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This paper analyzes President Clinton's first budget. Clinton's budget is his public policy. The budget is compared to Clinton's three stated objectives of stimulating the economy, investing in the future and reducing the deficit. His proposed budget and subsequent modifications are also compared to the budgets of previous administrations. In contrast to Reagan's first budget, which was a radical modification of public policy, Clinton's budget is only an incremental change from the public policies of the Reagan/Bush years.

This paper has two main objectives. The initial budget of a new administration sets the parameters of what can be accomplished during the term and sets the tone for subsequent policy development. We examine President Clinton's budget to ascertain if his policies indicate a major new direction in U.S. public policy. Second, we assess what impact, if any, Clinton's budget will have on improving the economy, overcoming Reaganomics, and redistributing economic benefits and taxes in a more equitable fashion.

Sociologists tend to consider federal budgetary decisions as unrelated to basic interests and concerns (Padgett, 1981). Yet, there is both longstanding (Goldscheid, 1917; Schumpeter, 1991 [1918]; O'Connor, 1973; Bell, 1976) and contemporary interest in fiscal sociology. Joseph Schumpeter (1991 [1918]: 100-101) may have said it best:

The fiscal history of a people is above all an essential part of its general history. An enormous influence on the fate of nations emanates from the economic bleeding which the needs of the state
necessitate, and from the use to which its results are put... But even greater than the *causal* is the *symptomatic* significance of fiscal history. The spirit of a people, its cultural level, its social structure, the deeds its policy may prepare—all this and more is written in its fiscal history, stripped of all phrases. He who knows how to listen to its message, here discerns the thunder of world history more clearly than anywhere else.

Fiscal sociology is the art and science of discovering the principles governing the volume and allocation of state finances and expenditures, and the distribution of the tax burden and benefits among various economic classes. Government spending accounts for about one third of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the federal budget is by far the biggest component of government spending. Far from being a sterile or arid enterprise, the fiscal sociology of budgetary analysis can be extremely useful in understanding the direction and characteristics of the political economy of the modern welfare state. This is particularly true when the economy and electoral patterns are undergoing dynamic shifts.

When Presidents Carter's last and Reagan's first budgets were analyzed in an earlier study (Fendrich and St. Angelo, 1981), a number of important conclusions and accurate short-term predictions about the consequences of policy shifts were made. This occurred before a critical consensus emerged over the harmful consequences of Reaganomics (Phillips, 1990; Harrison and Bluestone, 1988). President Reagan defined and expanded his mandate, and used it effectively during his first 200 days in office to gain both Democratic and Republican support for his Economic Recovery Act. In comparing Reagan's 1982 budget to Carter's, spending outlays for almost all budgetary functions received substantial cuts—regulatory agencies and social programs were particularly hard hit (Fendrich and St. Angelo, 1981).

The most dramatic changes in the Reagan budget were in the area of taxes. Reagan's public policy altered the tax code to rapidly redistribute wealth upward. Congress slashed taxes $749 billion. These cuts largely benefited the wealthy and/or corporate American, while the average citizen had her or his tax cut offset by increasing Social Security taxes. Although Reagan's
politically conservative rhetoric hyped the popular ideas of reducing the size and functions of government, the real political agenda was to use government authority and power to assist corporations and wealthy individuals. The tax cuts, deregulatory activities, and projected increases in defense spending clearly signified that class segments of the economic elite were using government policies to solve their problems and serve their interests. In 1988, the Congressional Budget Office reported that the bottom 80-percent of families in the United States lost income between the years 1977 to 1988. On the other hand, the top five percent of families experienced an income increase of 23.4-percent, and the top one percent of families experienced an income increase of 49.8-percent—in real dollar terms their incomes rose from $270,053 to $404,566 (Phillips, 1990). The budget figures demonstrated that the liberal spirit and thrust of "New Deal" and "Great Society" legislation was over.

Clinton's Budget

The Democratic victory in the 1992 presidential election provided an opportunity to reverse the public policy of the Reagan/Bush era. As The New York Times reported on the day after the election, "something approaching two-thirds of the electorate said it wanted to put an end to business as usual" (Apple, 1992:B3); in other words, there was a "mandate for change". While an impressive amount (19-percent) of this pro-change vote went the Independent candidate Ross Perot, the majority of it went to Clinton. Throughout Clinton's campaign, three themes of change surfaced: 1) restore the American economy through both private investment incentives and public investment; 2) restore fairness through a more equitable tax code and various transfer payments—in other words, make those who can afford it pay more while protecting those in need; and 3) reduce the deficit through a combination of spending cuts, expanded user fees for both businesses and consumers, and tax increases. In his first budgetary message to Congress, titled A Vision of Change for America, President Clinton (1993) roundly criticized the upward flow of wealth which occurred under Reaganomics, and promised to restore fairness by redistributing
benefits and opportunities. Was his message a real promise, a faint hope, or only political rhetoric?

Restoring the Economy

Clinton's plan to get the economy back on its feet consisted of a stimulus package for immediate growth and investment proposals to foster long term growth. Both sides of this approach consisted of selective spending and tax incentives. The goal of the economic Stimulus Package was to give the economy a jump start by providing immediate public investment, decreasing unemployment, increasing private incentives. To accomplish these goals, Clinton initially proposed a $16.3 billion Stimulus Package (Vision of Change). Of this amount, $8.3 billion would actually be spent in 1993 with the remainder earmarked for future years. In Clinton's first official budget proposal (referred to as the April budget), stimulus spending for the late 90's was increased; however, spending for 1993 and 1994 remained virtually unchanged. Furthermore, nearly $6.5 billion in tax incentives—particularly an Investment Tax Credit—were proposed. This plan met many of Clinton's campaign promises—such as putting 100,000 new police officers on the streets, extending unemployment compensation, increasing spending on transportation, accelerating the HOME Investment Partnerships program, providing funds for environmental cleanup, and providing tax credits for small business investment. The Stimulus Package also signalled that other campaign promises might well be fulfilled in the future—such as a fully-funded Head Start; Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); Immunization; Technology investments; and other programs. Overall, it appeared to represent an early attempt on Clinton's part to transform public policy.

However, the inability of Clinton and the Senate Democrats to break a Republican filibuster led to the death of the Stimulus Package. Only the $4 billion extension of unemployment benefits was passed. Later attempts at passing a scaled-down version of the package also failed, until supplemental appropriations—which contained remnants of the Stimulus bill—were passed by both Houses. This supplemental included $220 million for summer jobs (originally $1 billion in Vision of Change), $341
million in financial aid for students (originally over $2 billion), $150 million for more Law Enforcement, and $175 million for a Small Business Administration loan program (originally a $3.3 billion). All of these were a far cry from the original $16.3 billion package.

Building upon the Stimulus Package, the Investment Proposals were intended to continue the economic recovery and guarantee a growing and productive economy through increased public and private investment. These investment proposals constitute the key campaign promises made by Clinton to restore the economy. But what, or how much, constitutes the fulfillment of a promise? Is any spending increase enough to fulfill a campaign promise? Given Clinton's "mandate for change", it would be inappropriate to consider minor incremental changes as evidence of a fulfilled promise. Although the theory of incremental budgeting and policy making has been widely criticized (Axelrod, 1988; Schullman, 1975), it is still useful to examine the budget to determine whether the Clinton administration was proposing only incremental changes or whether his budget represented significant policy shifts.

Following conventional incremental budgetary analysis, we have decided that a nonincremental increase of greater than 5-percent beyond Bush's 1992 budget (which provides the baseline) constitutes a serious policy change. In making these comparisons, it is necessary to account for inflation from one fiscal year to the next. While the Consumer Price Index is commonly used to account for inflation, we have decided to use the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) deflator as a more conservative estimate. According to Clinton's budget, the GDP deflator is 2.8-percent for 1993. Thus, accounting for inflation, a nonincremental change is defined as greater than a 7.8-percent increase over Bush's budget.

Given that the 1993 budget only represents adjustments to Bush's already existing budget policy, it would be unfair to judge Clinton solely on this criteria. The FY1994 budget proposals represent Clinton's first "real" budget. So in addition, Clinton's FY1994 proposals will be compared to the FY1993 adjustments to see if his promises are introduced, retained, or dropped in this subsequent year. If a 1993 budget figure
already represents a significant (i.e. nonincremental) departure from the FY1992 budget figure, then we can expect that figure to stay relatively level through FY1994. To accurately identify a constant level of spending between budgets, we must again account for inflation, which is estimated to be 2.9-percent (the 1994 GDP deflator estimate). For spending in any given budget category to have remained steady, spending must increase by at least 2.9-percent between FY1993 and FY1994. On the other hand, spending must increase by 7.9-percent between the FY93 and FY94 budgets for us to identify a significant change.

With this guideline, it is clear that there were no substantial changes in public investment policy. Only a few of the programs slated for investment increases represented nonincremental shifts. Such shifts took place in spending for Community Block Grants (an increase in spending of 23.3-percent between 1992 and 1993, and up 30.8-percent between 1993 and 1994), Environmental Clean-Up (up 20.5-percent in 1993 and 10.4-percent in 1994), and WIC (up 14.2-percent in 1993 and 12.4-percent in 1994). Other programs received only “symbolic” support, i.e. they were provided with increased spending in nonincremental terms, but, in real dollar terms, received rather small increases of under half a billion dollars. The establishment of Community Development Banks and the National Service Initiative, and funding for the HOME program and Energy Conservation fell within this category of symbolic increases. Other “symbolic” programs were those in which spending increased in 1993, but then dropped again in 1994. The increased funding promised for job training programs suffered this fallback; funding for these programs in FY1994 will fall below the FY1993 levels. Most of these programs were underfunded because the Stimulus Package was not approved by Congress. In more general terms, Clinton promised to invest $20 billion a year to rebuild America’s infrastructure. But as President, he only proposed $34.7 and $35.8 billion in outlays over four years (in Vision of Change and the April Budget respectively), less than half the amount promised.

