) were young Jewish immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe who sought to participate in the Zionist effort to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Many of these young immigrants brought with them the collectivist notions that were an integral part of the radical ideologies of the revolutionary movements then active in the Eastern Europe. They sought to establish an egalitarian Jewish society in Palestine. The leaders of the Zionist movement supported the establishment of collective rural settlements by these young immigrants as a means of settling Palestine (Near, 1992).
Since the first kibbutz was established, the kibbutz movement has grown significantly. In 1991, 129,300 people lived in 270 kibbutzim, affiliated to three different kibbutz movements, scattered throughout Israel (Maron, 1992). Nevertheless, they have retained a number of key characteristics. They remain relatively small, intimate communities. The size of the average kibbutz is 463 inhabitants (Maron, 1991, p. 12). Membership is voluntary and dependent upon identification of members with the basic values of kibbutz society. The decision-making process is still based upon a large degree of participatory democracy. These characteristics have ensured a high level of internal cohesion on the kibbutzim.

The kibbutzim make up 2.6% of the population of the country. The population of the kibbutzim is similar in its demographic characteristics to that of the general population of Israel. 10.2% are elderly, over the age of 65 (slightly higher than the national average), while just below 30% are under the age of 14 (slightly below the national average).

While at their outset, the kibbutzim were agricultural settlements, today the emphasis is upon industrial production and services. Nevertheless, most kibbutzim usually combine both agricultural and industrial or service production. In both fields, the role of the kibbutzim is far higher than their proportion in the population. Thus, despite the drop in agricultural production, kibbutzim still produce a third of the entire agricultural product in Israel (Meron 1991, p. 38). Industry comprises two thirds of the total kibbutz production today and is growing. The kibbutz industries comprise 8% of sales and 9% of all industrial exports in Israel (Kibbutz Industries Association, 1992).

The kibbutz movement has served as the object of extensive study in a large variety of fields, in particular that of education (Shepher, 1974; Shur, 1976). The issue of welfare and social security on the kibbutz and its implications for the welfare state have, however, not been the subject of such scrutiny. In order to understand better the manner with which the kibbutz deals with these issues, it is necessary to clarify first issues of equality and distribution on the kibbutz.
Equality and Distribution on the Kibbutz

The notion of equality has long been associated with the kibbutz and, indeed, has been the subject of much academic scrutiny and polemics. Tumin (1967), for example, described the kibbutz as an example of a society that has achieved near total equality. Other writers, particularly Ben Rafael (1988), have indicated that social stratification does, in fact, exist on the kibbutz. However, this stratification focuses upon status rather than material differences between individuals on the kibbutz.

The initial attempts to institute equality in the daily life of kibbutz members were a result of the socialist values of the founders. The adoption of equality, however, was also a pragmatic response to the demands of a national movement which sought to establish agricultural communities for young East European immigrants in the sometimes hostile, and certainly harsh, conditions of Palestine in the second and third decades of the century. Over time, and in response to the need to institutionalize the egalitarian nature of kibbutz life, the notion of kibbutz equality became formalized in a series of documents which set forth both the goals of the kibbutz and the kibbutz movement, and also the rights and obligations of the members and the community. In 1951, the Ihud kibbutz movement, the largest and least radical of the movements, published a founding platform which stated that the essence of the kibbutz was:

"... the building of a socialist form of economy and life in workers' settlements that are based upon self-labour, equality of human value, full communality in the ownership of property, work, production and consumption, communal education, full joint responsibility based on the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" (Gadon, 1958, p.371).

The final part of the above statement, the adoption of the principle that each member contribute to the community according to his ability yet receive from the community according to his needs, provides the basis for the notion of kibbutz equality. Not coincidentally, this phrase also reappears in the Kibbutz Code that was drawn up by all the kibbutz movements in the 1960's (Article no. 66, p.13) and has been ratified on a number of
occasions ever since. On the basis of this passage, Shur (1983/4, p.190) has defined the notion of kibbutz equality as “the severing of the link between the contribution of the individual to production and society, and the return that he (or she) receives in order to fulfill his (or her) needs”.

This attempt to establish an egalitarian society in which all the needs of its members are provided by the community with no link whatsoever to the earning capacity of the individual obviously requires the establishment of a very unique distribution system. In fact, the modes of distribution that have evolved over time on the kibbutzim differ between kibbutzim and according to the goods distributed. In general, however, variations of four distinct modes can be found on all kibbutzim (Gluck, 1980; Barkai, 1978). Certain goods, usually low value domestic consumer goods, are distributed freely to all members upon demand. Other items, particularly clothing and shoes, are rationed out or, more commonly, members receive allowances aimed primarily at enabling them to purchase goods of this nature. A third mode is usually adopted with regard housing and certain durable goods. These are distributed on the basis of a “point priority scale” based upon considerations such as seniority, family size and health condition.

The fourth mode of distribution, and that most relevant to the study of welfare states, is commonly implemented with regard food (which is provided in a communal dining room) and welfare (health, education and personal social services). These are distributed according to need. Thus, budgetary constraints notwithstanding, the kibbutz provides for all the individual needs of members in these fields.

The Welfare Functions of Kibbutzim

The kibbutz can be seen as a kind of “communal welfare state” with regard the welfare functions that it provides its members. In seeking to deal with the needs of its members, it has undertaken three distinct, though overlapping, welfare state roles. The kibbutz serves as an intermediary between the state and outside agencies and its members, it enhances existing state provided social services, and it provides directly services to its members.
1. The Kibbutz as an Intermediary: In a number of different fields of welfare state activity, the kibbutz serves as an intermediary between the state, its institutions and other providers of welfare services, and the members of the kibbutz. While the state provides other citizens benefits and in-kind services directly, in the case of kibbutz members the process is different. In principle, the kibbutz is the recipient of benefits and funding on behalf of its members. Members do not receive benefits and services directly. Rather, the distribution of benefits and services received for individual members of the kibbutz is left to the discretion of the kibbutz.

The relations between kibbutz members, the kibbutz and the National Insurance Institute (NII) well illustrate this function. The kibbutz member is formally classified as an employee of the kibbutz by the NII, the primary supplier of social security in Israel. In a process similar to that of other employers, contributions on behalf of kibbutz members are transferred from the kibbutz to the NII. Unlike other citizens, however, the benefits are also paid to the kibbutz and not to the individual members (Ronen, 1978). Thus, old age benefits, child allowances and other benefits are all paid directly to the kibbutz in the name of individual members. Often, kibbutz members will be unaware of the level of benefits received by the kibbutz on their behalf, or even of the fact that they are eligible for such benefits.

In the field of education, the kibbutzim have their own educational institutions (often run jointly by a number of kibbutzim) that receive funding directly, as any other local authority, from the Ministry of Education. Health needs of kibbutz members are dealt with by health workers (either kibbutz members or salaried workers employed by the kibbutz) in a medical clinic on the kibbutz under the auspices of the sick fund affiliated with the Histadrut trade union federation. Thus, the educational and health needs of kibbutz members are provided in the framework of the kibbutz thereby considerably limiting the need for contact between members and additional health or education suppliers.

The intermediary role of the kibbutz in welfare not only provides the kibbutzim with a large degree of discretion (in the health and educational fields) with regard the quality and
nature of the services and the mode of distribution of resources to members but also provides very significant financial benefits. Thus, in the case of payments to the sick fund, the kibbutzim as a sector, enjoy a discount of 16% in dues to the sick fund (Tomer, 1993). With regard state social security, the same is true. As noted above, by law members of kibbutzim are regarded as the employees of the kibbutz. Because they do not receive wages, payments to the NII (which are compulsory and based on a percentage of the wage in the case of employees) by the kibbutz on behalf of its members/"employees" are based on the upkeep of a single individual on each specific kibbutz. This figure is generally much lower than the wages that serve as a basis for NII payments on behalf of most other employees. The implications of this system are that the kibbutzim pay a particularly low rate of payments to the NII. While the benefits that the kibbutz will receive on behalf of the individual member eligible for benefits that are based on prior wages (such as maternity leave or work injury benefits) will be lower than those that it would have perhaps received if the members were working in a similar position in the free market, it should be noted that most social security benefits in Israel are universal and based upon the average wage and not linked to prior income. Therefore it appears clear that the financial advantages of this arrangement for the kibbutz as a whole clearly outweigh its disadvantages.

The reasons why the state and other institutions have granted the kibbutz this intermediary role and provided it with a prefential financial status, can be found in both the political and financial spheres. In the past (and to a much lesser degree in the present) the kibbutz movement enjoyed political power far in excess to its size and proportion in the population. This was due to the major role played by the kibbutz movement in the establishment of the state and its position in the dominant labour movement (Horowitz and Lissak, 1989). As a result, members of kibbutzim were very significantly represented in the political elite in the first decade following statehood (Gurevitch & Weingrod, 1978). This is particularly true of the Labour movement and the Histadrut trade union federation. The kibbutzim were able to ensure that state laws (Weisman,
1966) recognized their unique collective form (thereby ensuring the kibbutz an intermediary role in welfare and other fields) and granted them a favourable financial position. The same was true with regard institutions, such as the Kupat Holim sick fund, which were affiliated with the Histadrut.

A second factor has less to do with politics and more with economics. The economic clout wielded by the kibbutz movement (even after the severe economic crisis it underwent during the late 1980s) is considerable. As representatives of a relatively large, close knit and prosperous federation of producers and consumers, the kibbutz movements have been able to negotiate preferred treatment by economic institutions. A recent example of this in the welfare field is the trend by competing pension funds to offer kibbutzim conditions for joining the funds which are better and more flexible that those offered other individuals (Gilboa, 1992).

2. The Kibbutz as an Enhancer of Welfare Services: In addition to its role as an intermediary between outside welfare providers and kibbutz members, the kibbutz as a "communal welfare state" tends to play an enhancing role. In various fields of welfare state activity, the kibbutz utilizes its own resources in order to augment existing services and provides its members with far more generous services than those provided by the welfare state to other citizens. Comparative studies of welfare expenditure between kibbutz families and urban Israeli families belonging to the sixth, seventh and eighth income deciles clearly show that in key fields of welfare state activity, per family expenditure on the kibbutzim is significantly higher. This enhancing role is especially marked in the health and education fields. Thus, for example, the monthly expenditure per kibbutz family on health reaches 159 IS (Israeli Shekels) while the average expenditure of families in the sixth decile was 92 IS, 111 IS in the seventh decile and 110 in the eight decile. The gap in expenditure on education is even greater. The expenditure per family on education on a kibbutz is nearly treble that of an urban family in the eighth income decile (Shmueli, 1989 p. 22). The addition in expenditure in the fields of health and education generally takes the form of lower teacher-student and nurse-population ratios on the kibbutzim and a greater readiness to spend more
for the provision of additional educational and medical services for members.

3. The Kibbutz as a Provider of Services: In a number of fields, the kibbutz serves as the direct provider of welfare services to its members, in a manner that is often very different from that of outside society. The most outstanding examples of this are in the provision of services to the aged and the personal social services provided by welfare agencies working in the framework of the kibbutz movements.

In the field of personal social services, services are provided by three primary sources—by "ESEK" a non-profit organization of social workers that operates under the auspices of the two main kibbutz movements, by for-profit services run by the kibbutz movements that focus on the needs of specific populations, and by various private sources. The activities of ESEK well demonstrate the providing function of the kibbutz in the field of welfare services. ESEK covers all the personal social service needs of kibbutz members in a majority of kibbutzim. The service is comprised of 80 full and part time social workers (all of whom are members of kibbutzim) who are divided on a regional basis and generally devote one full working day per week to an average sized kibbutz. The social workers work directly with individual kibbutz members or with local committees that deal with different social aspects of kibbutz life (for example, the committee for the aged). ESEK is funded jointly by the kibbutzim (in which its social workers are active) and by the kibbutz movements. Thus, for example, the Kibbutz Haartzi movement covers 50% of the budget. There is no direct funding from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The only financial support from welfare state institutions is in the form of indirect subsidies in those cases in which the office and transportation costs of the ESEK social workers are covered by regional councils which receive three quarters of their social service budget from the ministry.

An additional source of personal social services are centers that specialize in child development and in rehabilitation that were established, and are run, by the kibbutz movements. These centers provide for-profit services to both kibbutz members and regular citizens (Kaufman, 1982). The costs for services provided to members of kibbutzim are borne entirely by the kibbutzim.
The kibbutzim also receive personal social services from private sources. Members that require services that cannot be provided by the ESEK social workers (in the kibbutzim in which they work) are able to seek professional assistance from outside sources. In such cases, a request for payment will be directed by the member to a committee on the kibbutz. If approved, all the costs of the treatment will be paid by the kibbutz.

Thus, regardless of the form they take, all personal social services required by kibbutz members are covered entirely by the kibbutz and the kibbutz movement.

The kibbutz elderly, and particularly the impaired elderly, are also the recipients of a unique system of welfare provision (Reinharz, 1988). In seeking to deal with a growing number of elderly members, the kibbutz has sought to provide for the needs of these members within the framework of the community. One of the unique features of this effort has been the emphasis upon enabling elderly kibbutz members to continue to play an active role in kibbutz life, and in particular in the sphere of work. In the case of the impaired elderly, kibbutzim have also developed a network of support services that include specially trained kibbutz members, alternative housing options, group-care facilities, special means of transportation and adapted workplaces (Bergman, King, Bentur, Holmes, Holmes and Teresi, 1992). The costs of this elaborate system of community assistance to the elderly is borne almost entirely by the kibbutz without outside financial support.

Conclusions

Whether the kibbutz serves as an intermediary, an enhancer or provider of welfare to its members, the nature of its welfare system clearly places it within the realm of a Totally Decommodified Society (TDS). The distribution of welfare services to kibbutz members is determined by individual needs and not by individual earning power. Through a diverse range of external arrangements and internal mechanisms, total responsibility for the distribution of welfare services is in the hands of the kibbutz, thereby enabling the community itself to decide upon the criterion for qualification independent of outside influence, either by the state or non-state welfare state agencies.
Moreover, the conscious dismantling of the connection between the effort and material reward of individuals clearly provides an extreme case of a society in which the individual is not commodified, is not dependent upon market forces to satisfy individual or family needs.

Does this mean that there is no link between market forces and the needs of kibbutz members? Not necessarily. The kibbutz, as a community, is clearly dependent upon its joint earning power in order to provide for the individual needs of its members. In principle, it cannot provide more than the sum of the efforts of all its members. Obviously, in periods of economic difficulties, the ability of the kibbutz to provide answers to needs will decrease. This is what occurred in the late 1980's and early 1990's, during which high inflation rates, a severe drop in government subsidies for agriculture, and mismanagement in kibbutz industries, embroiled the kibbutzim in large debts to banks.

These limitations upon the ability of kibbutzim to maintain a high standard of living for members, coupled with the sharp swing in Israeli social and economic policy towards the free market and privatization (Karger and Monickendam, 1991) weakened support among many kibbutz members for the existing system. As a result, there has been a tendency among some kibbutzim to adopt the "New Kibbutz" concept which seeks to legitimize the concept of inequality on kibbutzim by implementing fundamental changes in a variety of fields of kibbutz life (Shafran, 1992/3). Basically supporters of this concept seek to "privatize" kibbutz life by "allowing market forces and profit considerations to have priority over social and value-related considerations... and by granting consumer sovereignty to the area of consumption and need satisfaction" (Rosner, 1992).

However, it appears that the changes in kibbutz society have, until now, been relatively limited in scope and nature. A recent study found that around ten percent of kibbutzim have taken significant steps in this direction. Only a handful have actually sought to link effort and reward (Rosner, 1993). In practice, the emphasis has been primarily upon a restructuring of kibbutz industries, diversification of economic fields of
activity, and greater involvement of outside finance and management. Consumption has primarily been affected by cuts in expenditure and a tendency to enhance individual discretion over non-welfare goods. There has been no significant attempt to change the modes of distribution of welfare services.

Despite the economic crisis and ensuing changes, the kibbutz still remains an example of society closer to the TDS than any other. Being a close-knit, voluntary and relatively homogenized society, the kibbutz has managed to ensure the continued existence of its unique social structure through a high level of social control. While its very uniqueness, its size and history, preclude far-reaching conclusion with regard the welfare state, the very existence of kibbutzim casts doubt upon the notion that large degrees of decommodification will, by necessity, undermine the economic basis of the welfare state.

Moreover, the social and economic mechanisms developed in this society should serve as a subject of research for social scientists and practitioners seeking to enhance the levels of decommodification on the state and community levels.