One of the real opportunities for shifting public investment policy was provided by the end of the Cold War. Shifting from “military Keynesianism” and the centrality of the defense indus-
try to an economy centered around non-defense public spending was a key component of Clinton’s proposals for "Defense Conversion". While it is true that funding was proposed in this area (a total of $19.5 billion over the next five years), it fell well short of the $60 billion Clinton promised as a candidate. Indicative of this, Clinton failed to shift federal funding on research and development from defense to non-defense programs. In both his FY1993 adjustments and his FY1994 budget the percentage of total federal funding for non-defense research remained virtually unchanged (increasing from 41-percent to 42-percent). The total federal spending proposed for research and development represented only an incremental increase, rather than the significant increase promised. Public investment policy remains oriented towards the defense industry.

Furthermore, Clinton massively scaled back many of his Investment Proposals following the April budget. Clinton only asked Congress for an additional $16.7 billion in budget authority for investment proposals which would result in only $5.9 billion in FY1994 outlays. This was $2 billion less than the authority initially planned in the April Budget. Of this, House appropriators only provided $8.8 billion in authority (excluding defense) or about 53-percent of what was requested (CQ Weekly Report, 1993e:1717).

According to Vision of Change and carried forward in Clinton’s April budget, most of these investment proposals were back-loaded, i.e. full-funding was withheld until some future date. Slated to receive full-funding in the latter part of Clinton’s term, these programs receive anywhere from two to ten times as much funding in 1997 than they did in 1994. For example, Clinton proposed to fully fund Head Start, but this will not occur until 1999, and 38-percent of funding for WIC is scheduled for after 1997. Over one-third (40.4-percent) of the total investment proposal spending occurs in 1997. At this time, Clinton’s figures show the deficit beginning to rise again. Thus, when Clinton’s investment programs are scheduled to receive full-funding, "the president and Congress would... face the difficult choice of fully funding his initiatives or holding down increases in the deficit" (Judis, 1993b:16). This back-loading of programs, combined with Congress’ reluctance to provide even
half of what Clinton originally proposed, makes it unlikely that any of these investment proposals will receive full-funding in the future, much less meet Clinton's campaign promises for public investment.

The second part of Clinton's investment plan consisted of private incentives through tax breaks. Unlike the failure to change public investment policy, Clinton had some success in implementing his private incentive policy. Table 1 provides Clinton's key campaign promises in the area of private incentives. Clinton's proposals reflected his promises for a Small Business Investment Tax Credit and a Research and Experimentation Tax Credit. But for the other promises listed, Clinton provided only symbolic fulfillment. The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and the Enterprise Zone credit are both small programs composed of little more than a quarter billion dollars combined in FY1994. Backing away from his innovative proposal to require corporations to pay for continuing education and training, Clinton instead proposed to provide corporations with a tax break, however small, for these activities.

Clinton's non-incremental private incentive proposals, did not make it through Congress unscathed. The budget proposal presented by the Joint Conference Committee revealed numerous changes to the April budget. They eliminated the Small Business Investment Tax credit proposed by Clinton, and the expansion of the Research and Experimentation credit was limited to only about 6 months. Both of the private investment promises fulfilled by Clinton were cut by the Committee, while other, more symbolic, proposals were only slightly altered.

Restoring Fairness

Taxation was one of the most important issues of the 1992 campaign. Candidate Clinton spoke countless times of restoring fairness to the tax code, with an eye towards relieving some of the tax burden of the middle and working classes. Early in the campaign, Clinton promised to reduce payroll taxes, which would have given a tax cut or credit of $300-$350 a year for families with adjusted gross incomes of less than $80,000 (equivalent to $60,000 taxable income). He also advocated an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which would have amounted to $22.5 billion
<table>
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<th>Table 1</th>
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<th>Joint Conference</th>
<th>Promise Kept</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Private Investment Promises (Incentives)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>As Candidate</strong></td>
<td><strong>As President</strong></td>
<td><strong>Joint Conference</strong></td>
<td><strong>Promise Kept</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A 50% Capital Gains Exclusion for long-term investments in small business</td>
<td>Proposed a 50% capital gains tax break on new stock held for five years issued by small businesses (with paid-in capital of $25 million or less)</td>
<td>No investment Tax Credit</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently extend the Research and Experimentation tax credit</td>
<td>Permanently extended</td>
<td>Extended six-months.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require Corporations to spend 1.5% of their payroll on continuing education and training</td>
<td>Proposes a permanent tax credit for employer-provided education assistance and proposes credits for certain jobs and youth apprenticeships</td>
<td></td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tax Incentives for Businesses that relocate to Urban Enterprise Zones</td>
<td>Provide tax credits for businesses that locate in needy urban areas (10 Empowerment zones with several tax incentives and 100 more Enterprise communities with fewer incentives)</td>
<td>Designate nine empowerment zones, and 100 enterprise communities</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment tax-credit for Businesses to encourage investments in new plants and equipment</td>
<td>Provide investment tax-credits, temporary for large firms and permanent for small firms</td>
<td>Allow small businesses to write off $17,500 in equipment purchases. Effective 1/1/93</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
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in tax relief over four years. Later, as the issue of the deficit took center stage, Clinton revised his plan; families could take either a reduction in payroll taxes OR a credit for children, but not both. Finally, as the election neared and the projected deficit figure continued to grow, Clinton further distanced himself from the middle class tax cuts by focusing on the size of the deficit and the uncertainty of the future. In a Presidential Debate on October 19, he hedged on the tax issue, saying, “You can’t say ‘read my lips’ because you can’t know what emergencies might come up” (CQ Weekly Report, 1993a:386). But barring any emergencies, Clinton promised that he would not raise taxes on the middle (or working) class.

As President, Clinton scaled back the EITC request to $19.8 billion over four years. The House reintroduced a more generous tax credit, proposing to increase funding by $28.2 billion over five years in what was an $11 billion per year program. Under this provision, low-income families with two or more children would have received up to $2,685 in 1994, and $3,371 thereafter. Low-income individuals with no children would have received up to $306. However, the Senate cut this program considerably, proposing $10 billion less. Under this provision, the EITC would have gradually increased to $3,315 in 1996 for families with two or more children. The Senate made no provision for individuals with no children (CQ Weekly Report, 1993d:1637; NYT, 1993g:A1). The administration and some House members had vowed to restore the EITC cutbacks because the credit was “a crucial component of Clinton's larger goal of expanding incentives for the poor to avoid welfare” (CQ Weekly Report, 1993d:1637). However, the Joint Conference Committee did not restore all that much; their compromise expanded the EITC by $20.8 billion over five years, although individuals without children are eligible (Wall Street Journal, 1993:A9). Even if Clinton’s proposal had made it into the budget intact, it would still have “stop[ped] short of the campaign pledge he made that all families with a full-time worker be guaranteed enough money to live above the poverty line” (Verhovek, 1993:A1).

As another promise to restore fairness, Clinton opposed a gas tax as being unfair to middle class taxpayers. As President, he proposed an alternative broad energy tax based on the BTU
content of different fuels. Different kinds of fuel could be taxed differently, or not taxed at all (as with solar and other renewable energy sources, and oil used to make plastics, chemicals, and tires) \((\text{NYT}, 1993a:3)\). The plan would have brought in nearly $72 billion in revenues over five years, and would raise the average family’s annual combined bills for gasoline, home heat, and electricity by only $100-$150. Lobbyists from a wide variety of industries began working to kill Clinton’s energy tax before he was even officially the President \((\text{NYT}, 1993d:A1)\). The House, which voted on their version of the budget in late May, retained the $72 billion, broad-based BTU tax in a show of support for the President. However, by the second week in June,

...after the proposed tax on coal was lowered; after aluminum smelters and barge operators got a break; after farmers and city dwellers won exemptions for the diesel that heats homes and runs turbines; after oil refiners and gas and electric companies moved the tax off their backs and onto consumers’; after grain merchants won and then lost a battle to exempt ethanol; after chemical and glass makers secured protection against untaxed foreign competitors...after all that and more, the White House gave up on enacting a tax on the heat content of fuels...\((\text{Wines}, 1993a:A1)\).

This energy tax would have provided the essential revenue needed to fund the variety of social programs supported by the House (EITC, empowerment zones, etc.). Both the House and Senate supported Clinton’s proposal to extend the 2.5 cent increase in the gas tax through September 30, 1999. But conservative Democrats and moderates in the Senate forced the drop of the BTU tax, and substituted for it a 4.3 cent increase in the tax on gasoline and other transportation fuels. This plan would only bring in about $24.2 billion in revenues over the next five years. The final resolution of the energy tax debate in the Joint Conference Committee upheld the modest 4.3 cent gas tax proposed by the Senate \((\text{WSJ}, 1993:A9)\).

Candidate Clinton also promised to make the wealthy and large corporations pay their “fair share” of taxes. For the wealthy, he proposed to raise the top income tax rate from 31-percent to 36-percent, which would apply to gross adjusted
incomes above $200,000 for couples filing jointly, and $150,000 for single filers. As President, he changed the lower end of the bracket for which this tax would apply to include adjusted gross incomes in excess of $180,000 for joint filers and $140,000 for single filers (CQ Weekly Report, 1993a:385). These figures correspond to $140,000 and $115,000 in taxable income, respectively. Furthermore, candidate Clinton sought to impose a 10-percent "millionaire's surtax" on taxable income in excess of $1 million (excluding capital gains), creating an effective top rate of 39.6-percent for those affected. As President, Clinton was forced to revise this proposal downward, such that taxable incomes greater than $250,000 would be subject to the 10-percent surtax. Conflict between the House and Senate on these issues arose over when the new tax should be implemented, what the top capital gains tax rate should be, and whether capital gains should be subject to the 10% surtax (CQ Weekly Report, 1993b:1280; 1993d:1637). After negotiating these differences, the Joint Conference Committee decided to uphold the House position that the new tax rate be retroactive to January 1, 1993, and deleted the 10-percent surtax on capital gains suggested by the Senate (NYT, 1993h:A10).

As President, Clinton initially proposed to increase the top tax rate on corporations from 34-percent to 36-percent on taxable income and net capital gains in excess of $10 million. However, both the House and Senate voted to limit that increase to 35-percent. In the Joint Conference Committee, Representative Charles Rangel and others advocated Clinton's initial proposal to raise the top corporate tax rate to 36-percent to help pay for social programs; however, in a clear turn around, Clinton opposed it (NYT, 1993f:A14). Clinton also promised to cap corporate deductions for CEO salaries at $1 million, and totally eliminate deductions for lobbying expenses. Again the House and Senate were agreeable to Clinton's proposals, but they determined that something loosely defined as "performance-based compensation" would be exempt from the cap (CQ Weekly Report, 1993b:1280; 1993c:1546). As many executive pay packages are tied to some measure of company performance, this exemption provides a considerable loophole for corporations (NYT, 1993a:3).
In another bid to restore fairness, Clinton proposed to completely eliminate tax deductions for business-related meals and entertainment. These used to be 100-percent deductible, until Congress, in 1986, scaled it back to 80-percent, calling the tax break “a write-off for rich businessmen who dined at overpriced restaurants” (Wines, 1993b:A8). But instead of completely eliminating the deductible in 1993, the House and Senate reduced it to 50-percent (CQ Weekly Report, 1993b:1280; 1993c:1546). Then, after a skillful lobbying campaign by the restaurant industry, members of Congress were “seriously considering restoring a chunk of the deduction, at a cost of perhaps $7 billion in lost revenues, even as they haggle over the size of tax increases and cuts in social programs” (Wines, 1993b:A8). However, the Joint Conference Committee concluded that such an action would indeed be too costly, and opted instead to add a credit for restauranteurs. This compromise convinced another Democratic senator, Richard Bryan of Nevada, to switch his vote in support of the bill (NYT, 1993h:A3).

In a bid to tax the more affluent elderly, the House gave Clinton their full support regarding his proposal to tax 85-percent (up from 50-percent) of Social Security benefits for recipients with incomes in excess of $32,000 for couples and $25,000 for individuals. The Senate approved the increase, but those affected would be couples and individuals with incomes exceeding $40,000 and $32,000, respectively (CQ Weekly Report, 1993d:1637). The numbers changed again in the Joint Conference Committee, which decided to apply the new tax rate to couples and individuals with incomes in excess of $44,000 and $34,000, respectively. Delayed implementation of this tax and the higher income figures were made to capture the vote of Senator Dennis DeConcini of Arizona, one of six Democrats who voted against the Senate bill (NYT, 1993h:A3).

Where did all this leave Clinton’s promise to restore fairness? In the same murky waters as his other campaign promises. Again Clinton did little to convert his promises of change into policy, and what he did do was undone by Congress. Clinton proposed to place most of the increased burden on the wealthy, but his proposals ignored the restructuring of the tax code throughout the 1980s. The changes made when Reagan first
took office resulted in a net increase in the tax burden for all income groups below $75,000, while those at the upper end of the scale enjoyed reductions in their tax burden. Spending cuts further impacted upon these regressive changes in the tax code. Edsall (1984) reports that according to the Congressional Budget Office, during his first two and half years in office, Reagan cut domestic spending on human resources by $101.1 billion, with $65.4 billion of those cuts coming from programs that provided cash or in-kind benefits that went directly to families (205). These changes were such that a household with an income of less than $10,000 paid $95 more in net taxes between 1980 and 1984 and lost $1,340 in benefits between fiscal year 1982 and 1985. Households making more than $200,000 experienced a net cut in taxes of $17,403 over the same period, with any household of $80,000 or more losing only $490 in benefits (205-206).

Another shift in the tax structure took place with the Tax Reform Act of 1986. In this case, all income groups experienced savings on their tax returns; but, the wealthiest benefitted disproportionately from these breaks (Phillips, 1993: 113). Overall, from 1977 to 1989 the top quintile of income groups experienced a 5.8-percent decline in their federal taxes (the top 1-percent of all families experienced a 24.7-percent decrease) while the bottom two quintiles have experienced increases in their taxes (112). Clearly, even Clinton’s early proposals were modest in light of the 1980’s tax restructuring.

Reducing the Deficit

The last major theme of Clinton’s campaign and plan for restoring the economy centered around reducing the massive Reagan/Bush deficit which developed from 1980-1992. When Reagan took office, the debt was $1 trillion and when Bush left office it was $4.6 trillion. During this period, the amount the government owed per every $100 of the nation’s income rose from $26 to $53 (Friedmann, 1993). Clinton was critical of the growing deficit during his campaign, and he pledged to reduce the deficit by half during his term. This reduction was to take place through a combination of tax increases and spending cuts.

Table 2 reports the highlights of Clinton’s Deficit Reduction plan. In Clinton’s detailed budget proposal, he outlined a
variety of spending cuts under the categories of defense cuts, eliminating unnecessary programs, reducing subsidies and increasing user fees, managing government for cost-effectiveness, streamlining government, and controlling health care costs. These cuts, which include increased revenues which have been designated as spending cuts by the Administration, represent a total of $13 billion in 1994 and a total of $217 billion from 1994 to 1998 in non-defense spending cuts. Combined with the $112 billion in discretionary Defense spending cuts and the reduction in the Debt Service of $46 billion, this plan provided for $375 billion in total savings over four years.

As a total package, Clinton’s proposals would have reduced the deficit not by half as he promised, but by a little more than a quarter. Again, like the Stimulus Package and the Investment proposals, the deficit reduction plan experienced difficulties in its adoption by Congress. Clinton indicated his willingness to sell out early when he abandoned certain fees within the category of eliminating subsidies and increased user fees (slated to save $1.5 billion in 1994 and nearly $27 billion through 1998). For example, under pressure from various interest groups, the proposed fees for mining, grazing, and timber were deleted. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbit was able to get grazing fees restored to satisfy environmentalists, however, when Clinton needed Montana Senator Max Baucus’s vote for NAFTA, the fees for grazing on Federal lands were reduced. Furthermore, many of the programs Clinton targeted for cuts have been traditional pork barrel programs supported by Congress, which historically have been placed under the deficit reduction axe only to wiggle out again.

Clinton’s proposed budget for the Central Intelligence Agency is another example of his failure to implement significant changes. The Cold War is over, yet Clinton proposed to fund the CIA at nearly $30 billion, up from $27 billion (NYT, 1993e:A7). In short, the CIA budget increased despite the fact that the CIA does not have to fight the “Evil Empire”, nor does it have a significant new mission consistent with the national interest.

Even without the changes to the Deficit Reduction plan made by the Joint Conference Committee (which called for more
Table 2
Clinton's Deficit Reduction Plan (all numbers in billions of dollars)

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<tr>
<td>Spending Cuts:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>-6.7</td>
<td>-11.7</td>
<td>-19.7</td>
<td>-37.4</td>
<td>-36.3</td>
<td>-111.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs That Don't Work or Are No Longer Needed</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
<td>-2.9</td>
<td>-3.2</td>
<td>-9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminating Subsidies</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
<td>-3.0</td>
<td>-6.9</td>
<td>-8.8</td>
<td>-6.8</td>
<td>-26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Govt. for Cost-Effectiveness</td>
<td>-5.9</td>
<td>-10.9</td>
<td>-15.2</td>
<td>-20.1</td>
<td>-23.8</td>
<td>-75.8</td>
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<td>Streamlining Govt.</td>
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<td>-1.6</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
<td>-4.2</td>
<td>-12.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Controlling Health Care Costs</td>
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<td>-6.5</td>
<td>-11.6</td>
<td>-17.2</td>
<td>-21.9</td>
<td>-60.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared Contribution</td>
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<td>-6.2</td>
<td>-8.9</td>
<td>-10.6</td>
<td>-11.7</td>
<td>-40.4</td>
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<td>Technical Adjustments</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Spending Cuts (Not including Debt Service Reduction)</td>
<td>-19.8</td>
<td>-39.8</td>
<td>-65.9</td>
<td>-99.3</td>
<td>-106.8</td>
<td>-331.7</td>
</tr>
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Source: A Vision of Change for America.
spending cuts and fewer tax increases), Clinton failed to deliver a plan for deficit reduction that matched his campaign promises. In fact, Clinton’s budget proposal would not have reduced the deficit any more than the proposal put forward by Bush in 1990. The Congressional Budget Office reported that Bush’s budget and the spending caps agreed to in the 1990 Budget Enforcement Act would have cut the deficit by $496 billion over five years (Friedmann, 1993; NYT, 1993c:A8).

Overall, Clinton’s self-proclaimed “mandate for change” and the obvious electoral support for change was not realized in fiscal policy. There is little in the federal budget which suggests any major shift in public policy. When extended out to 1997, the proposed budgets of Clinton and Bush (Budget of the United States Government, FY1994 and FY1993 respectively) are nearly identical. Clinton’s total proposed spending during this period would actually be three-tenths of a percent lower than that of Bush, while total receipts (as a percentage of GDP) would only increase by 1.5-percent over those proposed by Bush. Clinton’s fiscal policy represents “business as usual”.

Discussion

Clinton claimed a mandate for change, but his fiscal policy does not include many of his promised changes, and overall it does not represent a significant change from the policy of the Bush administration. Why the failure to carry forth the mandate? Part of the fault is Clinton’s. Part of the troubles stem from a fractured Democratic party under the misguided direction of the Democratic Leadership Council. Part of the problem lies with the Republican Party. Part of the fault lies with the influence-peddling in the U. S. Congress. Finally, and most importantly, the major reason for the continuing gridlock in Washington, D.C. is an evolving political system dominated by corporate America.