References


I would like to thank Prof. Abraham Doron for his very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper, and my colleagues at the Givat Haviva Institute for their assistance in preparing the paper.
From Entitlement to Contract: Reshaping the Welfare State in Australia

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Australia has sought to contain social welfare expenditures through more stringent targeting of benefits, increased scrutiny of applicants, and by requiring more vigorous job search and training activities. The changes implemented since the Labor Party assumed office in 1983 represent the most sweeping restructuring of the Australian welfare state in 50 years. They mark a shift from an individualistic, rights-based view of welfare state entitlements to one stressing reciprocal obligations. This article examines the origin and implications of this reshaping of Australia’s welfare state programs. It considers the dilemmas of enforcing work-related obligations and other compliance measures in an era of persistent, high unemployment.

As the Clinton administration ponders it’s commitment to welfare reform, it might well consider the experience of Australia. Like many other industrialized nations, a lagging economy has prompted a reassessment of Australia’s welfare state programs and services. The governing Australian Labor Party (ALP) has sought to reduce expenditures without alienating it’s electoral base among low income constituents. This article describes and assesses these reforms.

Australia has conventionally been labelled a welfare laggard, along with the U.S. and Japan, because of its low welfare expenditures, categorical, means-tested programs, low tax revenue base and its relative lateness in initiating welfare state programs in comparison with continental European nations (Castles and Dowrick, 1990; Esping-Anderson, 1990). Deborah Mitchell (1990), using data from the Luxembourg Income Study, however, has shown that Australia compares much more favourably on measures of poverty relief and income replacement when taxation is also taken into account, a view supported
by other analysts (Cass, 1989; Gruen, 1989). An observer from the U.S. cannot help but be struck by Australia's much broader coverage and higher benefit levels, except for aged pensions.

While many services had previously been provided by individual states, the Australian national welfare state dates back to the 1940s. The Commonwealth Department of Social Services was established in 1941; a series of national welfare measures—widows' pensions, the child endowment, unemployment and sickness benefits were adopted over the next few years and were brought together in the Social Services Consolidation Act of 1947 (Watts, 1987). The Commonwealth presently provides "pensions" for the aged, disabled, widowed, sole parents and carers of handicapped persons; and "benefits", intended to be of temporary duration, for the unemployed, and the sick; and "special benefits" for those in financial hardship not eligible for any other categorical program. There is a family allowance and family allowance supplement for families of low income workers, Austudy stipends for full time students, a young homeless allowance, and a job search allowance for unemployed 16 and 17 year olds. Low income families may also qualify for rental assistance and child care fee relief; and pensioners also receive concessions for things like public transport, telephone and pharmaceuticals. These programs are all means-tested, and except for the family allowance, subject to an assets test as well. Pension and benefit payment levels are indexed for inflation and pegged at about 24 per cent of the average male wage which places them at about the poverty line. There is also a universal health care program, Medicare.

The Development of the Australian Welfare State

It might seem paradoxical that the world's first Labor party, backed by a strong labour movement would countenance what many describe as a residual welfare state. The Australian Labor party (ALP) was formed in 1890, but despite its mass working class base, it has governed nationally only 28 of the 90 years since federation, 11 of which have been during the current Hawke-Keating regime. The Labor Party, however, has had considerable influence on public policy, even when in opposition (Castles, 1985).
Lenin, in 1913, characterised the party as liberal bourgeois, representing non socialist trade union workers. Until the 1960s, the ALP was committed to achieving greater social and economic equality and security. The trade union movement and the party were, however, more concerned about wages and working conditions, protecting domestic industry, and restricting immigration than welfare state benefits (Jaensch, 1989).

Australia, once known as “the working man’s paradise”, benefited historically from relatively high wages and a compressed distribution between high and low earners. A unique feature of Australia’s approach to dealing with class/industrial conflict was the system of compulsory wage arbitration. In the 1907 Harvester Judgement, the President of the Arbitration Court ruled that wages were to be set at a level deemed sufficient to provide a “civilized life” for the wage earner, his wife, and three children. Wage disputes were subject to compulsory arbitration, and wages were to be adjusted to keep up with the cost of living, though this basic wage did not become standard until the 1920s. Under this system, the poor were those outside the labour force, and especially large families of wage earners. This “wage-earners welfare state” worked reasonably well for the majority, except during times of high unemployment, as with the depression (Castles, 1985). As Castles observed about the selectivity of Australian welfare state programs: “If wages were fair and reasonable, it would only be the improvident and those unusually circumstanced who would require help.” (1985, p. 99). This emphasis on the male wage earner as provider also biased policies against women; equal pay legislation was not adopted until 1972. Current policies grant smaller benefits to couples, and foster a bureaucratic preoccupation with defining and identifying “de facto” or “marriage like” relationships (Bryson, 1984; Shaver, 1987).

The ALP maintained an ideological commitment to selectivity and means-testing as the best way to assist the poor until the 1970s. Prior to the 1970s, social security was limited in scope and administration. There was little outreach to inform citizens about available programs and uptake was relatively low. The small, residual social security system was to provide for those in need because of death, disability or retirement of the primary wage earner.
A series of reforms under the Whitlam Labor Government, 1972-75, brought a shift to universalism, increased benefit levels and a broadening of eligibility for means-tested programs. A national health scheme was introduced, though it was subsequently eliminated by the conservative Fraser government. The Whitlam era reforms were undertaken at the end of a long period of economic expansion in a country that enjoyed a high standard of living. Australia ranked 6th in per capita income in the 1960s. In the two decades from 1951 to 1971, Australia experienced an average annual increase in G.D.P. of 4.7 per cent (Edwards, 1991) though per capita G.D.P. was much lower.

During the Whitlam era, the prevailing philosophy stressed the awarding of entitlements with a minimum of delay or red tape. Those working in the Department of Social Security at the time summarise the prevailing attitude as one where it was deemed better that several people get benefits to which they were not entitled lest one needy person do without. The 1973 oil shock, however, heralded an era of persistent high unemployment, growing inflation and welfare backlash. A welfare system based on high wages and full employment was no longer viable (Cass, 1988).

With the 1974-75 recession the Department of Social Security was suddenly overwhelmed by unemployment applicants. The watchword of the day was to get the money to the people as quickly as possible. Staff struggled to keep up with the demand. While payments had been automated from 1967, the current technology required the manual batching of paper forms, punching of computer cards, and feeding the cards through a machine that would issue the cheques. With the limited resources of the Department taxed to the extreme trying to keep up issuing payments, there were neither the staff nor the management systems to ensure that the payments were issued only to those truly eligible. It should be noted that tax avoidance was also so rampant in the 1970s as to raise the prospect of it becoming a "voluntary levy" (Wheelwright, 1990).

Under these circumstance, it was indeed likely that some successfully claimed benefits to which they were not legally entitled. In addition, a substantial residue of unemployment remained in the wake of the two recessions of the 1970s leaving
large numbers of persons claiming unemployment benefits in the recovery periods. This enabled New Right politicians to exploit the issue of “dole bludgers”\(^1\) as part of their attack on the welfare state. Such attacks may well have tapped into incipient anti-migrant attitudes as well, especially given the Department and media attention to social security scandals, like the 1978 “Greek doctor conspiracy", that seemed to target particular ethnic groups as responsible for social security fraud.\(^2\)

The conservative Fraser government policy in the face of the 1978-79 and 1982-83 recessions was to “fight inflation first” and to cut unemployment benefits on the dubious theory that this would create work incentives (Cass, 1989). Labor returned to office in 1983 in the midst of the recession. The Labor government of Bob Hawke soon set about what became a major reshaping of the welfare state, marked by increased means testing and selectivity, as well as a restoration of national health care and an increase in some benefit levels.

The Hawke Labor Government Reforms

The overall thrust of the reforms was in keeping with, and influenced by, directions advocated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD had rejected labour market policies popular in the 1960s and 1970s that sought to address unemployment through the creation of public sector jobs or subsidies to private employers. Such policies didn’t work, according to the OECD, because, “if the overall demand for labour is depressed—perhaps as a result of macroeconomic policy—job creation initiatives at the micro level can only redistribute the incidence of unemployment” (OECD, 1990, pp 15-16). Furthermore, dealing with the consequences of unemployment, i.e., through payment of unemployment benefits, was insufficient. What was needed, according to the view that gained ground in the late 1970s and early 1980s, were “... fundamental changes in the institutions, attitudes and rules and regulations governing the socioeconomic system in general, and the labour market in particular...” (OECD, 1990, p. 16). This meant reducing social expenditures and deregulating the labour market to bring down labour costs and increase profits. Little was heard of the goal of full employment.
The OECD also stressed the notion of a "more active society", a term that meant, depending on one's point of view, reinforcing individual initiative with respect to skills acquisition and job search efforts; or conditioning cash payments on certain behavioural tests as a device for removing claimants from the unemployment rolls. As the OECD noted, to break "dependency cycles", it was necessary to promote "a spirit of active job search" (OECD, 1990, pp. 3, 8). The problem of unemployment that had continued to plague many of the OECD countries throughout the 1970s and 1980s was due in this formulation, not to a lack of jobs, but to a lack of effort and preparation on the part of the unemployed.

This view was consistent with the policies of Thatcher and Reagan. Both leaders took steps to reduce the influence of labour unions, constrain social expenditures and wages by limiting the safety net for the unemployed and others outside the labour force, the sick, disabled and dependent children. Workers would be more inclined to accept lower wages if the alternative was unemployment with subpoenaity level subsistence payments, or especially for many in the U.S., nothing at all.

While the policies of supply-side economics and an assault on the welfare state were consistent with the conservative views of Thatcher and Reagan, they seemed out of step with the Australian Labor Party. Nevertheless, the Labor government succeeded in implementing a series of economic and welfare state reforms that seemed to some, including those in Labor's left faction, more in keeping with conservative trends than with Labor's progressive tradition. Some observers noted a shift in ALP philosophy and tactics to improve its electoral prospects, in part to accommodate its traditional working class constituency's entry into middle class status. The party had begun, in the 1960s, to favour growth and efficiency goals. The objective was to manage capitalism through monetary and fiscal policy, promoting equality of opportunity rather than equality of results. In this view, the Whitlam government, in office from 1972-75, represented a "technocratic labourism" designed to attract middle class voters "alienated by labourism, Marxism and Roman Catholicism" (Jaensch, 1989, p. 92). This signalled its trans-
formation from a mass, collectivist party with a democratic/centralist ethos and radical reformist ideology to a "catchall party" with the prime objective of governing, a process completed with the Hawke-Keating governments' move to the right.

Just one month prior to the March 1983 elections that returned Labor to office, the Labor Party and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) forged an Accord under which the ACTU agreed to forgo wage increases and limit industrial disputes in exchange for a promise of increases in the social wage—tax cuts, health and welfare benefits, and lower interest rates. The assumption was that lower labour costs would yield higher profits which would lead to higher rates of employment and improved living standards in the long run. The year following Labor's 1983 election victory, the Age characterised the ALP as "...the true pragmatic conservative party of government, the heir to the Menzies tradition."

At the time of the Accord, unemployment had reached its then post war peak of 8.4 percent. (After declining to 6.2 per cent in 1988, it rose above 10 per cent in 1991 where it currently remains.) The Hawke government carried out a series of measures that reflected a pro-business stance stressing deregulation and competition, fiscal conservatism, privatisation and user fees. They implemented tariff reductions ending protection to domestic producers on the assumption that this would force them to become more efficient and competitive in the world market. They reduced government spending to levels, as a proportion of GDP, of the early 1970s; government outlays fell from 36.9 percent of GDP in 1984-85 to 32.1 per cent in 1989 (Pusey, 1991, p. 3). They even balanced the budget in 1987 and produced a surplus until the recession that began in 1990 pushed the budget into deficit once more. They put up for sale public enterprises including Qantas and Australian Airlines, Telecom, and the Commonwealth bank. They opened the country up to foreign banks. And in a shift from party policy since the Whitlam era, they imposed fees for tertiary education and introduced means-testing for old age pensions and family allowances. A proposal for an "Australia Card", a national identity card, was blocked in September 1987, but was reintroduced in the May.
1988 mini budget and adopted as a tax file number system that the government said would save $2.1 billion in avoided revenue over a ten year period (Maddox, 1989, p. 83).

Profits grew while real wages and unit labour costs fell to levels lower than in the 1970s; and following the recovery beginning in mid 1983, employment grew until 1990 when the tight monetary policy undertaken to restrain inflation produced what the then Treasury Minster, and current Prime Minister Paul Keating described as “the recession we had to have”.

Reflecting upon these changes, John Edwards (1991), who served as a consultant in the office of Treasury Minister, Paul Keating, gave this assessment:

The most striking aspect of the experience of economic policy in Australia over the period was not so much its success or failure as its improbability. No one could have forecast eight years ago that a Labor government would encourage and enforce persistent cuts in real wages, or that it would reduce the size of the federal government relative to the economy, or that it would reverse a long term trend of falling public saving, or that it would float the Australian dollar and deregulate financial markets. All are changes which would not have occurred without deliberate government decision. In those respects the government has been able to move further and faster than successive Republican administrations in the US or the former Thatcher government in the UK in increasing the profit share by containing wages, in cutting government, and in increasing public saving until the 1990 recession. (p. 4).

Social security policy was a central concern of the Labor government. A lagging economy, the recessions of 1982–83 and the current recession which began in 1990, persistent long term unemployment, an increase in single parent families, and the ageing of the population placed added demands on the Commonwealth social security budget. Public concern about the high rates of poverty, especially among children, and the need to compensate workers with a social wage under the Accord also contributed to pressures for increasing public social welfare expenditures. These expansionary pressures conflicted with a policy of budgetary restraint deemed necessary both to manage the economy and to retain the support of the business community. With the opposition calling for compulsory work for those
drawing unemployment benefits and raising the spectre of the
dole bludger "working at a tan on the dole,"4 the government
sought to demonstrate a firm stance on welfare compliance. In
the 11 July 1987 election, with the opposition in disarray, Hawke
won the endorsement of leading financial and industrial lead-
ers for the government’s “fiscal responsibility” (Maddox, 1989,
p. 48).

Social Security “Reform”

The government’s objective was to revise social security,
increasing some benefits, especially to address child poverty
(which Hawke had rashly pledged to eliminate by 1990) while
holding the line on expenditures. Social security expenditures
were held to about 24 per cent of total budget outlays which
declined when adjusted for inflation (Howe, 1989b).

The government’s approach to social security reform pro-
ceeded along three fronts:

- a reassessment and rationalization of social security pro-
grams through the Social Security Review;
- administrative improvements in the Department of Social
Security; and
- an increased emphasis on client compliance.

The Social Security Review. The guiding rationale for the
Social Security Review was to readjust programs in view of
changing demographic, economic and labour market conditions
(Cass, 1988), though some argued that the overriding emphasis
was on cost containment (Watts, 1990). The two objectives are
not necessarily inconsistent. Among the conditions that the Re-
view addressed were increased long term unemployment, the
increase in part-time work, the ageing of the population, and
the growth of single parent families.

The Social Security Review headed by social work profes-
sor Bettina Cass generated 31 background papers and 6 issue
papers, most of which were developed by Department of Social
Security staff under Dr. Cass’ overall direction. Most of its rec-
ommendations were implemented from 1986 to 1991. Prominent
among the changes has been an increased targeting of payments
and stepped-up monitoring and scrutiny of applications to reduce the risk of incorrect payments or fraud (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989; Saunders and Whiteford, 1990).

Several of its recommendations narrowed the basis of entitlements through increased targeting of benefits, extended waiting periods before benefits commenced, and the imposition of assets tests on benefits and the family allowance supplement, and an income test on the family allowance. (The government had introduced a pensions assets test prior to the review.) At the same time, some payments were increased and most have now been indexed for inflation. Brian Howe, then Minister for Social Security, noting the improvements in benefit levels since 1983, could claim, “We have rebuilt the safety net” (Howe, 1989a, p. 1). But perhaps the most far reaching change was the active labour market strategy that underlies the overall approach and was the basis for a revamping of the unemployment benefit. Under “Newstart”, which took effect in November 1991, those having received unemployment payments for 12 consecutive months or longer must now negotiate an “agreement” with a Commonwealth Employment Service representative to qualify for continued assistance. Originally called the “Active Employment Strategy”, the name was changed upon the recommendation of the government’s market researchers to suggest something more affirmative and action-oriented than a “strategy” to meet the growing unemployment; and the individual “contract” was now called an “agreement”, a term evoking a more friendly, benign interaction. The “agreements” are to stipulate activities, such as job search efforts, participation in training programs, or volunteer work, that will be undertaken as a condition for continuing to receive unemployment payments.