Traditionally, the Republican party has been viewed as the party of big business, while the Democratic party has been viewed as representing smaller businesses, developers, and a variety of nonbusiness “special interest” groups like organized labor. This view, however, is thoroughly outdated. Analyses of
who gives substantial money to political campaigns (Domhoff, 1990; Stern, 1988), who has the largest and best organized lobbying efforts (Lapham, 1993; Reagan, 1987), who controls major Congressional Committees (Domhoff, 1990; Greider, 1992; Sherrill, 1990), who becomes the chief staff aides and appointments of presidents (Greider, 1992; Judis, 1993a), and who controls major Federal agencies like the Federal Reserve Board (Greider, 1987) all reveal the overwhelming dominance of corporate interests in both the Republican and Democratic party. While not always united or ruled by a consensus, corporate America dictates the shape of the federal budget and the distribution of benefits (Bartlett and Steele, 1992; Domhoff, 1990; Dye, 1984; Greider, 1992). This statement does not deny the importance of class fractions among the economic elite, as there are often fierce struggles within and among these segments. The important point is that these groups are the real political players. Other political interest groups and constituents are either ignored, or placated by symbolic legislation which lacks any real power to challenge and change the very policies most Americans are concerned about.

In the United States, capitalism was reconstituted because of internal and external threats that emerged during the 1970s. International competition for market shares grew as world-wide production created the classic problem of overproduction and underconsumption. For example, Greider (1992) noted that 45 million cars could be manufactured world-wide annually, but only 35 million could be purchased. Across different economic sectors there has been a mad scramble to cut labor and other production costs (Harrison and Bluestone, 1988), and competition for market shares has grown increasingly fierce (Business Week, August 1993). The renewed trade talks with Western Europe and Japan have had less to do with "free trade" than they have with protecting domestic and international firms which are either based in the United States, or able to purchase political influence through Washington K-Street lobbying and consulting firms.

The formation of OPEC, rising energy costs, and the ensuing inflation it produced served as a wake-up call for U. S. corporate interests, who suddenly found that they were dependent on international events. The Tri-lateral Commission failed to
develop rules for orderly international competition in a world economy. As a result, the major task of governments controlled by corporate interests has been to expropriate the wages and resources of ordinary citizens both at home and abroad. In the United States, minimum wages are exceptionally low; new jobs are largely filled by temporary workers and full time jobs have been and continue to be changed to part time; white-collar employees have been and continue to be dismissed and occasionally rehired as consultants; the social wage has been and continues to be eroded; and young people have not been able to advance their careers or standards of living at the same rate or to the same degree as their parents. Corporations explain that they cannot raise prices in a weak economy, and therefore, they must cut employees and wages to maintain profits. Cutting jobs in the 1990s has become as popular as takeovers and mergers were in the 1980s. Gans (1993) notes that one of the fastest ways to increase the price of a company's stock on Wall Street is to announce the firing of workers. However, because of reduced per capita consumption, economists worry that permanent job loss will have a negative effect on an already weak economy (NYT, 1993g:A1).

Aggressive and increased corporate dominance of U.S. politics was a response to the political insurgency of the 1960s. Beginning with the civil rights movement, the political insurgency of the 1960s generated significant challenges to government policy. Citizens were mobilized around a variety of issues and demanded that government provide increased regulation and protection (Fendrich, 1993; Domhoff, 1990; McAdam, 1982). There was a substantial increase in the type and volume of federal regulations. However, as Domhoff wisely observed, "People won, but the power structure did not lose" (Domhoff, 1990:276). Corporate executives and their aides descended on Washington in their Lear jets. They bought academic talent and established Think Tanks (Phillips, 1993). They created business PACs and devised other creative ways to influence and change regulatory mandates. They put Ronald Reagan in the White House and bought enough influence in Congress to protect their interests. Clinton's fiscal policy does not represent a significant shift from these same interests.
As a whole, Clinton's presidency has failed to carry forward the "mandate for change". The Economic Stimulus package was reduced to little more than a shadow of its early incarnation, the investment proposals were cut by more than half, and the restoration of fairness and a "fair" deficit reduction has not occurred. Clinton did not adequately address the pressing economic problems that are part of the hangover from more than a decade of Reaganomics. Japan, for instance, had a much larger stimulus package to rebuild its faltering economy (NYT, 1993b:C2), and the Western European community was also working on a comparatively larger stimulus package. Liberal outsiders recognized that Clinton's stimulus package was inadequate for the country's needs. Jesse Jackson (1993) warned about the deepening job crisis and Clinton's mania for budget cuts. Felix Rohatyn argued in favor of a $25 billion a year, 10 year public works program to provide an adequate stimulus to the economy (Rowen, 1993:5).

What sounded good in Clinton's campaign, rather than being crystallized into sound and effective economic policy, will remain a distant dream. His major changes and promises are projected to be implemented only in the distant future, and the tax proposals will hardly soak the rich. Over the next five years they will recover only $241 billion, or 23-percent of the revenues lost during the first five years of the Reagan Administration. In fact, by applying the percent change in the Consumer Price Index to Reagan's $749 billion cut every year from 1984 to 1997, it shows that it would take an amazing $1.1 trillion in tax increases during Clinton's first term to replace those lost revenues. Although conservatives howled about the largest tax increase in U.S. history, Clinton's proposed tax increases were really quite modest compared to the outrageous tax cuts of Reaganomics. His tax package essentially leaves Reagan's tax breaks for the wealthy and corporations in place. As a Democrat, Clinton is the strongest probusiness president in this century and his first budget is "worthy" of former president Bush.

Because of the lack of any major fiscal policy shifts, we are likely to witness continued economic stagnation. The major problems of unemployment and the replacement of full time year-round workers with permanent, temporary workers...
Budget Analysis

will lead to continued stagnation and structural unemployment. Continued Defense cuts without retooling industries and jobs will contribute to a sluggish economy. The harmful effects of the NAFTA treaty on U.S. manufacturing jobs will surface long before any conceivable gains. As we reported above there is no stimulus package. Moreover, Clinton's modest investment proposals were severely reduced and underfunded. Welfare recipients, particularly women and children, are going to be worse off as they are removed from the welfare rolls and pushed in the so-called "no man's land" of part time, minimum wage jobs with no benefits.

Because of a sluggish economy, tax revenues will fall short of projections. The federal deficit is not likely to be reduced by the margins expected without adequate revenues. More spending cuts will be required to maintain the same level of deficit reduction, and if the past is any indication, social programs and tax breaks for the working classes and the poor will be cut to make up for the difference. In general, spending cuts are more harmful to the economy than tax increases. The reason for this, Paul Samuelson argues, is that spending cuts "go directly to the jugular of the current employment, production and re-spending stream" (Hilzenrath, 1993:8A). Allen Sinai, a managing director for Lehman Brothers, notes that his forecasts assume that over a two-year period a spending cut of $1 shrinks the economy by $1.10; while a tax increase of $1 shrinks the economy by only 70 cents (Hilzenrath, 1993).

Informed voters are likely to remember Clinton as the Neville Chamberlain of U.S. domestic policy. Despite being in tune with American voters and offering campaign promises with economic substance, Clinton can be considered the great appeaser. The actions of Clinton and Congress in 1993 do not signal a significant attempt to put the country on a sound economic footing. In contrast to Roosevelt's or Johnson's initiatives early in their administrations, Clinton's success was extremely limited. Indeed, in the course of this research we may have found Clinton's political epitaph:

No wonder Americans hate politics when, year in and year out, they hear politicians make promises that won't come true because
they don't even mean them—campaign fantasies that win elections but don't get nations moving again.

—Bill Clinton in a campaign speech to the Detroit Economics Club, August 21, 1992

References


Budget Analysis


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State Welfare Reforms: Typology and Analysis

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Recent state initiatives to change the AFDC program are usually described as a unified welfare reform movement with the single goal of decreasing welfare usage. However, analysis of state waiver applications submitted to HHS finds no single purpose in the reforms. Additionally, the net effect of the state experiments would be to increase usage by expanding eligibility.

Welfare reform, or, more accurately welfare restructuring, is at the forefront of policy and political debate. Driven by the twin fiscal pressures of recession and rising human services costs, governors, state legislators and citizen commissions throughout the country are debating public assistance purpose and method. The result is a creative array of modifications to the federal/state public assistance program Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

Wisconsin's Learnfare was an early experiment which received much media attention. Begun in 1988 Learnfare attempts to reduce truancy and drop-out rates by tying school attendance to the amount of the AFDC grant. From the beginning it was regarded as punitive, because its premise was to sanction families by reducing an already meager grant if their teenage children did not regularly attend school. When considered within the context of the unprecedented national reduction in the value of AFDC benefits and the politicization of welfare, it is not surprising that all state welfare reform activity became characterized as similarly punitive and anti-recipient. By early 1992 the collectivity of state welfare initiatives was described as a single movement of the "new paternalism" using "carrots and sticks" to change the behavior of recipients enforcing the "new social contract" with the goals of saving money and decreasing usage of welfare (U.S. Senate).
Since AFDC is a federal/state program, all states must operate their AFDC programs consistent with federal law and regulation. To receive permission to alter their AFDC programs at variance with federal standards, the state applies to the Secretary of Health and Human Services for a waiver to conduct an experiment, pilot, or demonstration project. Under section 1115(a) of the Social Security Act, the Secretary is authorized to waive federal AFDC requirements to run experiments when the projects are "likely to assist in promoting the objectives of" the AFDC program. In the past three years states have been active in requesting and receiving waivers. HHS reports approximately 30 waiver-based demonstration projects in effect in 19 states in 1991. In 1992 HHS received applications for 35 new 1115 Projects from 20 different states (Center, 1993b).

A typological analysis of these applications shows sufficient variability in state welfare reform activities to conclude that it is inappropriate to describe them as a movement with a single focus. The projects requesting a 1115 waiver include a wide variety of program elements, which are not uniformly punitive, paternalistic, or thrifty. On the contrary, the net effect of the state initiatives would be to increase the costs of and participation in the AFDC program.

Federal AFDC Eligibility Requirements

The majority of the 1115 Projects seek exemption from a federal status, financial or eligibility requirement.

Status Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for AFDC under federal law an individual must be a U.S. citizen or a legal alien and not receiving SSI. Further, to qualify for the status as a dependent child, the child must be: (a) below age 18, (b) living with a caretaker relative who is within a fixed degree of kinship, and (c) deprived of parental support or care by the death, continued absence or incapacity of either or both parents, or by the unemployment of the principal earner parent. For a family to be eligible under the unemployed parent provision, the principal earner must meet three criteria of unemployment. The principal earner must
be working less than 100 hours a month, have a recent work history, and have been unemployed for at least 30 days prior to application.

Financial Eligibility Requirements

After meeting the status requirements, since AFDC is a means-tested program, a family must meet resource and income limits. Federal law sets a resource limit of $1,000. States set their own need standard and the family cannot qualify for aid unless its income is below the state standard. Federal law then restricts eligibility to AFDC units whose gross income is less than 185% of that need standard. The federal and state income and resources limits are applied to the family’s countable income and resources, meaning income and resources after exemptions and disregards. Federal law determines what is to be included as countable income, for example the $50 monthly limit on child support which may be passed directly to the custodial parent and the amount of earned income that can disregarded and the duration of that disregard (Center, 1993a). In addition, federal law states which people and their consequent income and resources must, must not, or may be considered as part of the AFDC unit. Even if not part of the AFDC unit, the income and/or resources of certain designated individuals must be considered, because their income is "deemed" available to recipient, for example, stepparents' income.

Conduct Eligibility Requirements

Federal law currently requires three behaviors of recipients: furnishing social security numbers; participation in the federal work program Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS); and cooperation with child support collection activities. Categories of persons federally exempt from the JOBS requirements are persons under 19 if they are in school, caretakers with children under three years of age, and individuals too ill or incapacitated to participate, over age 59, needed in the home to care for an incapacitated or ill household member, too remote from the work program site, more than three months pregnant, or already working more than 30 hours a week.
States have applied for waivers from all three types of federal eligibility requirements—status, financial and conduct. The most significant status changes are requests to redefine absence and unemployment as conditions of deprivation. Important modifications of financial requirements include altering the formulas for disregards and exemptions to income, increasing the resource limit, and redefining which persons' incomes must be "deemed" available to the family. Proposals to add conduct requirements such as Learnfare which requires school attendance, have received the most notoriety and are largely responsible for the conceptualization of the state welfare reform activities as a unified movement to control recipient behavior. However, they are potentially the least significant of the state welfare experiments.

Typology of "Fares"

It has become commonplace to use the substitute for welfare formulation, such as learnfare, workfare and wedfare to describe different welfare reform strategies. Presumably this rhetorical device highlights the difference between present public assistance programs which are viewed negatively and the new proposal, which will hopefully be received positively because, no matter what it is, it isn't welfare. Following is a typological analysis of the elements of state programs submitted in 1992 for federal waiver according to their purpose using the welfare device.

Activityfare

The purpose of activityfare is to insure that all recipients, even if exempt from federal JOBS and educational requirements, participate in some activity that will improve their or their childrens' life chances. For example, HHS has authorized Utah under its Single Parent Employment Demonstration to require participation in activities such as family counseling, drug and alcohol programs, weight reduction, life skills classes, etc. which would prepare recipients for employment.

An important corollary developing with activityfare is the concept of an individualized plan for families, which ranges from a casework planning tool to a contract establishing the
conditions for receiving assistance. A central element of the Iowa Family Investment Program is the mandatory Family Investment Agreement (FIA) which outlines what the family must do to achieve self-sufficiency and the time-line. Family participation via a FIA would be a condition of receiving assistance.

**Assetfare**

Assetfare programs establish resource limits over the federal $1000 to allow families to accumulate assets which would facilitate their eventual independence from AFDC, such as savings for education, security deposit on a good apartment, or a reliable vehicle for employment. Additionally, assetfare proposals which would effect applicants as well as recipients would could keep families from being forced to sell an important asset, such as a vehicle, in order to qualify for a needed short-term income support. The principles underlying assetfare are that public assistance recipients should not be penalized for saving and that eventual self-sufficiency requires the accumulation of assets. Missouri's 21st Century Communities Demonstration Project was approved with a $10,000 resource limit.

**Babyfare**

To eliminate subsequent births to individuals already receiving AFDC, two types of strategies are used—capping the size of the grant so that it does not reflect the increased need generated by the birth of a baby and encouraging the use of family planning. In the Wisconsin Parental and Family Responsibility Demonstration Project families would receive only one-half the payment increase for the birth of a baby and no increase for subsequent births. In the Arkansas Reduction in AFDC Birth Rates Project and the New Jersey Family Development Program, where this is known as denial of aid for afterborn children, there would be no increase in grant size for the newborn. Many state programs pay bonuses for voluntary attendance at family planning and effects of parenthood classes.

**Benefare**

To ease further the transition to unsubsidized employment some states are experimenting with extending the transition
support services, such as health and/or child care benefits, beyond the 12 months required by the Family Support Act. The Illinois Homeless Families Stabilization Project, for example, allows extension of medical and child care benefits to families terminated from AFDC for employment reasons for up to 24 months.

*Diversionfare*

This strategy attempts to divert persons from AFDC by providing an emergency assistance grant if the one-time grant will prevent the need for on-going AFDC support. The Utah Single Parent Employment Demonstration provides job-ready applicants who appear AFDC eligible with a diversion payment in lieu of accepting their application.

*Earnfare*

One of the most significant categories of reforms are those state programs which would permit families to keep more money from sources other than AFDC without losing their eligibility or having their grants reduced so a disincentive for employment is created. The rationale for earnfare is to increase the financial payoff for employment. The primary mechanism is to expand the exclusions and disregards to countable income by experimenting with different formulas for earned income disregards. California is extending the $30 and one-third disregard indefinitely. Utah is instituting a permanent $100 plus 45% of gross earnings disregard, Michigan has been approved to replace the $30 and one-third with a continuous disregard of $200 plus 20% of the remainder of earnings. Iowa's Family Investment Program calls for a permanent disregard of 50% of earned income.

Another earnfare strategy is to exclude earnings. In To Strengthen Michigan's Families Demonstration Project, the earnings of dependent children are excluded from calculations of family income. In the South Carolina Private/For Profit Work Experience Project earnings from on-the-job-training stipends and other employment preparation activities are excluded.

Earnfare is also an important rationale behind the Vermont proposal to send the entire child support payment directly to the
family rather than indirectly through the AFDC grant. Vermont policy makers assume it would provide a work incentive for both parents. The child support obligated parent and the custodial parent could see the possibilities of receiving a combination of earned income and child support payments sufficient to make the family independent of AFDC.

The 100-hour rule presently required by the federal definition of unemployment creates a disincentive for full-time employment for several categories of workers possibly including workers with low earnings potential, low skill levels, minimum work experience, and large families. Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Vermont, and California have requested waivers from the 100-hour rule as earnfare so that a two-parent family would not be terminated from welfare if the principal earner works full-time or more than 100 hours/month.

A fifth category of earnfare proposal changes the federally required retrospective budgeting. The current retrospective budgeting system creates a deterrent to employment, because it may take up to three months for grant adjustment to fully reflect changes in earnings. Generally under retrospective budgeting a grant for a month is based on income received two months earlier. Thus when a recipient family begins employment the grant is not reduced to reflect the earnings until the second month. When earnings cease, the grant is not increased until the second month following the loss of earnings. The Illinois Income Budgeting Project changes AFDC retrospective budgeting rules to avoid the delay that retrospective budgeting causes in adjusting the grant when employment begins and ends (Center, 1993b).

**Edfare**

These popular programs are intended to increase the school attendance of children or child caretakers. Two sanction strategies for non-attendance are a reduction in the family’s cash benefit by a fixed amount (in Maryland’s Primary Prevention Initiative the amount is $25/month/child) and elimination of the noncomplying individual when determining eligibility and payment (Oklahoma Learnfare Program). Reward strategies are also employed. For example, Virginia’s Incentives to Advance
Learning would reward families of middle school children who maintain satisfactory attendance by providing the family with benefits at 100% of need instead of 90% which is the current payment standard statewide. The child is also directly rewarded with small in-kind bonuses such as passes to movies and sports events. The Ohio Learning, Earning and Parenting program combines the sanction and reward approach by reducing the grant $62 if the required person fails to attend school and supplementing it $62 when they do. A small subset of edfare programs is concerned not only with attendance, but with the quality of learning as measured by academic performance. Proposals such as those which would give high school seniors $200 upon graduation, provide honor roll high school students a $10/month bonus, and exempt the income of students who are employed as tutors, may perhaps correctly be described as learnfare, not just edfare.

**Fatherfare**

The purpose of fatherfare is to involve non-custodial parents, primarily fathers, divorced and never married, in child-rearing and preparation for employment. Two types of projects have been proposed. Under the Illinois Paternal Involvement Project the training, education, and employment services of the JOBS program would be extended to non-recipient fathers aged 18–35 who are receiving Food Stamps and whose children receive AFDC. This would open the JOBS services to fathers.

Another approach to father involvement is the proposal to send the complete child support payment to the family directly, not through the grant. The Vermont Family Independence Project in its application for waiver from the $50/month child support pass through limit, notes that under the present system, the noncustodial parent does not see that their efforts make a difference in the family's well-being and the children do not recognize the contribution of their absent parent to their welfare. The change, not using the child support payment over $50 to offset the AFDC payment, should "... improve the relationship between noncustodial parents and their children." (Vermont, p. IV–22).
Magnetfare

In order to discourage in-migration, some states are proposing restricting the benefits of newcomers to the state by limiting payments to recent migrants to the benefit level paid in the state they came from, if that state’s benefit is lower, for a period of time such as six months or one year. Wyoming, California, Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa have requested to create these two-tiered payment levels on the theory that their relatively generous AFDC benefits act as magnets attracting welfare dependent migrants to them. The portion of the California Assistance Payments Demonstration Project proposal which would have restricted benefits of non-residents was ruled unconstitutional on Jan. 28, 1993 by a federal judge for a U.S. District Court on the grounds that it violates the constitutional right to freedom to travel. That decision is being appealed by California.