The name changes were also in keeping with the recommendations of the Social Security Review. It had called for renaming employment programs to stress activity, to differentiate them from “passive” welfare programs—e.g., STEP for the newly unemployed, LEAP for those on benefit 12 months or longer, TAP for older workers, and Job Search Allowance for the young unemployed (Cass, 1988).

The rationale, set forth in the Review, was to help the growing numbers of long term unemployed maintain a connection
with the labour force and if necessary, upgrade their skills. This was in recognition of research showing that the longer one remained unemployed, the less likely one's chances of ever being rehired. Rather than relegating such individuals to permanent dependency, the idea was to encourage them to seek training and keep up an active job search (Cass, 1988).

A more cynical view was that the employment strategy was a response to the Liberals' "... dole stripping plan, whereby everyone was taken off the dole after nine months, and only half put on to 'special benefits' if they were sufficiently destitute, and incapable of any sort of work.... The government appeared to respond to the political pressure in its pre-election economic statement" (Kingston, 1991). The problem was, however, that the program came on line in the midst of Australia's most severe recession in 20 years.

A staff bulletin identified Newstart's objectives as helping the unemployed by: "changing income support from the passive unemployment benefit into allowances which encourage active job search and training; [and] making income support conditional on co-operative self-help on the part of the client. This 'reciprocal obligation' will be set down in a contract." Another goal was "to help identify those people who don't want to look for work because they already have a job or for some other reason." If clients failed "to respond well enough, this could provide grounds for a breach of the Activity Test" (Department of Education, Employment, and Training, 1990). The Commonwealth Employment Service was given a quota of cases to be purged from the rolls for various kinds of non-compliance. The union responded with a job action based on concerns for staff safety from disgruntled clients who were denied assistance or who might otherwise object to the new procedures. The Newstart implementation task force promised to increase security, provide "easy entry and exit for staff" from interview areas, and "concealed buzzers fitted to desks" (Department of Education, Employment, and Training, 1990).

The Department of Social Security also initiated a program, Jobs, Education, and Training (JET), to assist sole parent pensioners to get training and find work; and a new Child Support Scheme to ensure that non-custodial parents contribute to the
support of their children to the extent that they are able to do so. Both programs were inspired by U.S. examples, Massachusetts’ “ET” (Employment and Training for single parents) and the Wisconsin child support plan. In constrast to the U.S. JOBS program in the U.S., JET is strictly voluntary. The highly successful Child Support Scheme provides for formula-based, mandatory salary deductions from the non-custodial parent collected through the Department of Taxation. There are income guarantees for the children; and women on welfare, unlike their U.S. counterparts benefit by keeping a substantial portion of the child support income before their grants are reduced.

Administrative improvements. A number of major administrative improvements were also implemented. The decentralisation, or “devolution” of services has continued with the phasing out of the state offices, thereby eliminating one administrative layer between Canberra, the capital, and the regional (i.e., local) offices. There was a doubling of service locations from 150 in 1980 to 300 (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989). The payment systems have been computerised, and highly sophisticated, state-of-the-art management systems have been implemented. While these systems have vastly improved central office oversight, there has also been heavy stress on industrial democracy and participatory decision making. Although service delivery has been severely strained by caseload growth and staff shortages, especially among the entry level ranks responsible for client contact, staff positions have been upgraded, particularly for administrators of regional (i.e., local) and area (i.e., supervisory) offices; and considerable effort has been devoted to upgrading skills through training as well as improved recruitment.

Senior management has strived, with considerable success, to imbue staff with an appreciation for accountability, cost containment, and efficiency. As a result, there has been a decided shift in the direction of more tightly administered payments. This shift has also seen the implementation of numerous policy and procedural changes designed to limit the misuse of the program and reduce the risk of improper payments being made.

Compliance policies. A number of compliance measures have been introduced, especially since 1986. These have included:
More stringent personal identification requirements.

The introduction of the tax file number to facilitate identification of clients, and to make it more difficult to conceal income or assets.

Computer matching of client files to prevent duplicate payments.

A stepped up, risk-based review strategy, including: mandated reviews of specific payment categories, computer-assisted selection of cases at risk of incorrect payment, geographically-based saturation reviews by mobile review teams, and numerous special review project initiatives carried out at the national, area and regional office levels. These have included, for example, checking selected employer records against Department payment rosters; and a recent project to match New Zealand social security files with Australia's to check for duplicate payments.

An information-sharing agreement with the Commonwealth Taxation Office.

Social security amnesties were declared in February–May 1986 and in October 1990. Persons receiving overpayments could tell the Department without having to repay or face prosecution, providing the original claim was genuine and the overpayment was due to a failure to report a change in circumstances. These amnesties served to clear the books of a large number of costly overpayments while the attendant publicity gave notice to clients of improved methods of overpayment detection that were about to be implemented. Some 14,000 persons came forward in 1986, and 24,000 under the 1990 amnesty.

Increased emphasis and improved methods for collecting overpayments, including the establishment of specialised debt collection teams.

There is always a tension in any public welfare program between facilitating access to benefits on the one hand, and safeguarding payments on the other (Goodin, 1985; Sanders, 1985). Compliance measures serve to reassure the public at large.
that payments are being fairly allocated. On the other hand, an overly zealous search for "cheaters" may undermine the program's legitimacy by reinforcing negative stereotypes. As Goodin (1985) points out, increasing access may also increase the likelihood of granting payments to those not eligible while restricting access will impede assistance to legitimate claimants as well as those not properly entitled. The challenge is to find an appropriate balance.

Under the Labor government, the Department of Social Security shifted decidedly in the direction of restricting access and policing the rolls. There are several complementary thrusts to the overall strategy. The Department has sought to increase voluntary compliance. Voluntary compliance is both more acceptable to the public and reduces administrative costs associated with surveillance. It is contingent on public perceptions of the fairness and legitimacy of programs, on the clarity of the rules, the perceived and actual effectiveness of eligibility reviews, and operative cultural norms about compliance. The Department has also emphasised a deterrent approach such that clients who may be tempted to misrepresent their circumstances are aware of the risks and costs of detection. The emphasis on compliance has helped restore the integrity of the program in the eyes of the taxpaying public and has undercut to some extent Opposition efforts to exploit the issue. It is also consistent with efforts to contain expenditures. On the other hand, compliance measures are not without costs—to clients, to the agency, and to society at large. These compliance costs include encroachments on privacy, increased procedural barriers that impede access to benefits, and psychological costs, the stress and stigma of clienthood.

Conclusions

So what has been accomplished by the reforms? The Department of Social Security has indeed restored the integrity of the payment system by implementing numerous management improvements and compliance measures. There is, at least formally, a good system of checks and balances that provides clients with several alternative avenues of appeal against
Departmental decisions: internally, to social workers, office managers, and the Authorised Review Officers, a cadre of DSS officials who are the first line of appeal for clients contesting DSS rulings; and externally, through the independent Social Security Appeals Tribunals, Administrative Appeals Tribunals, and ultimately, to the Federal Court. Still other means of redress are available through community groups, advocacy organisations and letters to Members of Parliament and to the Minister for Social Security. All these appeal avenues, however, require knowledge and initiative on the part of clients who are often unaware of their rights.

With respect to income support, a study of family incomes in the period from 1982-83 to 1989-90 showed that most Australians, excepting farmers, experienced a decline in real income when housing costs were taken into account. The very poor, along with the very rich, however, made some advances. This improvement for the poor was a result of increases in social security family assistance payment levels and tax relief though payments remain at about the poverty line. The average family income situation would have been far worse, however, were it not for an increase in two wage households (Bradbury, 1989). And during the current recession, there has been a decided upturn in the poverty rate.

Social security in Australia works reasonably well for most people, protecting them from the kind of abject destitution experienced by many in the U.S. It does less well at providing an adequate living standard for those solely dependent upon it for their livelihood. Furthermore, one consequence of the targeting and the tightening of administrative procedures is that some truly needy individuals fail to qualify for benefits. Some are temporarily disadvantaged by the various waiting periods attached to programs. Others, such as homeless youth, the mentally ill, and some chronic alcoholics and drug addicts may fall within eligibility criteria, but be unable to satisfy the considerable documentary requirements. The tightened proof of identity and domicile requirements are substantial barriers for persons living on the streets or in shelters with no regular residence. He or she may lack the kind of documents readily available to those in a more stable environment: driver's license, birth certificate,
passport, bank statements, lease, rent receipts, utility bills, etc. The incidence of premeditated fraud is low, in part because of the various measures taken by the Department to protect the payment system. (According to the Australian Auditor General (1992, pp. 65, 75) the average value of all social security overpayments was $865; and 72% had a value of less than $500. The number and value of overpayments represent 1.9% of all beneficiaries and 0.45% of all benefit payments.) A high proportion of what the Department identifies as incorrect payment is attributable to the complexity of the rules, the Department’s failure to communicate its requirements clearly to clients, and genuine differences over interpretations of complicated and ambiguous eligibility criteria (McGregor and Harris, 1990; Penman, 1986; Weatherley, 1993). There is also a zone of contested eligibility wherein a minority of otherwise honest clients feel justified not reporting small amounts of casual income, just within or over the boundaries of the “free zone” where they are permitted to keep income before it starts being deducted from their grants; such clients justify minor nonreporting of income as necessary to meet basic living needs since grant levels are so low (Weatherley, 1993).

Some “fiddling” takes pressure off the state to raise social spending, and helps maintain social harmony, especially in economically-stressed times. As Mattera (1985) noted about the underground economy:

... what goes on in the underground is far from unrelated to what is happening in the larger economy ... the phenomenon is inextricably tied to the crisis of the economy at large. ... A side activity off the books has become an essential supplement to inadequate income from the regular economy for some people and an essential supplement to inadequate unemployment or social security benefits for others. (pp.13, 22–23).

A policy of total client compliance is not realistically achievable, and would arguably be inconsistent with the norms of a democratic society. Personal information on nearly a third of Australia’s population is contained in the Department of Social Security’s computers. Recent examples of misuse include staff selling confidential recipient information to debt collection
agencies, Department collusion with police to cut off unemploy-
ment beneficiaries who engaged in lawful political demonstra-
tions, and the disclosure, through computer error, of thousands
of confidential client files. The Department has narrowly fended
off proposals for integrating its client data base with that of the
national police, for cash bounties to those identifying cheats,
and for implementing case cancellation quotas for its staff re-
view officers. A Conservative government might have fewer
qualms about further encroachments upon the rights of Social
Security claimants.

The work test also poses vexing issues. As Saunders (1987)
has observed about the politics of unemployment benefits,

... whilst unemployment in general stems from factors external
to individuals, in individual cases it is more difficult to draw this
conclusion. Unlike other categories for whom income support is
available, individual unemployed people are more likely to be
suspected of choosing to enter that category.

As in the U.S., some politicians target the unemployed as
responsible for problems rooted in the macro economy. As one
commentator noted about the introduction of NEWSTART,

From 1 July, in the depths of a horrific recession with thousands of
Australians losing their jobs or unable to find their first, the Gov-
ernment will make it harder for many of them to get dole money
to live on. Today, the Government will introduce legislation for
the plan. In late June, it will spend $3 million on television and
print advertising to tell the unemployed the news that despite the
fact that there are virtually no jobs any more, they must pretend
there are and do all sorts of things to prove it (Kingston, 1991).

The official policy since 1985 has been to emphasise basic ed-
ucation and training, with job creation to be addressed through
macroeconomic policy instead of seeking to increase employ-
ment through direct job creation schemes. There is, however,
a considerable performance gap between the expressed aims
of the government policy and the commitment of resources
to implement it. In 1991–92, Australia ranked 20th out of the
21 OECD countries, immediately below the U. S., in expendi-
tures for active labour market programs. (Spain was number
21.) Australia and the U. S. spent .03 percent of GDP for each 1 percent of its unemployed, compared with .51 percent for top-ranking Sweden (OECD, 1993).

Furthermore, Australia has failed even to keep pace with its own poor performance record. The 1989–90 expenditures on training were at about half the level as in 1983–84 and 1984–85; and still less as a percentage of unemployment benefits (Stretton and Chapman, 1990). The government proposed a $260 million increase in support for technical education and other training schemes for 1992. But this actually represented a 20 per cent reduction, in view of the increase in the number of unemployed (Disney, 1991).

Ultimately, the Labor government was able to play both ways with a crack down on “bludgers”. It exploited the rhetoric of reciprocal obligation in announcing its tough policy to make the unemployed try harder to find jobs under the threat of a cut off of benefits. But with unemployment running about 10 percent, it tread softly in implementing the policy. While many found themselves under closer scrutiny, relatively few were cut off. Hence Labor preempted a major Opposition campaign issue without alienating too many among its working class constituency. To everyone’s surprise—including the Labor leadership—Labor was returned to office in 1993 despite the dismal economic outlook. Figuring in the Opposition’s defeat were concerns that the conservatives would dismantle the popular Medicare program and would impose a value added tax, a kind of national sales tax. And so the movement toward welfare state universalism initiated by the Whitlam government twenty years earlier has been reversed. Even so, Australia’s welfare system continues to provide a level of income security far above the U.S.

Notes

1. *dole-bludger*, n. One who exploits the system of unemployment benefits by avoiding gainful employment. *The Australian National Dictionary: A Dictionary of Australianisms on Historical Principles*, Melbourne, 1988. The term also refers more generally to one considered to be receiving benefits to which they are not entitled.
2. This was an alleged conspiracy of Greek immigrants to obtain disability benefits. The Commonwealth brought charges against 70 individuals, but ultimately dropped the charges, apologised, and paid them compensation. The claimants were found to have had legitimate disabilities qualifying them for assistance (Atkinson, 1987).


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This paper was prepared with the assistance of a research grant from the Australian Department of Social Security under the auspices of the Administration, Compliance and Governability Program, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University. I wish to thank Peter May, Margaret Levi, Patrick Troy, Robert Plotnick, Alastair Greig, Frank Castles, Deborah Mitchell and Rob Watts and the editor of the Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare for their comments and suggestions on an earlier draft.
The Effect of Corporatism on Contemporary Public Attitudes to Welfare

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This article examines evidence for the possible link between public support for increased spending on government welfare programs and the strength of government welfare intervention in six OECD countries; Austria, Germany, Britain, the USA, Australia and Italy. Data is used from a 1985 international survey to question the congruence between the public’s support for state welfare and the degree of corporatism as an indicator of state intervention in these countries. The concept of corporatism is limited to an analytic device that indicates the form of state intervention and policy making in particular historical periods and within sectors of state activity. The argument that state welfare action is directly constrained by public attitudes to welfare—the ‘popular constraints’ thesis—is questioned using this data. Other possible explanations for the lack of congruence between mass preferences and state welfare provision are also examined.

While research into contemporary popular attitudes to the state welfare system has increased in technical sophistication, the level of theoretical development has been somewhat lacking. It is no longer accurate to write, as others have (Myrdal 1960, Wilensky 1975, Coughlin 1979), that there is an acceptance of welfare measures in public opinion across all welfare states. Yet, recent debates on the nature of welfare state development continue to base arguments about the implementation of welfare intervention on the climate of opinion amongst citizens. In the most recent debates in Australia and elsewhere, an association is made between public opinion and the adequacy of coverage of public welfare measures. The argument contends that there is direct correspondence between public attitudes toward welfare and the levels and forms of public welfare spending in advanced welfare states.
Corporatism is broadly defined for the analysis below as those bipartite and tripartite contractual arrangements amongst business, the state and trade unions that lead to consensus building over social and economic policy. Corporatism is used below as a descriptive construct that indicates certain developments in the state welfare sector and not as a prescription for the political development of welfare policy. To use the term prescriptively would over-emphasise, as others have done (Wilensky 1981), the strategic value of corporatist theory. Strong corporatism usually means highly centralised state regulation of social and economic life. A further aspect to corporatist analysis emphasised by Cawson (1986, 1988) is the creation of policy at the meso-corporatist level from bipartite and tripartite arrangements, say between welfare lobby groups and the state, or amongst professional groups, the state and unions. Some implications of this broad definition for the relationship between state activity and welfare policy are included in the analysis below.

In Australia there have been repeated claims that public or community attitudes somehow retard or constrain the development of the Australian welfare state. Gruen (1989:2), for example, has claimed recently that ‘in probing the public mind one is trying to characterise a range of sentiments that serve as political constraints for policy makers’. Gruen then goes on to link, or at least suggest a link between, changing mass attitudes to government spending and the political constraints over time on Australian welfare policies created by these attitudes. Similar arguments on the constraints of state action are evident in empirical research in Britain. Taylor-Gooby (1988:13) offers one example, when he suggests that ‘over the period since 1979 the policy of constraint in welfare spending has been tailored by the pattern of public support’.

Accounts of the historical development of Scandinavian countries (Esping-Andersen 1985) and the United States (Heclo 1985) contend that their welfare cultures, especially amongst the working class, are particularly significant in the development of welfare provision. Esping-Andersen (1985:88) has argued, for example, that the Nordic Social Democracies have a “well-organized and politically articulate peasantry committed
to democracy”. This argument implies that the mass loyalty or support of the organized working class (unions and labour parties) is of major significance in the determination of welfare effort in any advanced democracies. A sophisticated theoretical position on the relationship between mass opinion and welfare intervention is provided by Habermas’s (1973:5–6) mass preference or loyalty thesis. This thesis argues that the political-administrative system is legitimated by the “mass loyalty” of the socio-cultural system in late capitalist societies. What is at question is how “mass loyalty” is constituted? Is loyalty represented simply by voting behaviour or other indicators of public opinion? A more fundamental question is how loyalty to social welfare provisions is distributed amongst social groups and whose loyalty is privileged in the polity of late capitalist societies?

Strong empirical accounts have dealt more thoroughly with this relationship between public opinion and welfare policy (Coughlin 1979, Papadakis and Taylor-Gooby 1987a, 1987b, Papadakis 1990a, 1990b). These studies provide plausible explanations for congruence and incongruence in the relationship based either on international economic trends (Coughlin 1979) or Hirschman’s influential concepts of exit, voice and loyalty (Klein 1976, Papadakis and Taylor-Gooby 1987a, Taylor-Gooby 1988, Papadakis 1990a, 1990b). It has been noted, however, that such explanations, especially the latter, equate public opinion or the opinions of specific groups with the likelihood of taking action on those opinions (Smith and Wearing 1990:10). Without further study of the relationship between group action and welfare policy it cannot be claimed that investigation of the effects of public opinion on welfare will tell us anything about “some of the constraints on policy makers” (Papadakis 1990b:1).

It is likely that there is an equally weak empirical association between opinions and action on welfare policy as there is between opinions and social location as measured by indicators of social class or occupational status. The latter association is a finding of Papadakis’s most recent study of attitudes to welfare in Australia (Papadakis 1990b:126). As argued elsewhere (Smith and Wearing, 1987, 1990), Australian and international evidence suggest that conditions for the development
of welfare cultures remain at a disjuncture to mass preferences in advanced welfare states. Whether they are economic models of "public demand" or the "popular constraints" models, explanations of public opinion's effect on welfare policy have clearly neglected the lack of empirical connection between opinion and policy developments (contra Papadakis 1990a:224). This criticism of studies notwithstanding, research on empirical insights into opinions amongst various groupings in relation to specific welfare measures has developed the domain of political explanation for constraints on policy.

A similar "popular constraints" thesis on the development of welfare policy has developed from a social democratic position in line with those claims made above on public constraints of state welfare. A common theme in contemporary social democratic writing (see Wilensky 1981a:189, Mishra 1984:32) on social policy suggests that social welfare policies organised around a national political (party and administrative) strategies of corporatization are more likely to gain support from public opinion than other forms of national political organisation of social welfare provisions. Democratic corporatism is a form of corporatism that is generally open to the pressure of public opinion. It is designed to enhance citizens' support for and consensus over the public legitimacy of advanced welfare states and, thus, to counter sources of popular pressure against social democratic reform. In this process corporatist agreements by-pass normal parliamentary debate and channels of political and social contract. Further, recent comparisons show that there is a significant positive association between the level of spending in advanced welfare states and the degree of corporatism (O'Connor and Bryan 1988:54–59).

The main argument of this paper is that state social and economic policies, especially public welfare policies, are not constrained by the mass preference of citizens in the countries examined. The paper further argues that the pro-corporatist stance of current social democratic thinking which assumes public opinion constraints state welfare intervention has little, if any, empirical validity. There is very little comparative evidence for congruence or correspondence between public perception and the form of actual welfare policies (of Smith and Wearing
The aim of this article is to use comparative evidence on public opinion to assess the impact of corporatism on welfare culture in the development of welfare policies. The range of welfare provisions assessed is limited to public or state welfare activity in the areas of education, health, unemployment, unemployment benefits and aged pensions.

The method adopted is an assessment of the relative degree of corporatism in advanced welfare states. Survey evidence from the 1985 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) that includes items on public attitudes to welfare spending and provision is used to gauge the effects of corporatism on welfare cultures (random samples were taken for the survey; sample size for each country is given in Tables 1, 2, and 3). It is acknowledged in this method that different factors may be necessary in time and across countries to provide adequate explanations for the development of different forms and types of welfare states.

Corporatism and Welfare Culture

What effect have corporatist tendencies had on the welfare cultures of advanced welfare states? If we focus on similarities amongst the provisions of welfare states, then a concept of corporatism offers a way of understanding the consistencies in welfare state developments across nations. At a comparative level, the problem might well be "how and when corporatism matters" and not merely a corporatism that correlates with periods of social democratic governance (Shalev 1983: 350). Corporatism is one general concept amongst many that may be used to understand similarities in the comparative analysis of welfare expenditure and provision. The problem with this focus is that comparative difference such as in political systems, country-specific historical circumstances and the socioeconomic environment can be either ignored or obscured. A multi-dimensional approach to comparative analysis that includes theoretically informed analysis and a diversity of social and political factors should illuminate areas of welfare state development.

Social democratic traditions of welfare are difficult to define under categories of party politics in the United States—liberal
and conservative, Democratic and Republican. Usually the term "social democrat" is associated with a liberal-left perspective on social and economic reforms. These reforms are based on the mobilization of working class interests in the development of the welfare state (Castles 1985:1–9). Corporatist theory confuses the left/liberal versus right/conservative dichotomy by adding a third dimension. Corporatism is seen to develop either under the political conditions of pluralism (Wilensky 1981a, 1981b) or conditions of class conflict (Gould 1982, Panitch 1986, Rothstein 1987). Hybrid versions of these two positions tend to conceive corporatism as a regulatory function of state action that is negotiated or bargained for by "group representatives" (Offe 1984) who in turn stand-in-for or represent relations amongst the three dominant political actors—capital, labour and the state (Cawson 1986).

An empirical focus on the opinions of group representatives assumes a certain correspondence between their opinions and the stringency or generosity of social welfare provision. In this paper public support for social welfare is assessed in several countries to evaluate the impact of corporatism on public attitudes to state welfare. This is an exploration of the general effects of corporatist tendencies on public attitudes to welfare.

Corporatism has not featured as a part of policy and political debate in the 1980s in the United States as it has in several other advanced industrial countries. The literature from Australia and the United Kingdom refer to 'peak associations' such as the Business Roundtable or key organisations in the securities industry whose interests cut across industries and sectors as examples of corporatist strategies in the United States (Stabler 1987: 278, Moran: 207). The American literature has described Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States as 'the least corporatist in their bargaining structure' (Wilensky and Turner 1987: 14–15). The weak corporatism of these countries leaves their political economics fragmented, decentralised and open to interest group pressure—all characteristics of a pluralist polity. Some commentators contend that the New Deal of the 1930s was a critical period for the establishment of limited corporatism in the United States. According to Moran, state regulation of the securities industries in the United States from the
1930s to the 1980s illustrates the outcome of corporatist strategy. He argues that all Federal securities exchange legislation over this period has augmented the authority and control of the peak association, the Securities and Exchange Commission (Moran 1987: 207-208).

As a working hypothesis, strong corporatist welfare states should have more public support for welfare than weak corporatist welfare states. This hypothesis is questioned by the evidence presented. There is no indication in the data that weak corporatist welfare states lack public support for more generous forms of socio-economic distribution by way of state welfare measures. The countries included in the analysis below—Austria, West Germany, Italy, Britain, America and Australia—are placed within the general categories of weak, medium or strong corporatism. These are the categories suggested by Cawson's 1986 analysis. Such categories are contentious in that most comparative policy analysts cannot agree on the strength of corporatism in modern states. Both Esping-Anderson (1991: 60–61, 70–71) and O'Connor and Bryan (1988:62) give slightly different empirical classifications of countries in relation to corporatism from Cawson. Nonetheless, Cawson's classification provides a framework in which to demonstrate both limits to theories of corporatism and counter arguments to congruence and popularist arguments on welfare development. This classification is supported by Esping-Andersen's (1991:70–71) ranking of the degree of corporatism in 18 welfare state regimes.

Support for Public Welfare Spending

What effect has corporatism had on public opinion towards state welfare policies? In the early 1930s Tawney (1964) argued that two arms of "the strategy of equality" had been promoted in policies of social and economic redistribution in these countries. The first arm promoted universal social welfare policies and, the second, the regulation of economic freedoms in the market. This redistributive vision of social-democratic thinking gained intellectual support in post-1945 arguments on the social and economic benefits to citizens of welfare states. In the late 1950s, the Swedish social democrat, Myrdal (1960:121) argued
that redistributive policies of the welfare state—social security, public health, public housing, public education and progressive taxation—had gained the support of national populations in advanced democracies.

More recently Le Grand (1982) has questioned this social-democratic vision with evidence from Britain that most social welfare services except for income maintenance policies are not redistributive. Other writers (Papadakis and Taylor-Gooby 1987) also point to the “islands of privilege” of upper and middle class groupings maintained through occupational as well as social welfare measures in the British class structure. Such problems of distribution were alluded to in Titmuss’s (1958 [1955]) essay on the three-part divisions of fiscal-occupational and social welfare. Similar hidden occupational mechanisms of distribution such as non-wage employment benefits are also lacking in relation to social policy debate on the Australian social wage (for an exception see Graycar and Jamrozik 1989).

The contemporary critics of the redistributive potential of the state welfare have undermined the “purity” of the political project of an original social-democratic strategy to promote equality, a strategy that underlay government funded and delivered social welfare services (of Baldwin 1989). While this intellectual vision for social welfare measures has been found wanting, public support for such policies has not waned as the following evidence will demonstrate. However, lack of public support for the promotion of equality through fiscal-social welfare measures could threaten the possibility of social-democratic reform to income and wealth distribution. The nature of reform would further depend on the form of political economy in each welfare state. As others have recognised, political control of the corporatist economy is a corporatist requirement for social democratic welfare (Shalev 1983:344, Esping-Andersen 1990: Chapter 7). The extent to which this control is not achieved in advanced welfare states reflects a misconception of how political constraints work in these countries.

Table 1 shows that national public support for government to reduce income inequality was lowest amongst Australians and Americans at the time of survey in 1983–84, and high in Austria and West Germany (53.8 per cent and 38.5 per cent
in the former thought the government definitely or probably should support reductions compared to 78 per cent and 77.4 per cent in the latter). There is, nonetheless, high public support for governments to reduce income differences in weak corporatist countries such as Britain and Italy (74.6 per cent and 84.1 per cent). This may indicate the mismatch between pro-corporatist views on income redistributive policies and the high levels of public support for a general policy of redistribution. Countries such as Austria and West Germany are not the only countries with high levels of public support for income redistribution. Marklund (1988:77) argues that while public support for social welfare is relatively high in Scandinavian countries compared to other advanced welfare states, this support is declining. These general levels of support can be tested against more specific public support for state welfare provisions which may or may not be perceived in public opinion as policies of redistribution.

Table 1

| Public Support for Government's Responsibility to Reduce Income Differences Between the Rich and Poor (percent) | West |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Total % = 100  N = 7350) | Australia | Germany | Britain | USA | Austria | Italy |
| Definitely should be | 24.4 | 27.7 | 47.9 | 17.5 | 41.2 | 46.9 |
| Probably should be | 29.4 | 39.7 | 26.7 | 21.0 | 36.8 | 37.2 |
| Probably should not be | 26.4 | 25.3 | 14.3 | 26.6 | 16.4 | 10.2 |
| Definitely should not be | 19.9 | 7.3 | 11.1 | 34.9 | 5.7 | 5.6 |
| Sample Size | (1528) | (1048) | (1530) | (677) | (987) | (1580) |

Source: International Social Survey Programme; Role of Government—1985 (Germany)
Table 2

Public Support for More or Less Government Expenditure on Education, Health, Old Age Pensions and Unemployment Benefits (percent)
(Total % = 100  N = 7350)

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>West</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Italy</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spend much more</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>17.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spend more</td>
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<td>30.5</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>46.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spend the same</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend less</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Health (b)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>11.2</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>14.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spend less</td>
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<td>6.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td>47.4</td>
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<td>11.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.1</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend much more</td>
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<td>7.9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend more</td>
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<td>18.4</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>40.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spend the same</td>
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<td>39.7</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>26.6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend less</td>
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<td>14.9</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend much less</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Size</strong></td>
<td>(1528)</td>
<td>(1048)</td>
<td>(1530)</td>
<td>(677)</td>
<td>(987)</td>
<td>(1580)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: International Social Survey Programme; Role of Government—1985 (Germany)
Table 2 shows two consistent patterns in public support for government expenditure on the specific state provisions of education, health, aged pensions and unemployment benefits. First, there is strong support for greater government expenditure on education, health and old age pensions in all six countries. These strong levels of support dispute the pro-corporatist arguments of social democrats that weak corporatist welfare states such as Australia, Britain, the USA and Italy do not have the popular mandate to pursue policies of social and economic redistribution. Social democratic thinking on the politics of welfare cultures has created a popularist fallacy. This fallacy is that, somehow, these weak corporatist countries are more constrained by the public legitimacy of social welfare measures than countries such as West Germany and Austria. The argument accepts a teleology that asserts mass public support or mass loyalty for certain social policies legitimates (by their input into state planning) a specific constellation of welfare policy. The functionalism in such views of state action in liberal democracies obscures the lack of choice citizens have in the limited policy options made available to them by social welfare administrations, amongst other forms of administration.

Second, in the strong corporatism of countries such as West Germany and Austria a consistent pattern emerges in public opinion’s levels of satisfaction with current government spending on the four areas. For these two countries there is greater public support in most instances to “spend the same” across these welfare provisions. This greater satisfaction with current government spending on social welfare may be related to public perception that after two-to-three decades of high levels of expenditure on social welfare programs, national well-being has been adequately catered for. A survey of Austrian attitudes to post-war welfare measures found that Austrians “showed themselves aware of the successful attempt to ensure full employment stability and social welfare” (Veselsky 1981:180). Lower levels of support for increases in such countries may be a reflection of this success. It is plausible, however, that this expenditure addressed problems of socio-economic inequality in these countries. Further, there are significant indications, whether by design or default, that Scandinavian countries have had the
most equitable policies in the post-war period (Stephens 1979, Pampel and Williamson 1988). A different set of arguments applies to government benefits-in-kind provided to specifically targeted populations. When the public supports an increased role for government to provide for specific groups such as the sick, the aged and the unemployed, the degree of support for these groups can not only vary considerably across each country but also across each group within a country. Table 3 shows that in America and Australia, as the most extreme examples, nearly half of those surveyed (49.7 per cent respectively) do not think the government is responsible for providing a decent standard of living for the unemployed. Further, while the provision of health care for the sick is seen as a legitimate role for government provision, public support for the creation of employment by government is not as strong. Again, as with their opinions on policies targeted at the unemployed, Americans and Australians are least likely amongst all the countries to support job-creation as a legitimate role for government—65.3 per cent of Americans and 47.3 per cent of Australians believed that 'jobs for all' either probably or definitely should not be the responsibility of government.

The findings on national attitudes towards select public welfare measures are two-fold. First, national populations are more likely to support comprehensive systems of benefits such as free universal education and health service than spending or provision for heavily stigmatised groups such as the unemployed or sections of the aged population. In strongly corporatist countries, this stigma is presumably not as great. One administrative factor that may influence the degree of stigmatisation in these countries is the degree to which unemployment or aged benefits are tied too strong (Universalist) social insurance schemes for all or most of their populations.