Parentfare

Most states actively experimenting with their AFDC programs are attempting to make caretaker parents perform certain parenting behaviors. Parentfare includes insuring that children attend school and receive appropriate health care and that parents otherwise contribute to the financial and emotional support of their children. Examples of approaches to parentfare are to exclude the needs of an non-immunized child from the grant for failure to provide primary health care, as in the Georgia Preschool Immunization Project; bonuses for providing primary health care to children; requiring co-payment for JOBS provided child care (the Massachusetts Child Care Co-Payment Project would require participants to pay $2/week/child); bonuses for attending parenting education classes; bonuses or grant reductions related to school attendance for children; and allowing families to exceed the $50 federally allowed child support limit.

Timefare

The purpose of timefare proposals, also known as time-limited welfare, is to establish a limit to the length of time a recipient can receive AFDC, regardless of other factors of eligibility. This is analogous to President Clinton’s proposal for a two-year limit to welfare. An example is the Vermont Family
Independence Project which would limit single parent AFDC households to 30 months of benefits and AFDC-UP households to 15 months of benefits. At the end of the specified period families would receive benefits only in exchange for unsubsidized employment or community service.

A variation on the use of time or duration of receipt to influence welfare receipt is to establish a two-tier benefit system where lower payments come into effect after a period of time, regardless of whether there is a change in the family’s need. It is difficult to tell if this is timefare or merely a mechanism for benefit reduction for everyone. It was proposed in the California Welfare Reform Demonstration Project referendum which was defeated by Californians in November 1992.

Welfare

Programs whose purpose is to encourage marriage or at least not discourage it are welfare programs. The most significant welfare approaches eliminate disincentives to marriage for persons receiving AFDC and removes the incentive for two parent families not receiving AFDC to separate so they can qualify. Examples of welfare strategies to eliminate disincentives to remarriage are programs which exclude from the calculation of family income the income of a stepparent thus allowing a family to retain eligibility for AFDC. In the New Jersey Family Development Program, if an AFDC parent marries a person who is not the children’s parent, the children will remain eligible for AFDC if total annual household income does not exceed 150% of the poverty level. The stepparent’s earnings will not be counted in determining the children’s benefit amount. Technically this eliminates the federal stepparent income deeming policy. The Iowa Family Investment Program includes a welfare element giving stepparents the same expanded work deductions proposed for parents.

Waiving the work history rule in the Unemployed Parent program are welfare proposals which eliminate the pressure to separate in families where the parents are married to each other, residing in the same home, but where the principal earner does not have sufficient work experience to qualify as unemployed.
Conclusion

Even though the rhetoric of state welfare reform is of satisfying taxpayers who are fed-up with welfare by changing recipients forcing them to act responsibly in exchange for their benefits, analysis of the state experiment applications shows that their main effect would be to expand AFDC usage. When barriers to self-sufficiency are removed, they also remove barriers to eligibility. The number of eligible persons would be significantly increased by assetfare, wedfare and earnfare experiments which eliminate the deeming of stepparent income, eliminate the 100 hour and previous work history rules establish higher disregards of earned income, and permit the accumulation of assets without losing eligibility.

Expenditures for services such as Medicaid, JOBS training and employment, the creation of new counseling services and transitional health, child care and transportation benefits would be increased by activityfare, benefare, and fatherfare because more people would be required to participate in or be given access to the services, new services are created and duration of services would be extended.

Even those proposed elements that look as though they would reduce costs and eligibility—timefare, babyfare, and magnetfare—have limited cost reduction possibilities. Most timefare proposals, for example, specify that after the time limit has expires, the family receives the benefit in exchange for workfare or community service, not that they cease receiving all financial support. Wisconsin is an exception. In Wisconsin the durational limit is absolute. Magnetfare and babyfare, if they are successful in preventing in-migration and afterbirths, will not reduce costs. At most they would reduce the growth in expenditures.

Review of the diverse program elements ranging from activityfare to wedfare for which the states requested federal waivers, suggests there is no uniform state welfare reform movement. The goals, strategies, and effects of the diverse 1115 programs show that even though the rhetoric of welfare reform is consistently harsh and exclusive, program purposes and consequences differ considerably.
References


New Opportunities, New Responsibilities: Welfare Reform in Wyoming

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Early experiments with welfare-to-work programs and other welfare reform initiatives had disappointing results, but successful state trial programs since the Family Support Act of 1988 are changing the prevailing wisdom. With evidence that reform can enhance self-sufficiency, many states are embarking on a redefinition of public assistance. Wyoming, a conservative frontier state, is implementing a welfare reform plan that incorporates components shown to be successful elsewhere. In addition to enhanced child support enforcement and workfare, Wyoming welfare reform stresses job preparation, education, and training up to the university level. Degree programs utilize the state’s video network and are adapted to the rural context.

In late 1992, Governor Mike Sullivan proposed an experiment in welfare reform for the State of Wyoming. Noting the rapid rise in the state AFDC caseload, erosion of public support for traditional welfare programs, and limited state revenues, he advanced a reform strategy that is designed to promote self-sufficiency, stem caseload growth, and reduce welfare dependency. The Governor’s proposal, subsequently enacted as law in early 1993, reflects an accelerating national trend by state governments to redefine the welfare contract by changing its emphasis from public assistance to self-sufficiency. This one state’s reform initiative is but the latest reflection of a profound ongoing change in welfare policy in the United States.
The Welfare Reform Debate

P. T. Bauer contends that, "... in politics, myth is all" (1981, p. 1). No set of social policies in America has generated as much debate as welfare reform; much of it has been based on myth and ideology. Only recently has it been possible to pierce the ideological haze. Two factors account for the change. First is the key provision of the Family Support Act of 1988 which allows for state waivers to federal program requirements permitting state governments to experiment with AFDC programs. This bill, which received broad bi-partisan support, has resulted in dozens of state waivers and experiments which have completely altered the traditional incentive structure of public assistance and changed the terms of the welfare reform debate. Many such experiments have incorporated reciprocal contracts between clients and agencies such as workfare, training, and community service.

A second factor making it easier to go beyond the ideological level in the welfare reform debate is the proliferation of scientific studies which objectively evaluate reform programs. Now it has become possible for state governments to learn from each other which program designs are most effective in pursuing a goal which constituents from all sides of the ideological debate seem to agree is a reasonable aim of social welfare programs: the promotion of client self-sufficiency.

The Policy Context

Although there is widespread agreement about the ends of public assistance, there has been little consensus about the means. At one extreme are those who have contended that public assistance is a "right" of citizenship (Marshall, 1981), that the role of social workers and economic assistance workers is to assert that it is government's responsibility to assure a minimum standard of living for its citizens (Nichols-Casebolt & McClure, 1989), and that welfare programs, especially workfare, are designed for failure in order to support capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy (Miller, 1989). Most from this school of thought see welfare as an entitlement which should be much better funded and should involve no reciprocal obligation by the recipients (DiNitto, 1993). It is also argued by
proponents of this approach that welfare reform, especially workfare, is fraught with problems and bound to fail because it does not address the true basis of poverty (Segal, 1989; Abramowitz, 1988).

Those at the opposite end of the ideological continuum assert that public assistance, rather than providing for the poor, has actually increased poverty (Mead, 1986) and that the poor are so because of a set of social pathologies including an absent work ethic, lack of aspiration, single parenthood, drugs, and crime (Rector, 1992). Within this school of thought are those who advocate for a complete dissolution of the welfare state (Murray, 1984) and others who think that public assistance should be a large scale behavior modification program to correct “behavioral poverty” (Rector, 1992).

In the decades of the 1960’s and 1970’s, social policy tended to be closer to the first pole than the latter. During the War on Poverty period in particular, programs were designed under the assumption that the poor were so due to circumstances beyond their own control. Liberal poverty policy sought to address the structural basis of indigence through community development programs (e.g. Small Business Administration, Office on Economic Opportunity), while ameliorating family poverty with unconditional grants-in-aid. The conservative revolution of the 1980’s reversed the trend and social policy approximated the views of the latter pole by emphasizing traditional values of reciprocity, productivity, work, and family (Karger & Stoesz, 1990). It was asserted that government welfare programs acted as a disincentive to both work and family cohesion (Butler & Kondratas, 1987). Thus, benefit levels were rolled back and, although total expenditures on public assistance continued to expand, the rate of growth of federal welfare expenditures was scaled down. Some traditionally-federal responsibilities were transferred to state governments and selected programs were eliminated altogether (Romig, 1991).

By the end of the 1980’s, a new bi-partisan consensus on welfare emerged in the center and the traditional gulf between liberals and conservatives on social policy was reconceptualized. This was partly a result of the advent of neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism—pragmatically-oriented political philosophies that shunned traditional party ideology. During President
Bush’s administration, a group of progressive conservatives, including HUD Secretary Jack Kemp and Education Secretary Lamar Alexander, sought to redefine Republican social policy under the rubric of the New Paradigm group (Galston, 1991). Although tenets of traditional conservatism were present (such as a preference for small government and a resistance to taxes), other new elements of the approach included the view that government should empower citizens, that the federal government has a central role in poverty policy, that bureaucracies should be decentralized, and that many government programs (such as public housing) should be privatized.

At the same time, a new wing of the Democratic party was emerging which stressed individual responsibility, reciprocity, civic duties and obligations, free market enterprise, social choice, and national service (Marshall, 1992). Organized in the early 80’s under the Democratic Leadership Council, of which then Governor Clinton was a founding member, the group sought to reinvigorate the political center and to forge policy not on the ideological orthodoxies of the past, but on a pragmatic pursuit of policies that work. The so-called “New Democrat” approach rejects big government in favor of choice, competition, reciprocity and market incentives. A view that became widely popular during the past decade is that “... the kind of governments that developed during the industrial era, with their sluggish, centralized bureaucracies, their preoccupation with rules and regulations and their hierarchical chains of command no longer work very well (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; pp. 11-12).