A discernible pattern on the social categorisation of welfare beneficiaries is evident from this data. If a category of welfare beneficiary (or their benefit) is associated with economic definitions of the causes of their circumstances (Eg lack of “work effort”) it is more likely that the public will adopt punitive attitudes towards these welfare dependent groups. A similar pattern of categorisation of beneficiaries is evident with some
### National Support for Government's to Provide: Jobs for all; Health Care for the Sick; and, a Decent Standard of Living for the Aged and the Unemployed (percent)

**(Total % = 100   N = 7350)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Britain</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>16.6</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>86.6</td>
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<td>13.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Provide for the Aged</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>78.3</td>
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<td>64.3</td>
<td>81.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>20.1</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably should not be</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Definitely should not be</td>
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<td>44.3</td>
<td>15.7</td>
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<td>3.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Sample Size** | (1528) | (1048) | (1530) | (677) | (987) | (1580) |

Source: International Social Survey Programme: Role of Government—1985 (Germany).
qualification in Australian public opinion. Chart 1 shows the trends in Australian opinion polls that surveyed “causes of unemployment” from 1975 to 1990. Over the period 1986-90 the category in these polls “people not wanting to work” was consistently high or the highest category of public opinion on the causes of unemployment. As was the case with the mid-1970s, this later period corresponds with a period of economic decline in Australia. The unemployed became scapegoats for economic recession in both periods. This evidence suggests that Cawson’s (1986:108) arguments on class collaboration at the meso-corporatist level have some foundation especially within a welfare sector faced with staffing and other economic cutbacks during the 1980s such as that in Australia. The stigmatisation of the unemployed diverts attention away from middle class beneficiaries of social and occupational welfare in Australia (cf Gould 1981). The organisation of professional and administrative interests—white collar or middle class interests—to the exclusion and victimisation of poor people such as the unemployed and single parents is a distinctive historical feature of Australian social policy.

The second finding is that there is some variation across countries not examined in the generalisation of the first finding. In this regard the degree of corporatism may have some effect on the level of satisfaction that exists for a government welfare provision. This level of satisfaction appears unaffected by the lack of strong support for an increase in the government’s role to provide for these groups. Highly interventionist and centralised governments such as Austria appear to have only marginally less support for their interventionist stance on specific welfare groups than countries such as Britain and Italy.

Figure 1 is a typology of correspondence between the degree of satisfaction with welfare spending by governments developed from Table 2 and the degree of corporatism in each welfare state. The relationships suggested in this typology indicates that the strength of corporatism is associated with existing levels of provision in each country. This is not to say that these welfare cultures lead to a greater role for government in the provision of welfare than the other countries mentioned. Table 4 ranks ten countries, including the six mentioned, by their
levels of public social security spending. The spending on public social security in these countries shows there is not a perfect correlation between ranks of levels of spending and the suggested degree of corporatism in such countries. If expenditure on social security benefits is a good indicator of the degree of corporatism in each country then America and Australia are the lowest spenders with the lowest degree of corporatism and Austria and West Germany are the highest degree of corporatism of the six countries included in the analysis. Nonetheless, the
correlation between welfare spending and corporatism would be weaker if welfare effort/spending was measured using a combined set of indicators (as suggested by Gilbert and Maon 1988) rather than social security expenditures alone. Even amongst English-Speaking countries the mix of social security provisions is diverse and highly specialised for the conditions of each country (Bolderson 1988). Such complexity in the measurement of welfare effort makes comparison of opinion and corporatism problematic. In making these comparisons, however, the significance of the debate on corporatism and welfare development is not denied.

Strong corporatist countries have the most redistributive social and economic policies of all advanced welfare states (Castles 1990). An emphasis on the success of other countries' policies in promoting equality does not mean that such policies are translatable into the policy-context of weak corporatist countries. The political danger in adopting policy ideas, say from the Swedish social welfare system, are obvious: redistributive policies can be developed out of their social and political context, the history of labour movements struggles and other arenas of political struggle such as those over the right to vote, resource allocation
Table 4

Public Social Security Spending * as a proportion of GNP at current Prices

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
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<td>%</td>
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<td>7.1</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.0(9)</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sweden</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>8.8(2)</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>7.0(3)</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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* Public Social Security Spending equals total expenditures on Public Social Security Schemes that includes Old Age, Unemployment, Family, Temporary, Sickness and other transfers.

and rights to social welfare are either neglected or ignored completely. Perhaps a more fruitful line of analysis of public support for redistributive measures would be to gauge the mood of public attitude towards redistributive policies including social welfare services in specific electoral regions. From this research, opinions that inform voting behaviour on social policy might be gauged in each country.

Beyond "Democratic" Corporatism

The general findings of this paper are not surprising. We would expect a nation's public support for welfare spending to show similar, albeit inconsistent patterns in each welfare state dependent on the form of social provision. We would, however, probably not expect similar levels of support for distinct provisions in the welfare cultures of both strong and weak corporatist welfare states. This latter-finding runs contrary to arguments that favour corporatist political organization. The most notable assumptions challenged by these findings is that either a strong welfare culture enhances generous welfare measures or the public good is served by a program of 'democratic' corporatism. Democratic corporatism supposedly insulates state administrations from popular pressure and, yet, remains open to the pressures of the opinions of those who participate in tripartite arrangements. The promise of this style of democratic corporatism has little to offer as a strategy for capital-labour mediation. A strategy that supposedly retards those political "constraints" created by mass loyalty to policies of redistribution.

One problem with using corporatism as an analytic concept is its contested meaning in political analysis (Panitch 1986, Cox 1988, Cawson 1988). According to Cox (1988: 294) the theory of corporatism is most useful when describing the political form of the state in historical periods and not in understanding the policy process. Cawson disagrees with Cox in arguing that corporatism can be used in tandem with other theories of the state and policy formation to explain policy development in a country. Theories of corporatism may provide some necessary evaluation and differentiation of policy development and
policy closure in decision-making in various spheres of state, business, union or welfare activity. The concept of corporatism is not the only metaphor in modern political theory that stands for forms of consensus politics or bargaining amongst interest groups. Cawson's (1988:314) defence of the concept as a useful tool in policy analysis seems to suggest otherwise. The rise of the concept in political theory has meant that it has been uncritically integrated into studies of the state and, hence, studies of welfare state development.

There are several speculative arguments that are relevant to contemporary debate despite the eight year lapse since the collection of this attitudinal data on welfare. Even if all public opinion could be controlled by governments, there is little evidence to support the thesis that mass opinions or "mass loyalty" makes any direct difference or contribution to social policy-making in advanced welfare states (cf Smith and Wearling 1990). The pursuit of democratic corporatism embraces the flawed political assumption that more direct public pressure on welfare would bring a social democratic "strategy of equality" undone. On the evidence of this paper such assumptions are wrong in their original premise about the relationship between political action and the level of state welfare intervention. At the very least, in terms of state welfare activity, political constraints do not equal 'popular constraints' no matter how we think a liberal-democracy should be governed.

The general criticisms of corporatist theory are linked to this paper's empirical critique of part of the democratic corporatist thesis. Other writers (Bean 1991) have used the 1985 ISSP data to describe the pattern of attitudes towards government programs and expenditure. The analysis of this paper evaluates the empirical evidence to counter some normative arguments on the role of corporatism in welfare development. In doing this, the claim made is that certain political and social factors such as corporatism contribute to the making of public opinion and are generalisable for the purpose of comparative policy analysis (cf Castles 1982a). Theories of corporatism provide limited explanations for both how welfare policies and services have developed and why they develop in advanced welfare states. Corporatist
theory explains a proportion of state policy development. The theory does not explain all policy development. Furthermore, it is doubtful whether the status of corporatism as a political concept in modern political theory is deserved.

What are the implications of these conclusions for current thinking on the comparative developments of welfare states? The orthodox social democratic thesis on the relationship between public opinion and welfare—that constraints on redistribution policies are created by public opinion (Eg Wilensky 1981:189)—is discredited by the findings and analysis above. More critical analysis of the relationship between state welfare activity and public attitudes might look towards those social actors involved in the steering of state action that builds a picture of consensus on national welfare. Recent evidence on the disjuncture between public opinion and actual policies of distribution and redistribution suggests the ideology of egalitarianism has been preserved in the most conservative welfare states such as America and Australia (Kolosi 1989). While in almost complete contradiction, these welfare states remain the least generous towards their populations and the least distributive with wage income (cf Saunders and Hobbes 1989, Castles 1990).

Implications can be drawn from the findings for the development of the Australian welfare state in the 1990s. Since the early 1970s the Australia welfare state has developed a number of corporatist tendencies that have shifted government objectives towards economic productivity and restrained public finance commitments (Encel 1979, Head 1989). On the one hand, this position justifies the general category of Australia as a weak corporatist welfare state (Stewart 1985). On the other, the position does not necessarily justify an interest group approach such as that adopted by Cawson on how corporatism works. The interest group or pluralist position that often develops together with arguments on corporatism may be of limited value in analysis of the Australian situation (cf Loveday 1984). A more critical approach to the current Australian federal political system could be categorised as 'pseudo-corporatist'—a system where partners can opt out of tripartite or, at other policy levels, bipartite agreements.
Conclusion

No doubt tighter and more stringent discipline of the work force can be imposed under strong macro-corporatism to encourage a nation's economic productivity and at a micro economic level the efficiency of private firms. This does not mean, as Offe (1984:250) points out, that all partners in national social contracts are subject to the same degree of regulation over their distributions of assets and their economic privileges. The scenario of a form of 'pseudo-corporatism' that is undemocratic is the more likely trajectory of the Australian welfare state in the 1990s. The political form of this corporatism means there is no obligation on business partners to comply with contractual agreements on state regulation of business. The business sector might agree with some state policies but they are under no obligation or duty to sustain a partnership with the state, with groupings in the welfare sector or with unions. The power structure of these relationships places business in the dominate position beyond the control of the state and in control over workers' rights such as the right to strike. This 'control from above' brings with it the servitude of the workers to work and defines their claims over work conditions as only existent within the contractual agreements of corporatism.

Recent developments in Australian state welfare indicate that increased targeting of beneficiaries will mean that greater hostility amongst working class and poor people will eventuate towards state welfare activity. Governments cannot expect these groups to vote for policies that support more generous welfare measures unless they can be demonstrated to benefit such citizens. More critical research on those who actually benefit from the contemporary social image of the welfare state has lead the way in this regard (cf Papadakis 1990:b). Such research will lay to rest the suggestion in social science that mass loyalty is a homogenous factor in shaping government policies of social reform in advanced welfare states. To understand congruence between public opinion and state welfare activity further political explanation and empirical study is needed on the opinions of select social groups that persuade governments to take action on welfare policy. Just as all votes do not count equally, not
all welfare consumers have an equal voice in the political and policy arenas that orchestrate the distribution of state welfare benefits.

References


Welfare and Public Opinion


Beyond Coping: An Empowerment Perspective on Stressful Life Events

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Research on stressful life events has demonstrated their negative effects on health and mental health. The possibility of empowerment, how individuals can take action to change their situations, has been largely overlooked by this research. Empowerment theory and research suggest that the outcome of stressful life events can be less debilitating when individuals are encouraged to identify with similar others, to develop specific skills, to perceive the societal or institutional components of their problems, and to engage in change on a collective level. This article develops this perspective by proposing how an empowerment perspective can enhance our understanding of the coping process.

A large body of social science research has investigated the negative effects of stressful life experiences on health, mental health and other aspects of individual functioning. This literature has focused primarily on the debilitating affects of stress and the ongoing difficulties individuals experience following a stressful event. What this research has overlooked is the recent work on empowerment: how some individuals who experience stress can respond by taking positive action to change their situations in an active, outwardly focused, way. This article is a first attempt to examine theory and knowledge regarding the empowerment and coping processes in an effort to gain a greater understanding of how individuals can respond effectively to stressful life events. This examination can contribute to both fields. The literature on coping can inform our understanding of the experiences of less powerful groups and provide insights into the psychological process of empowerment. Information on empowerment can expand our thinking about the relationship between mental health and stress to include the group and community levels of analysis and suggest ways in which responses to stress can contribute to proactive change.
The literature on empowerment and on coping have much in common. Both deal with elusive phenomena which have been difficult to define and study (Hobfoll, 1989; Zimmerman, 1990b). Both are concerned with issues of control and mastery over the environment, including cognitive and affective processes and observable changes in behavior. A difference between these literatures is in their perspectives on the social environment beyond the individual level. Both literatures recognize the importance of social support, however, the social environment is the primary target and means for intervention and change in the empowerment literature. Much of the work on coping looks at how individuals adjust to stressful events, while the empowerment perspective is concerned with how people, individually and in groups, actively attempt to change or eliminate stressful and unjust conditions. Consequently, the coping literature has described most victims as reacting to stress with feelings of self blame and depression, while the empowerment literature has described ways in which individuals have made efforts to influence social policy and to improve social conditions for themselves and others.

The major questions addressed by this article are the following: What do the literatures on coping and empowerment tell us about reactions to stressful events? Can these two perspectives inform one another? In what ways are they irreconcilable? What does this perspective suggest for the field of social work? These questions are addressed by defining the concept of empowerment, by briefly summarizing the literature on stress and coping, and then by discussing how these two perspectives inter-relate. The final section specifies some of the implications for social work research.

Defining Empowerment

Empowerment involves the process of increasing personal, interpersonal, or political power so that individuals, families, and communities can take action to improve their situations. It has become a popular concept or goal for health and social service professionals in a number of fields although the use of the term within and between fields has been inconsistent (Gutiérrez,
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1990). Many authors define empowerment literally and depict it as the process of increasing group power or control (Albee, 1986; Wolf, 1986). Conversely, empowerment has also been described as the development of feelings of increased power or control without an actual change in structural arrangements (Pinderhughes, 1989; Sherman & Wenocur, 1983; Simmons & Parsons, 1983). Only recently have practitioners and scholars begun to grapple with the interface of these two approaches: how individual empowerment can contribute to group empowerment and how the increase in power to groups can enhance the functioning of individuals (Gutiérrez, 1990; Kahn & Bender, 1985; Kieffer, 1984; Rappaport, 1985; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988).

The empowerment perspective taken in this article is grounded in a conflict analysis which assumes that societies consist of separate groups possessing different levels of power and control over resources. The focus of empowering practice is on the experience of oppressed groups whose individual members are hampered both concretely and psychologically by their lack of access to power and resources (Pinderhughes, 1989; Solomon, 1976). This perspective on empowerment has centered on understanding how individuals develop a sense of personal control and the ability to effect the behavior of others, enhancing the existing strengths in individuals or communities, establishing equity in the distribution of resources, an ecological (rather than individual) analysis for understanding individual and community phenomena, and a belief that power is not a scarce commodity but one which can be generated in the process of empowerment (Gutiérrez, 1990; Kieffer, 1984; Rappaport, 1987). Research in this area has focused on identifying psychological elements of the empowerment process (Gutiérrez, 1989; Kieffer, 1984; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988); developing and testing empowering interventions (Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Gutiérrez & Ortega, 1991; Serrano-Garcia, 1984; Simmons & Parsons, 1983); and studying groups of empowered individuals (Kieffer, 1984; Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Pretsby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich & Chavis, 1990; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). Although much of this research is in the exploratory stages some major issues and themes can be identified which characterize the process of empowerment.
The literature on empowerment describes a process of change which occurs on the individual, interpersonal, and political levels. These three levels together work toward assisting individuals to develop a sense of personal power, an ability to influence others, and an ability to work with others to change social institutions (Gutiérrez, 1990; Kieffer, 1984; Zimmerman, 1990a). A number of psychological changes and social experiences have been identified which can contribute to this process of empowerment. The language used to describe these changes and experiences and the relative emphasis placed on them are influenced by the discipline of the author and whether their focus has been primarily on the societal or individual aspects of empowerment. In an effort to define some common themes across this literature, the change processes of empowerment can be conceptualized as consisting of at least four sub-processes which are described in the following ways:

*Increasing self efficacy*: Bandura (1982) defines self-efficacy as referring to beliefs about one's ability "to produce and to regulate events in [one's] life." (p.122) Although this term is not used in all of the empowerment literature, authors describe similar changes such as strengthening ego functioning, developing a sense of personal power or strength, developing a sense of mastery, developing client initiative, or increasing the individual's ability to act (Garvin, 1985; Pinderhughes, 1989; Solomon, 1976; Zimmerman, 1990a).

*Developing a critical consciousness* involves increasing an awareness of how political structures affect individual and group experience. Critical consciousness can result in a perspective on society which redefines individual, group, or community problems as emerging from a lack of power. Critical consciousness has three cognitive components: an identification with similar others, a reduction of self blame for past events, and a sense of personal responsibility for solving future problems (Friere, 1973; Gutiérrez, 1990; Keefe, 1980; Kieffer, 1984; Solomon, 1976).

*Developing skills*: Skill development allows individuals to develop the resources to be more powerful on the individual, interpersonal, or political levels. Research on empowering organizations has found that participation in community and mutual
aid groups which encourage skill development can be an important link in the process of empowerment (Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Reischel, Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1986; Pretsby, et al, 1990).

Involvement with similar others: Contact with others sharing a similar status or problem situation can occur in an informal or formal context. This contact is most useful when it occurs within mutual aid, self help, or voluntary organizations which have been organized to provide emotional or concrete assistance and support (Chessler & Chesney, 1988; Garvin, 1985; Gutiérrez & Ortega, 1991; Kahn & Bender, 1985; Kieffer, 1984; Reischel, Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1986).

Although these subprocess have been described in a specific order, it is not to suggest that the empowerment process occurs in a series of stages. Instead these sub-process often occur simultaneously and work to enhance one another. For example, self-efficacy can be enhanced as skills are developed and involvement with similar others can facilitate the development of critical consciousness. Those who have studied the process closely suggest that one does not necessary “achieve empowerment” but that it is actually a continual process of growth and change which can occur throughout the lifecycle (Friere, 1973; Kieffer, 1984; Zimmerman, 1990b). Rather than being a specific state, it is a way of interacting with the world.

Concepts of Stress and Coping

Research on stressful life events evolved from attempts to account for the positive correlation found between life events and poor health or mental health outcomes. Stressful life events have been defined as life experiences which exceed the individual’s capacity to respond effectively (Hobfoll, 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The effects of these experiences can either be short term and intense, such as with brief medical procedures; long term and sequential, such as with divorce; or made up of chronic strain, such as a diagnosis of cancer (Hobfoll, 1989; Moos & Billings, 1982). Long term effects are not unusual, for example of those who had lost a child or spouse in auto accident about 40% were still found to be ruminating about the
experience 4-7 years later (Lehman et al, 1989). The literature identifies many different kinds of impacts on the individual, but most center on feelings of loss of control, the experience of shattered assumptions, and initial denial of the severity of the situation (Kessler, Price & Wortman, 1985). These impacts may account in part for the significant association (about .40) consistently found between negative life events and psychological disturbance (Thoits, 1983).

Research on coping considers all the responses made by an individual experiencing a potentially harmful outcome, including behaviors, cognitions, emotional reactions, and physiological responses (Hobfoll, 1989; Kessler, Price & Wortman, 1985). Coping efforts can be appraisal-focused, problem-focused, or emotion-focused (Moos & Billings, 1982), and therefore can be oriented toward preventing the stressful situation, altering the stressful situation, changing the meaning of stressful situation, or managing the symptoms of stress (Pearlin & Aneshensel, 1986). An accurate appraisal of the source of stress is crucial, as emotion-focused coping is most effective when not much can be done to change the environment and problem-focused coping is most effective when conditions can be changed (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The coping perspective is primarily individually focused and considers the proximal and distal social environment only to the extent that it affects the ability to achieve homeostasis. Based on a systems analysis, the desired outcome of dealing with stress is to return to an effective level of social functioning. Although Lazarus (1984) and others describe problem focused coping as those methods which focus on modifying the social environment, most of the literature pays little attention to ways in which a negative social environment, which can be creating stress, can be directly challenged or changed.

Much of the coping research has identified internal, interpersonal, and external factors which can facilitate coping. Internal, or individual factors which assist coping include behavioral self blame (Frieze, Hyman, & Greenberg, 1987); experiencing feelings of choice and self control (Rodin & Langer, 1977; Thompson, 1981); accurately appraising the stressful event (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984); finding some meaning from the experience;
gaining a sense of mastery over the situation; feeling responsible for future outcomes (Brickman, et. al., 1982); good ego development and social and problem solving skills (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Methany, et al, 1986; Moos & Billings, 1982); denial concerning the event and its outcomes (Janoff-Bulman & Timko, 1987; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984); physical health and energy; positive beliefs (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984); personality factors, such as hardiness (Wortman, 1983); and learned resourcefulness (Rosenbaum, 1983).

Interpersonal and external factors which facilitate coping have also been identified. The presence of social support can have a positive effect on the coping process (Kessler, Turner & House, 1988). Dimensions of social support which have been found to be especially effective are those which enhance the self, support collective action (Pearlin & Aneshensel,1986; Wortman, 1983), provide an opportunity for ventilation, (Lehman, Ellard, & Wortman, 1986; Silver, et. al., 1983); allow contact with similar others (Lehman, Ellard, & Wortman, 1986); and provide emotional support (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). External factors which have been associated with effective coping include a large social network; instrumental social support which provides concrete help (Pearlin & Aneshensel, 1986; Wortman, 1983); and access to material resources (Kessler, Turner & House, 1988; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Moos & Billings, 1976).

When these internal, interpersonal, or external conditions are not present, coping may not be as effective. For example, the lack of a social network, the inability to ventilate, and poor self concept all provide a poor basis for dealing with life stress (Kessler, Price & Wortman, 1985). The nature of the life event can make effective coping especially difficult. Research has consistently found a strong association between undesirable, uncontrollable, and unexpected major life events and poor psychological outcomes (Pearlin & Aneshensel, 1986; Thoits, 1983). Another consideration is the magnitude or complexity of the problem, as described by Pearlin & Aneshensel (1986):

Many life conditions that threaten health are simply not responsive to individual coping efforts and social supports. Extreme
economic deprivation, continued involuntary unemployment, being trapped in a depersonalized job setting, and having responsibility for young children as a single parent are a few examples of situations that may be stubbornly resistant, if not impervious, to coping efforts and social supports (p. 27).

This suggests that some life events may be so overwhelming or complex that they exceed the coping capacity of any individual. They may be more amenable to group or collective solutions, such as those described in the empowerment literature (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978).

Empowerment and the Coping Process

Theory and research on coping and empowerment have developed separately and with different foci for concern, can they inform one another? This exploration will begin by looking at some general areas of convergence and points of departure between these two perspectives.

One important similarity is the emphasis placed on the interaction of the person and the environment. Both perspectives consider the social environment as contributing to social and emotional well being. A basic assumption of the life stress and coping field is that psychological functioning is affected by external stimuli and that symptoms such as anxiety or depression do not necessarily arise from underlying psychopathology (Hobfoll, 1989; Kessler, Price & Wortman, 1985). The empowerment perspective also focuses on the person/environment interaction, but from the standpoint of wellness, competence, and control. It suggests that empowering interactions and institutions can be an important mediator of stressful life experiences by encouraging healthy and action oriented responses to the social environment (Zimmerman, 1990a).

Therefore, one major difference between these two perspectives relates to their orientation toward the fit between individuals and their environments. The coping perspective has most typically looked at how the person/environmental fit can be improved upon by making changes on the individual or psychological level. The emphasis has been on how the individual changes his or her cognitions, emotions, or behaviors to manage
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life stresses (Hobfoll, 1989). Only when describing problem-focused coping is the stressor or social environment the target for change and in most cases these changes are minimal and proximal. In contrast, the empowerment perspective focuses almost exclusively on how environments can be modified to improve the person/environmental fit. The assumption is that the social environment in its present state cannot be supportive of members of oppressed groups, who because of their status are more likely to experience stressful events. The orientation is toward identifying and creating social environments which will maximize the functioning of all individuals and communities (Rappaport, 1987).

Both perspectives also concern themselves with an individual’s experience of control of the social environment. Experiencing the loss of control is one critical factor influencing the psychological impact of stressful life events (Rodin & Langer, 1977; Thompson, 1981; Wortman et al., 1980). These feelings can challenge assumptions about the world and one’s ability to control outcomes and therefore heighten feelings of anxiety and arousal (Thompson, 1981). In response, causal attributions, which place blame or responsibility for the event on the individual, can enhance feelings of control over the environment (Coates, Wortman, & Abby, 1980).

This literature is limited as it does not fully explore how environmental conditions can affect the experience of loss of control. The empowerment perspective relates the ability to feel in control, and to have control, as linked to one’s personal, interpersonal, or political power. In order to have control, individuals must first have the resources and ability to express and act upon their goals and desires. This is supported by research which found that individuals which had more control over some elements of their environment had better health outcomes than those who did not (Rodin & Langer, 1977). Illusions of control, and self-blame may help people to feel better but they may interfere with processes which would allow them to more accurately identify the source of their problems and act upon that appraisal.

Research on psychological empowerment also suggests that social interaction can have a positive effect on the experience
of the loss of control. Zimmerman (1990) proposes that learned hopefulness can be developed as a means for regaining a sense of control, mediating stress, and improving problem solving capacity. Learned hopefulness can develop in situations in which individuals experience success and develop the skills to realistically appraise their ability to control a specific situation. Research on learned hopefulness suggests that it can be generated through participation in empowering organizations and can contribute to a sense of psychological empowerment (Zimmerman, 1990).

Both the literatures on empowerment and coping describe involvement with similar others as an important process. Good social support has been identified as a significant mediator of life stress. The best form of social support takes place in involvement with others who have experienced similar stresses (Brickman, et al., 1982; Coates, Wortman, & Abby, 1979; Kessler, Price & Wortman, 1985). These studies suggest that similar others are more likely to be accepting of others, more capable of supporting the need to ventilate, more capable of providing accurate information or advice, and perhaps more capable of playing a role in anticipatory socialization. In combination, these factors facilitate the coping process.

Within the empowerment literature involvement with like others is also identified as leading to positive outcomes by providing individuals with a basis of social support through the change process, with a format for providing mutual aid, with the opportunity to learn new skills through role modeling, and with a potential power base for future action (Chesney & Chessler, 1988; Gutiérrez & Ortega, 1991; Keefe, 1980; Pinderhughes, 1989; Reischl, Zimmerman, Rappaport, 1986). In many respects some form of group contact, either participation in mutual aid or voluntary organizations, is presented as a necessary condition for psychological empowerment (Garvin, 1985; Gutiérrez & Ortega, 1991; Kieffer, 1984). Research on the empowerment process suggests that the role of the group leader as a facilitator of interpreting experience and developing skills can be crucial if group interaction is to contribute to empowerment (Gutiérrez & Ortega, 1991; Kieffer, 1984; Pretsby, et al, 1990).

The development of specific skills has also been described as a method of improving coping and facilitating an empowerment
process. In relation to empowerment, skill development is one way in which individuals can build their social power through problem solving, community or organizational change, life skills development, or interpersonal skills such as assertiveness, social competency, or self advocacy (Checkoway & Norseman, 1986; Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Garvin, 1985; Keefe, 1980; Kieffer, 1984; Pretby, et al, 1990; Sherman & Wenocur, 1983; Solomon, 1976).

The coping literature also identifies specific skills which have been related to positive outcomes. Social skills can facilitate coping because they can enable the individual to utilize social support more effectively, allow greater control in interaction with others, and facilitate joint problem solving (Moos & Billings, 1982; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Problem-solving skills can assist coping by providing a rational means for dealing with stress and concrete issues (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Cognitive skills, such as learned resourcefulness, can provide a means for regulating internal events and for appraising situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Rosenbaum, 1983).

The skill areas identified by these two literatures are not dissimilar. Both identify social skills and problem solving skills as contributing to the coping or empowerment processes. Research on learned hopefulness suggests that cognitive processes and skills can contribute to psychological empowerment. Both of these perspective emphasize the important role skills can play in dealing with stress.

However, a critical difference between these perspectives is the emphasis placed on comprehending the larger social environment. Although the coping literature describes how an accurate appraisal of the stressful experience can maximize coping efforts (Hobfoll, 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) it does not recognize the role which critical consciousness can play in affecting ones reaction to stress (Friere, 1973; Gutiérrez, 1989; Kieffer, 1984). Critical consciousness differs from the appraisal process because it is not oriented totally on one’s personal experience and one discrete event.

Research from the coping literature can explain how developing a critical consciousness can contribute to the empowerment process by directly effecting appraisal. When engaged in the process of appraisal the individual assesses the nature
of the stress and whether problem-focused or emotion-focused coping would be more efficacious (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This process is strongly affected by the individual's world view (Wortman, 1983). The coping literature suggests that group contact and identification may allow individuals to feel less to blame and less stigmatized for their situation and more capable as a group to effect constructive change (Brickman, et al, 1982; Pearlin & Aneshensel, 1986). Therefore individuals who have developed a sense of critical consciousness and who interact with similar others may be more likely to identify external causes for their distress and be more motivated to engage in efforts to change the social structural sources of stress (Bandura, 1982; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Gutiérrez & Ortega, 1991).

This discussion illuminates how knowledge about empowerment can create a more holistic understanding of how individuals react to situations of injustice, powerlessness, and stress. Increasing feelings of control, having contact with similar others and developing skills can contribute both to empowerment and effective coping. The major area of difference centers on the role of the group and critical consciousness. The coping literature describes individual phenomena and has largely overlooked how group efforts and an understanding of social structures can contribute to more active efforts to increase individual, group, or community power. The empowerment literature which identifies group interaction and collective action as crucial elements of the change process can begin to explain why some victims of stressful events have been moved to take political action. It encourages us to look at "victims" of stress as potential participants in social transformation and recognizes the crucial role which appraisal, skills, and social interaction can play in determining how individuals react to stress.

A Research Agenda on Empowerment and Coping

This perspective is of significance to social workers who are interested in creating structures and programs which can mediate the effects of stress and encourage empowerment. It is of particular importance to those of us who concern ourselves with individuals, groups, and communities on the margins of
society who are likely to experience severe life stresses due to societal injustice and inadequate access to social resources (Albee, 1986; Gutiérrez, 1990). Research and practice in social work which looks at social systems primarily from a stress and coping perspective will not adequately consider how the social environment can be modified or understand how participation in social action or mutual aid can have a positive affect on health and mental health. An orientation which extends information on the stress and coping process to include empowerment can give us the means to understand how individuals, communities, and groups can move from frustration, inaction, and fear to efficacy, action, and participation in social change. A program of research on empowerment and coping can advance our field to begin to understand these process in more depth and to identify ways in which this new perspective can be put into practice.

This research agenda must be conducted from an empowerment perspective. It requires action research carried out collaboratively with the groups who will ultimately benefit from the development of this knowledge and practice (Sohng, 1992; Sommer, 1990). These articles, and others, spell out some of the assumptions, methods and contradictions involved in carrying out this kind of research agenda. Much of the previous research on empowerment has been conducted with efforts to use these methods and orientations and it has expanded our knowledge on empowerment processes of the chronically mentally ill (Rose & Black, 1985), mutual aid groups (Checkoway & Norseman, 1986; Chessler & Chesney, 1988), voluntary organizations (Pretsby, et al, 1990; Florin & Wandersman, 1990); adolescents (Simmons & Parsons, 1983) and African American single parents (Gutiérrez & Lewis, 1992). This is in contrast with the coping literature, which has less often been carried out collaboratively or grounded in the context of the groups in question. The creation of ecologically oriented action research to investigate reactions to stressful events can create greater insights into these processes and their interaction.

Research in this area could place its primary focus on individuals and groups which are experiencing stressful life events. This could include the groups cited above as well as others such as survivors of family violence, the chronically ill and
their families, homeless individuals and families, and others living below the poverty level. The overall goal of this research would be to develop knowledge which could provide us with the means to create policies, organizations, and programs which would enhance their empowerment. A first task would be to observe and document the coping and empowerment process and begin to identify common responses to life stress in order to develop a better "mapping" of the individual/environmental fit. For example, in doing research with survivors of family violence we may observe that for most the first reactions to violence may involve emotion-focused coping in a need to establish a feeling of equilibrium. However, in carrying out this research over time we could observe a range of long term reactions to violence and how they could be influenced by such factors as the involvement of survivors in mutual aid groups, in skill development programs, and in accessing protection from the legal system. These external factors, in combination with other more individual, familial, or cultural factors could influence the movement of some individuals from a coping to an empowerment response. This initial, naturalistic, research can help us to further identify those individual, group, organizational, cultural and structural factors which in interaction can influence the processes of coping and empowerment.

The literatures on coping and empowerment have largely overlooked the possible impact of gender, ethnicity, and class. Although each body of research has involved individuals from different populations, rarely has the meaning of membership in a particular gender, racial, ethnic, or class group been related to the empowerment or coping process. Given the large body of research which has demonstrated the importance of these variables to mental health, cognition, and behavior, more information is needed on how these variables, and our experiences of them, have an influence on coping and empowerment. For example, research on group consciousness has consistently found that members of ethnic minority groups and the poor are more likely to have a critical orientation to the social structure (Gurin, Miller, & Gurin, 1980; Gutiérrez, 1989; Kleugel & Smith, 1986). This suggests that they may engage in a different process of developing critical consciousness than members of majority
groups and that critical consciousness may play a different role in the empowerment process for different groups.