The trend of many traditional liberals to move to the center was also strengthened by events in Europe. The rapid dismantling of the formerly socialist nations of the Warsaw Pact lent credence to those who were contending that state socialist ideologies were rapidly becoming extinct. A view of benevolent states acting in the public interest came to be seen as naive and anachronistic in countries from Europe to Latin America (Lusk, 1992). In addition, the “model” welfare states of Britain and Sweden began to reduce benefits, privatize services, and redefine the notion of unconditional social entitlements as a right of citizenship (Barrett, 1993; Marklund, 1992).
Indicative of a new American consensus on welfare was a June 1993 speech by Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala. In a significant departure from previous Democratic administrations, she said, "I don’t think we should subsidize poor mothers who stay out of the workforce when working class mothers are going into the workforce" (Shalala, 1993). Her view reflects that of a vigorous new administration that is willing to look at a host of new ideas for a system that all sides agree has failed. Among the ideas floated by the Clinton administration is a controversial “Two Years and Out” regulation that would stop benefits for recipients who do not find work within two years (Pianin, 1994). A second proposal drawing fire is a “Minor Parents Rule” which would require teenage parents to live with a responsible adult in order to receive benefits (NASW, 1994).

The political context of the past decade has made reaching and definitive welfare reform in the United States possible. Virtually every president since John Kennedy advocated for a major overhaul of the welfare system and none was successful in altering the incentive structure nor stemming the growth of the client caseload (See Figure 1). But by 1988, a consensus had emerged between the parties on the failures of the welfare state, thereby making the passage of the Family Support Act possible.

State Experiments in Welfare Reform

Given the new latitude provided under the Family Support Act to conduct large scale experiments in the administration of AFDC programs, many states embarked on initiatives that changed the terms of the contract in family assistance from entitlement to exchange. Wyoming’s current welfare reform measure represents the latest initiative in this national trend. State governments were required by federal statute to establish Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) programs by October 1990 and all had such programs in place by that time (Clinton & Castle, 1991). JOBS, a limited welfare-to-work program, requires states to provide clients with basic education, job training, job search skills, as well as job development and placement. All
non-exempt AFDC recipients are required to participate in employment and training activities when child care services are available. Although the JOBS program does not include funding for large scale job creation through economic development, it has at least had the effect of putting workfare back into the mainstream of welfare policy.

Within this legislative framework, several states have experimented on a large scale with workfare and, in contrast with the pessimism of social work academics who had vigorously asserted that workfare was bound to fail (cf. Abramowitz, 1988; Segal, 1989; Sanger, 1990), many of the experiments showed promising results.

Early reviews of workfare evaluations had shown that a major obstacle to the success of welfare-to-work programs was access to child care (Dickinson, 1986); this obstacle was
addressed in the Family Support Act which requires that states guarantee participants with adequate and appropriate child care (Segal, 1989). Programs such as Work Incentive (WIN) had also been criticized as "make work" programs that did not generate the higher paying positions needed for long term success. Although some experiments, such as the California Work Experience Program (CWEP), showed modest improvements in employment and income, the workfare efforts of the 1970’s were generally disappointing.

Under the provisions of the Family Support Act, however, state experiments began to succeed more often than fail. In the most comprehensive review of such workfare programs yet published, Gueron and Pauly (1991), noted that, "Almost all of the welfare-to-work programs studied led to earnings gains. This was true for both low and high cost programs and services, and for broad coverage and selective voluntary programs" (p. 26). Gueron and Pauly’s work for the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MRDC) involved a five year national review of dozens of welfare-to-work programs. Among their more important results was the finding that improvements in earnings had a lasting impact of at least three years. Programs which had a universal mandatory job search component more consistently increased earnings and employment rates because they reached more people and acted as a deterrent to remaining on welfare. These results did not surprise economic assistance workers and others who work directly with AFDC families. Despite myths to the contrary, AFDC recipients prefer work over welfare and actively seek to be involved in the labor force when the obstacles of child care and health care can be overcome (Kerlin, 1993).

A cost savings to government budgets was also observed. While welfare-to-work programs initially cost more than conventional public assistance programs, these investments were usually "...offset by savings in expenditures and tax increases" (p. 33). The San Diego Saturation Work Initiative Model (SWIM) was particularly effective in this regard. Every dollar invested yielded a three dollar return (Gueron & Pauly, 1991). The MRDC research was corroborated by Moffitt (1991), who found that the total earnings of workfare participants often increased
significantly. What is remarkable about the positive findings is that they occurred during a national recession which may well have masked even more profound employment effects.

Emboldened by the positive findings of early state experiments and by the willingness of the Clinton Administration to condone welfare reform initiatives, several states have recently enacted aggressive experiments toward self-sufficiency. Over a dozen states, including California, now allow welfare recipients to retain more earned income while remaining on welfare as an incentive to "bridge" over into the labor market. Nine states have increased payments assistance to households with two parents and four states have enacted rules to reduce or eliminate welfare after two years (Deparle, 1994). Clearly the rules of the game have changed!

The Wyoming Context

Wyoming, like the rest of the union, has experienced rapidly growing AFDC caseloads (see Figure 2) and increasing budgetary allocations for public assistance. Public support for welfare programs as traditionally defined is minimal. Wyoming has a strong cultural tradition of self-reliance and rugged western individualism that stands in stark, if not schizophrenic, contrast to the harsh economic realities of the state. Few have done well in the state over recent years and the national recession has been felt even more acutely in Wyoming.

While the state enjoyed a period of strong economic growth during the seventies, the past decade has been one of marked economic decline. Total employment dropped steadily during the period and state per capita income growth fell below national per capita income growth every year during the past ten (Department of Administration & Information, 1992; p. 22). Many of the state's youth have been compelled to migrate out-of-state for employment; overall, the state population fell from 469,557 in 1980 to 453,588 in 1990 (Department of Administration & Information, 1992).

The state's economic situation is most commonly linked to the decline in production of minerals, petroleum, and natural gas as well as an unstable market for agricultural products. State
revenues are tied directly to the well being of these industries. Wyoming draws the largest portion of its revenue from mineral severance taxes as there is no income tax and property and sales taxes are very low. Severance tax revenues and total tax revenues have also decreased over the decade. One effect of this protracted period of economic decline is that the poor of Wyoming have had access to a very weak labor market. In addition, without a diverse revenue portfolio, Wyoming state-supported programs face continuing pressure from elected officials to reduce costs and improve efficiencies. Public welfare is no exception.

Wyoming Welfare Reform

In this pressing environment, the Family Support Act has provided an opportunity for the state to experiment with welfare reform. Thus, in December 1992, Governor Sullivan
proposed a welfare reform package that was enacted into law by the legislature in early 1993. The Governor's rationale was the limited revenue base to support state programs, erosion of public support for welfare, dependency of recipients, and legislative initiatives to limit benefit levels (Office of the Governor, 1992). The bill required federal waivers which were obtained shortly after the Governor hand-delivered the measure to President Clinton in May 1993.

Key elements of the Wyoming welfare reform package include a trial workfare program. In three pilot counties (Natrona, Campbell, Carbon), able-bodied AFDC recipients are required to work or perform community service. Recipients can be exempted from this requirement if they are enrolled in an approved education or training activity that involves at least forty hours per week. The Department of Family Services (DFS) collaborates with the Department of Employment (DOE) in providing employment-related services to assist AFDC clients obtain work. To reinforce working clients, the allowable resource limit was raised from $1000 to $2500 and clients are provided with work essentials such as clothing, tools, transportation, and most importantly, child care. DFS and DOE staff are to provide counseling and support to those clients entering or designated to enter the work force. In addition, employers are encouraged to provide job coaching to help the recipient entering the workforce or adjusting to a new job. Recipients who cannot find employment after a reasonable period are referred to community service work by the Employment Service.

The education and training option is provided for those who lack the job skills to compete in the labor market. A case manager and the client jointly develop an individualized self-sufficiency plan with the goal of employment and the means to that end are designated. Training and education options go well beyond the minimal requirements of the federally-mandated JOBS program and include: job search and readiness training, remedial education, adult education, vocational education, and higher education. What distinguishes the Wyoming training component from the national norm is its inclusion of vocational and university degree training as an option. Clients may be trained in one vocational preparation or college degree program only.
The high fiscal impact of the training component is being offset by long term reductions in case rolls and reductions in housing subsidies as clients earn more in the job market. In addition, the Wyoming legislature established the AFDC payment standard at 87.5% of the standard of need (SON)—commonly referred to as a ratable reduction of the SON.

Another ingredient of the Wyoming reform effort is assisting recipients become self-sufficient by strengthening child support enforcement. The Wyoming position is that effective collection of child support is a cornerstone of welfare reform (Office of the Governor, 1992). Early reports on the Clinton Administration’s welfare reform proposal also stress collecting support from absent parents. The Administration, noting that national AFDC caseloads in 1993 have reached a total of 5 million families, asserts that strict enforcement of child support will be key to federal welfare reform (Clinton Team, 1993). The Wyoming plan includes voluntary income withholding when possible supplemented by court-ordered mandatory deductions when it is not. District courts may now order able-bodied, unemployed absent parents of children on AFDC who are unable to fulfill a court-ordered child support obligation and who reside within the state to participate in the state’s education, employment, and training program for AFDC recipients. Under the JOBS program, or Wyoming Opportunities for Work (WOW), as the JOBS program is known in Wyoming, unemployed absent parents receive the same assistance in job search, work readiness, employment training, and education as AFDC clients. This sends not only the message that the state is serious about enforcing parental responsibility, but also that the state is willing to provide the mechanisms and support for placing both parents in the labor force. Other child support legislation enacted by the welfare reform effort include:

- changing child support guidelines to presumptive child support amounts;
- establishing paternity by voluntary acknowledgement or by court action;
- counting the income of both parents in setting the amount of child support;
voluntary income withholding for child support payments can be withdrawn only when all arrearages are paid, and;

- limiting conditions for petitioning a stay of an income withholding order.