This research could also investigate the impact of individual variables on coping and empowerment. The literature on coping identifies individual factors which facilitate coping, in particular personality traits and beliefs which are most compatible with an individually based means of dealing with stress. For example, hardy individuals, field independent individuals, and “internal” individuals may be more compatible with coping efforts which are focused on individual effort because they perceive themselves as in control of their environment and independent of others (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Moos & Billings, 1982). One program of research could look at whether this individualistic orientation might interfere with an empowerment process which is oriented toward group advancement. Conversely, one could document whether the personality factors which have been identified as interfering with individually based coping would facilitate group empowerment rather than individual acceptance.

Another important area of research would be to further identify structural influences on the empowerment and coping process. Previous research has established that group contact and social support can have a positive effect, however more information is needed on the characteristics of empowering group structure and process and ways in which some group interactions may interfere with empowerment by reinforcing emotion focused appraisal and efforts when they are not appropriate. The importance of group interaction also suggests that the empowerment process can occur only when similar others are proximate and available. Research on whether it is possible to become empowered on an individual basis, without the support of and contact with a group could allow us to understand the relative importance of this subprocess.

This observational and naturalistic research could provide the basis for action research which could develop and pilot test interventions aimed at enhancing the empowering elements of the social environment. Potential beneficiaries of this research could collaborate with social workers to develop different methods to encourage empowerment and to evaluate these
interventions. One possible model for such research could look at the differential impact of the subprocesses of empowerment—increasing self efficacy, developing skills, developing a critical consciousness, and social interaction—in relation to one particular problem area and one particular group. Another important focus could be on methods involving more than one level of empowerment and looking at ways in which individuals can move from increasing their self efficacy to collaborating on community projects. A final focus could be on how the process of this participatory research could one way of increasing the three levels of empowerment (Gerschick, Israel, & Checkoway, 1990).

This research agenda can further clarify the empowerment processes. It can enrich the study of empowerment by grounding it in a research base. It would also enhance our understanding of stress and coping by bringing issues of power, and group experience, into consideration. Looking beyond coping to empowerment could bring some unity into the study of how individuals, and groups, deal with stress, loss of control, and powerlessness.

References


Empowerment, Stress, and Coping


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An earlier version of this paper received the Henry J. Meyer Award at the University of Michigan for the best integration of social work and social science theory.


Nicholas Barr maintains that economic theory explains the welfare state better than any ideologies. While libertarians see the development of the welfare state as an encroachment of individual liberties; liberals see it as a quest for social justice. Socialists view it as a capitalist conspiracy to contain social unrest. For Barr, however, all countries, irrespective of their dominant ideology, have developed similar industrial structures (theory of convergence) and some form of welfare state. Thus, the welfare state develops as a response to the logic of industrialism.

If ideology plays any role at all, it is in the model of the welfare state, namely, the residual (as in the U.S.) or institutional (as in North-western Europe). Although Barr endorses technological determinism, he is not ideologically neutral. He prefers the liberal ideology since its utilitarian approach seeks to maximize total welfare without dogmatic adherence to a method—private markets, public production, or both.

The distinction between aims and methods of policy are fundamental to Barr since the aims of policy (equity/justice, efficiency, individual freedom) are normative and are influenced by ideology. Once the aims are laid out, the method of achieving them is a technical matter left to the managerial technocrat.

With this framework Barr discusses economic theories of state intervention and insurance, and presents certain assumptions in which markets operate efficiently. These are: (1) perfect information on products and prices for consumers and firms; (2) perfect competition; and (3) no market failures on account of provision of public goods, external effects (e.g., air pollution) and increasing returns of scale (leads of monopoly and elimination of smaller firms).
When these assumptions fail, state intervention in the form of regulation, finance, or public production, is justified to achieve efficiency. Barr also proposes that social justice aims can be achieved by income transfers unless in-kind (free education, health care, child care) transfers are more efficient. Illustrating these propositions with the United Kingdom as an example, he provides a detailed analysis of the cash and in-kind benefits there.

The social insurance programs of the welfare state seek to provide security to people in the form of unemployment, sickness, and disability, and retirement benefits. Since the market cannot insure against unemployment and inflation, these are justified for the public on the grounds of efficiency. In other words, the risks for the private markets are too high and profits cannot be made. Perhaps the same reasoning could justify public provision of automobile or home owners' insurance.

Barr's analysis of health care is timely for the United States. He favors the National Health Service of the United Kingdom on the grounds of efficiency and social justice, but endorses the Canadian and the Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) models as possible alternatives. He does not favor education to be left to the private market on grounds of efficiency. Regarding housing, he recommends the replacement of price subsidies (rent control, loan finance, mortgage interest tax exemption) to be replaced by income subsidies to those in need since price subsidies lead to inefficiency.

Barr struggles with the dilemma of the welfare state itself—how to achieve equality without lost incentive. For him, "To avoid the disadvantages of capitalism by abandoning the market system entirely is to throw the baby with the bath water." (p.434). He advocated taxing transmission of wealth (death duties, inheritance taxes) and profit-sharing with workers to give them a small stake in the capitalist system.

Lindbeck attempts to resolve this same dilemma in his essays. As an academic economist and advisor to the government of Sweden, the most advanced welfare state in the industrialized world, Lindbeck is concerned about the expansion of the welfare state into a free-for-all redistribution state—"transfer state." Such redistribution takes place from the middle class to the middle
class itself or "from the right to the left pocket." Lindbeck fears that this situation will produce serious problems for the long-term viability of the welfare state, for example: 1) a disincentive problem causing what he calls "substitution effects" and "dead weight costs"; 2) weakening of the family, 3) tension between the individual and the state; and 4) the loss of pluralism.

Lindbeck does not advocate a complete roll back of the welfare state. Emphasizing its achievements, he characterizes "the modern welfare state as a triumph for modern civilization." It has eliminated destitution (at least in North-western Europe), improved the economic security of ordinary people, increased national economic productivity by increasing investment in human capital by providing free education, health care, and child care.

The remaining challenge is "how to restore efficient incentives to productive activity without jeopardizing the social achievements of the modern welfare state." (p. 95). The effects resulting from high marginal tax rates are that people choose leisure over work, pursue do-it-yourself work, produce for barter, and cheat on taxes since honesty is expensive. Lindbeck laments that the provision of personal services to family members is nationalized in advanced welfare states. What he ignores, however, is this benefit liberates women from unwaged domestic servitude. It may eventually set right a global injustice to women who do two thirds of the world's work and get a tenth of the income and own one percent of the property.

Lindbeck overlooks the fact that "cheating on taxes" is not only characteristic of advanced welfare states. In a free market system, consider the following: transfer pricing techniques of multinationals, tax loopholeing by bribing (campaign contributions) legislatures, setting up subsidiaries in tax-haven of-shore island countries, stashing away money in Swiss Bank accounts, money laundering by multinational banks, Savings and Loan scandals in the U. S., and Pentagon capitalism.

Lindbeck wants public spending in the welfare state to be less than 50% of the GNP. This would restrict the role of the welfare state to its percentage of the 1960s. In this form, the welfare state would focus on providing social security, eliminating poverty, and providing basic social services such as education
and health. Some of his reforms are: tax reform, privatizing many public sector services, and keeping the social security system compulsory but making it actuarial and benefits relating to contributions, a voucher system for redistributinal goals, and taxing consumption.

Lindbeck claims that the competitive and decentralized market system and pluralism go together. He favors state intervention to reverse the tendencies for merger, emergence of conglomerates and development of interlocking directories in the corporate sector; in other words, he wants the state to bring back competitive capitalism.

What both Barr and Lindbeck overlook is that private markets and capitalism are not designed to distribute incomes evenly. In fact, the advanced welfare states are facing a crisis today because of attempting to function in a contradictory global capitalist system. Capital has no commitments to any nation states. Its favorite working class is that one which gives it the maximum surplus value. It would be very hard for any nation state to compete in a global market place using third world workers paid poverty level wages. This contradiction even socialist regimes have to face. Reforms recommended by the both Barr and Lindbeck may only postpone this crisis. Students of the welfare state, policy makers and administrators will find these books, thought-provoking and informative.

Henry J. D'Souza
University of Nebraska at Omaha


For those enamored of the idea that we are makers of our own futures, *Diverging Pathways* should be must reading. Kerckhoff's most recent study of stratification in Great Britain analyzes the effects of structural "placements" in schools and the labor market. An exemplar of the new genre of status attainment studies which accord socialization and allocation processes coequal standing, *Diverging Pathways* takes social structure seriously.
Kerckhoff views the British experiences as a particularly informative counterpoint to the situation here: school-type distinctions in the British educational system are more sharply drawn and selection mechanisms are more highly institutionalized, yet at the secondary level and beyond there are numerous avenues besides college for acquiring valuable labor market credentials. The British school-reform movement of the mid sixties may have lessened these differences some, but Diverging Pathways overlaps this period and so affords a glimpse of both old and new.

The analysis is organized around the several stages of schooling (infant to junior; junior to secondary; secondary to postsecondary) and the school to work transition. The main lines of divide for the book's treatment of school structure are school type distinctions (e.g., at the secondary level, grammar, modern, private and comprehensive) and ability group placements (high, middle and low groups, but in some comparisons also an "ungrouped" option), while the analysis of labor market placements considers firm size, public sector employment and a four-fold industrial classification (core vs peripheral, overlaid on service vs production). Following the life-course chronology, consequences of structural placements are evaluated for achievement test scores, examinations passed, "qualifications" acquired and first job occupational status, more or less in that order. Do structural placements determine success in school and afterwards and if so exactly how do these forces play themselves out over time? This is Diverging Pathways' ambitious agenda, and in the main its ambitions are well realized.

Individual chapters are devoted to each school and work stage. Using extensive statistical controls to help isolate the effects of interest, analyses in these chapters assess determinants (including prior placements) of structural location, effects of structural location on outcomes, and possible mechanisms through which that influence is exercised. Diverging Pathways identifies teacher ratings (and presumably behaviors that revolve around those ratings) as key. At most stages teacher's impressions are highly responsive to prior placements and are strongly predictive of later attainments. Two final analysis chapters look at the orderliness of placements across stages—"career
trajectories”, if you will. In a particularly clever exercise, Kerckhoff recalibrates all outcomes to a common metric to calculate, via the logic of path analysis, the cumulative “deflective” effects of structural placements at successive stages. These calculations are the basis for the book’s subtitle.

The data come from the National Child Development Study, a truly extraordinary project which sampled all children born in England, Scotland and Wales during the week of March 3–9, 1958 (N=17000+). Information was gathered at ages 7 (at which age members of the cohort were in elementary school), 11 (around the time most would be moving from elementary to secondary school), 16 (their last year of compulsory school attendance), 20 and 23 (at which points school leaving and the transition from school to work are addressed). This is a remarkably agreeable design for Kerckhoff’s purposes, providing data before, during and after each stage of schooling and overlapping practically everyone’s entry into the labor force.

Diverging Pathways finds quite substantial effects of school placements at practically every stage, and because of strong connections across stages in placement patterns, this has the effect over time of greatly increasing individual differences in outcomes compared to what would be expected absent structural differentiation. However, the details differ from stage to stage and for men and women. Some of these differences make perfectly good sense in the context of the book’s logic and conceptualization, but others simply are empirical findings. Also, there is some reshuffling of the deck at the labor market stage, mainly for men, owing to the importance at that point of alternative pathways to further qualifications not strongly linked to prior educational placements. These complications notwithstanding, the overriding message of Diverging Pathways is that school and labor market structures
are of great consequence and its evidence on this score seems to me quite compelling. The book concludes with a discussion of how stratification processes in the U. S. might differ from those in Great Britain and of prospects for reducing the unequalizing effects of structural constraints through school reform.

Karl L. Alexander
Johns Hopkins University


Although Americans value equality, in practice, this equality has never been very complete. What, after all, in the context of the U. S. constitution, does equality mean? Here is a document that promised equality, at the same time that it withheld the benefits of that equality from women, slaves, and persons from the less propertied classes. In *The Pursuit of Equality in American History* (2nd Edition), J. R. Pole traces this ambiguous legacy from pre-Revolutionary times to the modern era.

The original concept of equality was a republican one, through which the authors of the Constitution sought to distinguish the new, United States of America from the European monarchies. In Europe, titles could be conferred through heredity; in the U.S., heredity conferred no such benefits. This distinction was both vital and limited: vital because it signified the establishment of an American republic, and limited because the equality before the law was originally protective rather than interventive. Seen from this perspective, the right to own African-American slaves was a property right to be defended, rather than a violation of human rights that warranted intervention. Echoes of this distinction can be heard in the present day, when even though the federal government intervenes with much greater frequency, there is a tendency to flinch from addressing basic human needs—the provision of housing and medical care, for example—because invariably, they involve somebody else’s property rights.
Quite apart from this basic conflict, the concept of equality entails many other complications. As individuals, people are not equal in mental ability, in physical dexterity, or in income; as members of identifiable groups, they may be superior or deficient in any number of distinct qualities. The question then becomes, in which of these categories is equality desirable? One of the best examples of this conflict that Pole cites is the 1895 opinion of Supreme Court Justice Field in the first case about the constitutionality of an income tax: the law, Justice Field declared, unfairly "discriminates between those who receive an income of four thousand dollars a year and those who do not." Today, we are inured to the notion that this is precisely the kind of distinction that an income tax is supposed to make, but then debates about equality have always been debates about the politics of difference. Through political campaigns in the early years of this century, social reformers succeeded in making a difference in income one of the differences that mattered.

As Pole demonstrates, in its modern version, this debate has shifted somewhat, so that it now revolves around groups rather than individuals. This shift is significant, not in the least because it departs from the concept of the equal rights embodied in the Constitution. Inevitably, when gays, women, and people of color have sought to define the deprivation of their rights as a matter of group membership, others have either sought to reframe the issue as an individual matter, or have tried to highlight the differences within a particular group. As a result, the politics of identity have been superimposed on the politics of difference. Both are now an integral part of the fight for equal rights.

*The Pursuit of Equality in American History* is unquestionably authoritative on all these issues. Pole has taken one of the major themes in the evolution of the United States and analyzed it with great diligence and sophistication. His book deserves a reading both by those doing collateral research and by those who are interested in a careful study of the standard work in the field.

Joel Blau
State University of New York at Stony Brook


From the time of Adam Smith, economic knowledge has been abstracted from an understanding of the way Western capitalist economies operate. Smith's great contribution was to explain the changing economic forces of his time, and to comment on them in normative terms. Little has changed since then. Despite its claim to positivist detachment, conventional economic theory has formulated explanations as well as normative principles around the working of Western capitalism.

Although dissenting models derived from Keynesian interventionism, humanism and Marxism have changed the dominant paradigm, they have not been widely adopted except, of course, in the centrally managed economies where Marxist theory has proved to be of limited durability. Development economics has emerged as a separate field concerned specifically with the Third World. While it has offered dissenting insights into Third World conditions, it has not displaced the commanding role of Western economic thought in the Third World.

In these two books, Masudul Alam offers a basis for two differing systems of political economy. The first seeks to describe the principles governing the operation of the Islamic economy while the second provides an overview of the field of development economics, largely from a neo-institutional perspective.

Choudhury's analysis of the principles of Islamic economics deserves to be widely read. It offers an outline of the theological bases for an Islamic political economy, dealing specifically with the Islamic view of human nature; normative prescriptions governing economic behavior; the Islamic system of profit sharing (or *mudarabah*); the proscription on interest; and the role of *zakat* (or the wealth tax) in meeting social welfare goals. The final chapters of the book examine the application of these principles in Malaysia, a country with a sizable Muslim population.
While Choudhury's analysis is notably lacking in critical analysis, it makes a significant contribution to the literature by showing that alternative systems of economic thought do have currency in non-Western societies. The book is well written, easy to read and highly informative.

The author's *Comparative Development Studies* is a wide ranging book which surveys the broad field of development studies. While several surveys of this kind have been published before, Choudhury's book is up to date and includes material on recent developments in the field. For example, the book offers useful summaries of the work of Sen on entitlements, the emergence and formulation of the concept of 'sustainable development' and the fate of the basic needs approach which first emerged in the 1970 under the guidance of the International Labor Office. Of particular interest is a summary of major reports on development questions such as the South Commission report, the World Bank's annual *World Development Reports* and the *Human Development Reports* published by UNDP. While Choudhury's book is not highly original, it is a useful resource which will be of value to students of development studies.

James Midgley
Lousiana State University


Neither Marx nor Engles ever provided a precise characterization of future communism. *The German Ideology* curiously described communism in the pastoral imagery of the fisherman, the herdsman, the hunter and the critic, hardly suitable for an advanced industrial society, but pointed in its assurance that a fixed division of labor would be a thing of the past. *The Grundrisse*, a long series of manuscripts Marx prepared for his planned six volume work on economics (*Capital* was to have been volume one!), gave rare glimpses into the future with vague musings about the universal individual and the notion of free time. Finally, *The Critique of the Gotha Programme* made a distinction between lower and higher communism. Lower or
vulgar communism might have to allocate goods according to the amount of labor each citizen contributes, whereas in higher communism the operating principle shall be “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”

It fell, then, to Marxist practitioners and to academic scholars of Marx, to fill in the gaps and to attempt what Marx and Engels had not done. Since 1989, of course, the practitioners have largely abandoned the field and former communist regimes are, with some trepidation, embracing political economies they had long criticized. Not surprisingly, the academicians keep the inquiry alive. Stanley Moore is a good candidate for this task, since twelve years ago he wrote an interesting essay entitled, *Marx on the Choice between Socialism and Communism*. Now, in *Marx verses Markets*, he has returned to the issue of the nature of communism with what he terms a “radical revision” of that earlier work.

The key element in Marx’s arguments about and for communism, Moore contends, are essentially moral and philosophical. They focus on the distinction between classless economies with commodity exchange and classless economies without commodity exchange, the latter, in Marx’s view, being superior to the former. Moore traces the development of Marx’s arguments from the early *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* through *Capital*. In that survey, an altogether too brief and cryptic eighty-eight pages of text, we are presented with a Marx at odds with himself. The moral argument of philosophical communism, as Moore calls it, is that estrangement and dehumanization will cease only when division of labor and commodity exchange are abandoned. Yet, the premises of historical materialism allow only that capitalist societies will evolve into classless economies with two possible choices, one in which “rent, profit, and interest are collectivized, [and] markets are combined with planning, the other where rent, profit, and interest are eliminated, [and] markets are replaced by planning.” In other words, Marx’s own economic analysis did not require the abandonment of a market economy. Yet, his moral and philosophical arguments, drawn largely from Feuerbach and Hegel, do require that commodity exchange should disappear. Thus, in Moore’s opinion Marx was blinded by his desire to maintain his moral arguments and
did not sufficiently understand that his economic arguments led to the conclusion that "the only workable complex classless economies are socialist economies with competitive markets."

The idea that scientific socialism was often at odds with the moral and philosophical presuppositions of Marx is hardly new. Scholars are disparate as Mircea Eliade and Robert Tucker have long argued that Marx was essentially a mythopoeic thinker, a moral philosopher, and not an economist or a sociologist. Moore adds a clever twist to this perspective, however, by focussing on the issue of commodity exchange, or markets, and provocatively demonstrating that Marx's theory of communism without markets is a moral goal without substance and an empirical theory without sufficient foundation. Implicit in Moore's analysis is the notion that communist regimes since Lenin have all too willingly accepted Marx's dismissal of the socialism of his major French rivals, a socialism that sought to create a classless economy that was both planned and driven by market concerns and to construct a political regime that recognized both the rule of law and individual rights.

Cecil L. Eubanks
Louisiana State University


Social scientists working within the traditions of political economy have over the years created diverse conceptual models of Western societies which project images not only of their structural organization but of the way their political and economic systems operate. Pluralism, capitalism, liberal democracy, social democracy and similar terms are now widely used in everyday language to connote different social, economic and political arrangements in different nations and regions of the world and to explicate their dynamics. The identification of corporatism as yet another category suggests that the creative process in social science thinking on issues of political economy continues to be vibrant. It also suggests that the process of change which
promotes divergent social, economic and political systems continues apace.

Research on corporatism as a unique political economy is developing very rapidly. The attention which is now being given to the theory of corporatism is compatible with the view that conventional Anglo-American models which previously dominated social science thinking, not only fail to describe events within the English speaking world, but fail to account for the divergent social, economic and political arrangements which exist in other countries. The discovery of corporatism has also facilitated new normative thinking. Just as social scientists previously hailed Post-War pluralist liberal democracy as a superior system, so scholars of corporatism have claimed that it too represents a higher form of social organization.

Pekkarinen and Pohjola are two Finnish social scientists who have teamed up with Rowthorn at Cambridge University in England to answer the question of whether corporatism is indeed a superior system. While they recognize that the concept of corporatism is elusive, they define its essential characteristics by emphasizing the role of the state as a arbiter between capital and labor and as an active promoter of development. Defined in this way, the editors make a cautious argument for the adoption of corporatist forms of statism particularly in developing countries where there is a need to build institutions conducive to economic and social change. Corporatism, they suggest, offers a compromise between oppressive socialism and unfettered capitalism and fosters economic as well as social progress.

This is a useful book which attempts to come to grips with the difficult concept of corporatism and seeks to explore its various aspects, particularly with references to labor issues. It contains interesting chapters on Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Australia and Norway which have, to varying degrees, adopted the corporatist approach. Although the price of this book is prohibitive, it should be acquired by libraries to provide a useful reference source for social scientists interested in learning more about the corporatist model, and its growing relevance to the solution of contemporary social and economic problems.

James Midgley
Louisiana State University

There is a small but rapidly growing literature on the consequences of the spatial organization of labor markets. Almost three decades ago, W. R. Thompson argued strongly that the local labor market, defined by commuting radius, was for income analysis an analytical unit on a par with the more traditional industry category. Until recently, most students of the field ignored his argument, but in the last five years or so the careful work of a few sociologists and economic geographers has clearly pointed to a need for a conceptual redefinition of the "economic space" within which workers operate. These researchers have begun the development of conceptions of labor markets that categorize and systematize the "market imperfections" of orthodox economics into crucial differences in local labor market structure, differences that usually inhibit mobility, and the lead to less than perfect competition.

One group of these researchers has been at work since the early 1980's empirically subdividing and mapping the U. S. into 382 distinct "labor market areas," (LMAs) both urban and rural, based on census journey-to-work data. Their painstakingly careful work has produced a publicly-available dataset that has set the standard for research in the area. Singlemann and Deseran have assembled a valuable collection of 14 original articles based on this dataset, most of the authors part of the group responsible for its existence.

Following an introductory chapter, the book is divided into a "theoretical and methodological" section containing four articles, and a "new empirical findings" section with nine articles. The latter is the most valuable part of the book. The two theoretical pieces offer useful, if attenuated, reviews of the literature and interesting arguments on the importance of space in social analysis, but both are seriously limited by an unfortunate focus on narrow slices of theory. One methodological article is a good review of the logic and method of LMA mapping, and the second makes a strong case for the use of multi-level models in analyses of inequality.
The empirical articles range from an insightful study of the economic performance of LMAs over time to a study of black migration out of southern LMAs and its effect on human capital concentration in those areas. In between there are several studies of LMA-level effects on within-area inequality, two quite interesting studies of the effects of black concentration in LMAs on inequality and underemployment of black residents, a careful examination of LMA effects on the labor force participation rates of females, and several other topics. Though some articles purport to be "multi-level" analyses, none are in fact, but their OLS results nonetheless provide interesting and insightful clues for further research. Though only a few authors explicitly note the fact, most of the articles tend to move beyond the LMA only as an area containing labor markets, and treat it instead explicitly as "locality" or as "local context," in the words of two of them. This focus is quite proper, and represents the most fruitful direction for future research.

The book is an eclectic collection that provides a thorough overview of the many aspects of adding a special context to social science research. The articles have some rough edges, as one would expect in research in a relatively new and undeveloped area, but are all competently done, and combine into an excellent overview of this new focus. The book's most serious lack is a good concluding chapter that ties together and places in context all that came before, while pointing to future research. Even without this, however, it is a book that should be owned by all embarking on research concerning the effects of local context, and that should be read by all who want to keep up with the increasingly complex models of social science.

Wayne J. Villemez
University of Connecticut

The post colonial era in the Third World has been characterized by state interventionism. As indigenous elites assumed power after the collapse of European imperial rule, they sought not only to consolidate their control over the state apparatus but to extend it. The declared intention of their statism was to promote economic and social development. They believed that the considerable resources of the state could be mobilized to promote economic growth, foster social progress and transform backward agrarian communities into advanced industrial nations.

In this detailed study of government rural development programs in Zaire, Mokoli argues that the statist strategy for development failed miserably. Although the country’s political leaders consistently claimed that government actively promotes development for the benefit of ordinary people, the record is dismal. Applying established theories of the state to analyze the cause of this situation, Mokoli concludes that the absence of a pluralistic political system has permitted elites to take control of the state for their own benefit. While Mokoli’s study has obvious relevance to other nations and for understanding the role of the state in development, his findings should not foster the conclusion that statism has been universally disastrous.


Despite widespread ignorance of what Swedish social democracy comprises, it has either been a subject of derision or veneration in American political circles. For some, the Swedish system offers a utopian vision of what government direction of economic and social affairs can achieve. For others, Sweden is an oppressive society in which individual creativity is stifled by high taxation, government regulation and social uniformity.
This definitive book should dispel many stereotypes about Sweden. Anyone who has an interest in Swedish society, and in the social democratic tradition generally, will benefit from reading this highly informative publication. Designed specifically to trace the evolution of social democracy in the country and to assess its achievements, the book is an invaluable resource covering topics as diverse as education, local government, housing, international affairs, agriculture, family policy and social security. The book examines the Swedish system critically, and the authors do not hesitate to expose its weaknesses and failures. Despite current difficulties, and disaffection with state intervention from some sections of the population, Swedish social democracy has fostered significant social gains. Whatever one's personal biases, it is hard to disagree with the book's conclusion that social democracy in Sweden has produced an extraordinarily high quality of life for the nation's citizens.


This significant book provides a comprehensive account of poverty in the urban areas of the United States today. It focuses particularly on the 'underclass' phenomenon but does not become entangled in theoretical and ideological debates about whether an underclass exists, or whether sociologists should use the term.

Examining various operational definitions, the book uses the 'poverty threshold' approach to account for the incidence of poverty. Although the threshold approach is also applied to examine rural poverty, the book focuses primarily on the urban underclass. Particular attention is paid to family issues, employment, welfare, substance abuse, crime and violence. The final chapter attempts to sketch out a policy agenda for the future which urges the federal government to create programs that will enhance job creation, social welfare, education and health care. The authors argue that is only through national policies and programs that urban poverty can be eradicated and that new opportunities for the deprived and oppressed of American cities can be created.
Clyde W. Barrow. *Critical Theories of the State: Marxist, Neo-Marxist, Post-Marxist*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. $38.00 hardcover, $15.95 papercover.

Academic inquiry into the role of government in society is hardly a new topic. Indeed, political theory from the time of the Greeks has dealt either directly or indirectly with the state as a phenomenon worthy of study. However, there has been a significant resurgence of interest in critical theories of the state in recent times. Derived primarily but not exclusively from Marxism, these theories examine the nature of the modern state and investigate its functions in society by considering how the state serves the interests of those in positions of power and influence.

Marx and Engel’s own writings on the subject provide a starting point but it is surprising how their seminal ideas have been challenged, reformulated and transcended by critical theorists over the years. This book offers fascinating insights into what has conventionally been a perplexing field of inquiry marred by jargon and obscurantism. Barrow’s well-written, scholarly and interesting account is essential reading for any social scientists wanting to know about the modern state and its role in society today.


This is the third of an annual series of reports on global social development. Published by Oxford University Press for the United Nations Development Program, this report follows the precedent of previous reports by focusing on a particular theme. In this report, the theme is the role of people’s participation in development.

There is, of course, a huge literature on this subject but given the dominance of economists in the authorship of the report, much of this literature is ignored. In addition, the authors focus particularly on the economic aspects of popular participation, interpreting participation as a mechanism for integrating the population into the free market system. The report’s naive
faith in what is described as 'people friendly markets' appears to be oblivious of the fact that governments rather than ordinary people have the power to mediate markets and to mitigate their exploitative tendencies. The idea that 'people power' will somehow create viable non-exploitative market systems, and engender prosperity for all is surprisingly ignorant not only of the literature but of decades of development experience in the Third World.

Despite this criticism, the 1993 Human Development Report will be an indispensable resource to social scientists concerned with development questions. Its statistical appendices and county case studies are invaluable and indicative of its breadth and comprehensiveness.


The British welfare state has long been admired by students of social policy for its highly integrated structure, comprehensiveness and centralized managerialism. Indeed, the fact that Britain is often regarded as a prototypical welfare state is attributable not to historical inventiveness but to its universalism and inclusive organizational structure. Now, fifty years after Beveridge formulated a blueprint for the British welfare state, its character is being rapidly altered. Under Mrs. Thatcher and her descendants, the once integrated British welfare state is being trimmed, decentralized, fragmented, privatized and diluted.

This book will make depressing reading for those who have admired the British system and its organizational universalism. Nevertheless, it is essential reading for those who wish to know how the British welfare state is evolving. While American readers will recognize many of the features of the new managerialism, few will welcome it. By bringing together this series of highly informative chapters on the current trend away from statism in Britain, the editors of this book have made a major contribution to the study of comparative social policy.

This is not the first book to attempt an encyclopedic classification of the major ideologies of Western political thought but it is probably the best. The editors not only offer a comprehensive overview of key Western ideologies such as liberalism, conservatism, democratic socialism and Marxism but discussed ideologies that are usually neglected in the literature. These include three ideologies that are particularly topical today, namely feminism, nationalism and ecologism.

One of the editors, Roger Eatwell has written an excellent introductory chapter that summarizes the definition and theory of ideology. This chapter is informative, well written and particularly helpful to those who require an introductory exposition rather than intricate analysis of this complex field. The chapters on the various ideologies follow a standard pattern and are all highly readable and enlightening. This book is highly recommended for anyone interested in knowing more about the role of ideology in shaping attitudes and events in modern societies.


From the end of the nineteenth century, the progressive movement has advocated a positive role for government in regulating capitalism, intervening to meet human needs through the provision of public social services, and protecting the population against the negative effects of industrialization. State interventionism became increasingly common during the 20th century, and was only significantly challenged during the 1980s when the doctrines of the Chicago School of law and economics were embraced by the Reagan administration. The Chicago School advocated a massive withdrawal of the state from civil society and believed that the market, if permitted to operate independently of statutory constraint, would of itself promote the general welfare.
Rose-Ackerman points out that while the Reagan era did not result in the abolition of state interventionism, it severely undermined confidence in progressivism. Progressives were thrown into disarray by the Reagan offensive, and have not been able to offer a credible alternative. There is an urgent need for a new progressive agenda which abandons old, unpopular doctrines and boldly advocates new forms of intervention that protect society and enhance people's welfare.

Rose-Ackerman attempts to provide guidelines for a progressive agenda of this kind. Her book is an important one and like other works in this genre, such as Reinventing Government and Reconstructing the American Welfare State, her prescriptions are highly compatible with the Clinton administration's conservative centrist. A devotee of the methodology of public choice, she believes that the radical regulation of political and bureaucratic decisions offers helpful prospects for the future. The chapters on 'proxy shopping' in the social services should be read by all who want to know how the advocacy of social service vouchers may evolve in the future. While traditional progressives will not be enthralled by Rose-Ackerman's prescriptions, her book is essential reading for those who want to understand the new 'progressivism' and follow its potential adoption in the circles of power.
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INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS
(Revised December, 1987)

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

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

Reviewing normally takes 60 days but can take longer in the event of split recommendations. Things move more slowly at the end of semesters and during the summer. Authors should feel free to write or call the editor if they feel an undue amount of time has elapsed.

Preparation. Articles should be typed, doublespaced (including the abstract, indented material, footnotes, references, and tables) on 8 1/2 x 11 inch white bond paper with one inch margins on all sides.

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

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

Gender and Disability Stereotypes. Please avoid gender restricting phrasing and unnecessary masculine pronouns. Use of plural pronouns and truly generic nouns ("labor force" instead of "manpower") will usually solve the problem without extra space or awkwardness. When dealing with disabilities, avoid making people synonymous with the disability they have ("employees with visual impairments" rather than "the blind"). Don't magnify the disabling condition ("wheelchair user" rather than "confined to a wheelchair"). For further suggestions see the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association or Guide to Non-Sexist Language and Visuals, University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Processing Fee. The increased cost of typesetting has made it necessary to charge a processing fee of $35 to authors who are accepted for publication. You will be billed at the time of acceptance.

BOOK REVIEWS

Books for review should be sent to James Midgley, School of Social Work, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803.