Because it is important that communities be stakeholders in the success of the poor, the Wyoming reform establishes task forces in each of the three workfare pilot counties to coordinate activities leading to the employment of AFDC recipients. Appointed by mayors and county commissioners, each task force includes representatives from the private sector and delegates from four state departments: Family Services, Education, Employment, and Health. Such task forces sensitize community leaders to AFDC clients' needs and abilities and remove roadblocks to self-sufficiency. Local leaders are in a better position to know their communities and promote economic development.

Recognizing that the public assistance system itself is in need of reform, the Wyoming plan has undertaken to significantly reduce paperwork, bureaucratic roadblocks, and AFDC monthly reporting requirements. Osborne and Gaebler (1992), have stressed results-oriented rather than process-oriented government. While organizations in the private sector survive by performance and efficiency measures, it is often the reverse with public agencies. The traditional presumption of process-oriented bureaucratic models of government has been that greater caseloads require additional funding; poorer schools need more resources, and dangerous neighborhoods lack sufficient police officers. More public agencies are turning this logic upside down by rewarding success and the Wyoming reform reflects this trend.

To date, the reform has shown promising results. In the first six months of the initiative, total caseload dropped by over 7% statewide even though the trial was limited to three counties. Clients moved into the workforce at an unprecedented rate and the earned income of household heads rose. Child support collections accelerated with an estimated savings to the state of $5–6 million in the first biennium.
In sum, Wyoming welfare reform stresses: independence through employment; investment in education, college, training, and job skills for work; strengthening families through child support; extending the penalty for fraud; and increasing the resource limit for working AFDC recipients.

Looking Forward

As the least densely populated and most rural state in America, Wyoming faces special challenges in adapting welfare reform to its unique, frontier context. Welfare-to-work programs are designed with the assumption of a stable and diverse labor market, a level or growing economy, sufficient density of population and industry to support a varied work force, and an AFDC caseload that provides an economy of scale for implementing major program changes and reform (Gueron & Pauly, 1991; Whitener, 1991; Harper & Greenlee, 1991). Some of these conditions are not present in Wyoming's rural counties.

Although about 295 thousand of Wyoming's 454 thousand residents live in "urban" areas of 2,500 or more (65%), most of these reside in one of four metropolitan areas: Casper, Cheyenne, Laramie, and Jackson. Only one Wyoming "city" (Cheyenne) exceeds a population of 50,000 and it does so by only eight people! Fully 35% of Wyomingites live in rural areas—many in isolated frontier communities with populations of less than 100 residents.

Whitener (1991) has observed that rural areas must contend with three complicating factors in making welfare reform successful: 1) limited employment opportunities, 2) lower than average educational characteristics of rural populations, and 3) the inadequacy of the local social service delivery system. He notes that rural environments are characterized by high unemployment, limited job opportunities, and isolated rural conditions which may serve as a disincentive for business growth. He also observes that rural Americans have lower educational and vocational achievement, higher rates of illiteracy, and greater proportions of the particularly disadvantaged. Finally, he comments that economic assistance and social services delivery systems and infrastructure are often minimal in isolated rural settings.
All of these factors complicating welfare reform in rural areas will ultimately have to be confronted in Wyoming if the state's plan is to be successful over the long term. Yet the situation is not as grim as might be anticipated. With respect to education and training opportunities, Wyoming is well ahead of other rural regions, such as Appalachia, where welfare reform has been hampered by the inaccessibility of schools and colleges (Harper & Greenlee, 1991). Wyoming has a major university with campuses in two cities as well as seven community colleges which are evenly distributed geographically. Educational programs are broadcast statewide via a state-owned video teleconferencing network. Part of the uniqueness of the Wyoming reform measure is that the state is well positioned to reach its rural residents and provide local educational programs and job training. The greater challenge is not in outreach services, but in the more difficult task of promoting economic development in a state that has relied on agriculture and extractive industries since its founding.

Conclusion

Child support enforcement, education, training, and welfare-to-work programs are an important first step in helping the poor achieve economic self-sufficiency. Workfare and the attendant components of welfare reform, despite the ideological arguments against them, are useful in providing skills, incentives, and supports for families as they strive for economic security.

An important next step in welfare reform will be the integration of funding streams and programs so that clients might straightforwardly access simple programs at one location. The need for interagency welfare coordination and consolidation accompanies the necessity for greater accountability and customer orientation. As important as it has been to attend to the incentives which impinge upon welfare recipients, it is also critical that agencies must be subjected to performance standards as measured by reduction of poverty rates, job placement, and child welfare indicators.
Wyoming Welfare Reform

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How to Help the Working Poor Develop Assets

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This article explores the inability of the working poor to withstand income shocks. Because they often lack assets, the working poor are increasingly vulnerable to increasing deprivation. Interestingly, the welfare state enables the middle-class to develop and maintain assets through institutional arrangements. It is argued that solutions to the problem of poverty must include ways for the working poor also to develop and maintain assets.

Over the last several years some discussion has focused on the financially vulnerable state of the working poor (O'Hare, 1985) with scholars, such as Sherraden (1988) and Belcher and DiBlasio (1990), arguing that more attention needs to be directed towards the working poor’s inability to accumulate and maintain assets. Household incomes continue to shrink for the average American family, which places them at greater risk of falling into poverty. Assets enable individuals to withstand income shocks, such as unemployment, divorce, disability, or a death in the family. Facilitating asset development is designed to supplement already existing income maintenance programs by expanding support to Americans who make too much income to qualify for income maintenance, but earn too little to participate in traditional middle class entitlement programs.

During the 1980s social welfare policies were criticized for affording too many people the opportunity to participate in welfare entitlement programs, such as food stamps and Aid To Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) (Murray, 1984; Abramovitz, 1983). The neo-conservative attack on the welfare state focused on those individuals receiving entitlements, however, it ignored one of the greatest beneficiaries and also one of the greatest costs to the social welfare state; people who earn middle and upper incomes (Belcher & Singer, 1988).
The American welfare state has developed a two tier layer of benefit programs with a growing number of Americans unable to participate in either layer. Income maintenance programs are reserved for the very poor and the tax shelters provided by the federal tax code primarily benefit people with higher incomes. For example, in 1987 approximately 75 percent of the benefits from housing related tax shelters were utilized by people in the top 15 percent of the income distribution or people with incomes over $30,000 (Leonard, Dolbeare, and Lazere, 1989). People who do not fall below the official poverty line and do not earn over $30,000 are often overlooked by the welfare state.

A goal of the social welfare state is to motivate people to become invested in society by staking their future on both the vitality and stability of society. The state facilitates this process for the middle class through institutional asset development mechanisms, such as the home mortgage interest deduction. The working poor are overlooked and the very poor are only marginally and inconsistently sustained. The working poor's disaffiliation is not easily measured, but it is apparent in the growing number of working poor who vote for political candidates who blame the desperate economic times on welfare mothers and inner city poor people who allegedly do not want to work. It is also apparent in the number of voters who have simply quit participating in the electoral process.

This paper explores the problem of asset insecurity and develops workable strategies to expand asset accumulation efforts for more Americans.

Asset Insecurity

Many Americans within the middle class have been afforded a stake in society through the mosaic of accumulation programs that enable them to develop assets (Pechman, 1989; 1990). The federal tax code allows people to shelter income from taxation through the purchase, improvement, and maintenance of an asset. For example, home ownership enables many taxpayers to use interest, insurance, and property taxes paid on their residence to reduce their tax liability which in turn reduces revenue to the federal treasury. People also shelter income through the
use of tax deferred annuity accounts commonly known as 401K plans. These benefit programs enable thousands of Americans to develop and maintain assets that can later be converted to cash or used to leverage greater wealth.

A growing number of American’s incomes are so low that they are unable to take advantage of traditional middle class accumulation programs, such as home ownership. Income disparity has significantly increased between 1977 and 1988. In 1988, the most recent year for which the federal government has published a poverty line, the official poverty line was set at $12,092 for a family of four. This meant that approximately 32.5 million people were officially poor. Nearly two million married couple families live below the poverty line. At least one parent worked in 82 percent of these families, and both parents worked in 30.6 percent of these families. The Census Bureau reported that in 1990, 33.6 million Americans were poor. This figure is 2.1 million higher than in 1989. Income for middle-income households declined by $525. These figures, while alarming, do not begin to show the extent of poverty in many inner cities where the Census has historically under counted and under-reported rates of poverty.

The poverty line is a somewhat arbitrary number and many experts believe that it does not accurately reflect the purchasing power of an income. A recent study conducted by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in which a sample of 3,511 people were asked how much a family of four needed to pay for rent, food, health care, transportation, and other expenses placed the figure at $20,913 (O'Hare, Mann, Porter & Greenstein, 1990). This figure is 73 percent higher than what the government has determined to be necessary for a family of four to simply survive.

Another way to examine the extent of poverty is to examine the portion of income received by different groups. Table 1 highlights the fact that the second poorest and the poorest two fifths of the nation’s population received a total of 19.9 percent of the national income.

Many of the people in the second poorest fifth quintile are not included in official poverty estimates because their income is just above the poverty line, however, their incomes are not
Table I.

**Income Distribution of American Families in 1988**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Category</th>
<th>Percentage of Total National Family Income</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poorest Fifth</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>Lowest since 1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Poorest Fifth</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>Lowest ever recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Fifth</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>Lowest ever recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Richest Fifth</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest Fifth</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>Highest ever recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest Five percent</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>Highest since 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Three-Fifths</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>Lowest Ever recorded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities U.S. Census Bureau.

sufficient to enable them to avoid poverty. Over the last decade, people with incomes in the poorest and second poorest fifth quintiles have lost ground with their share of the national income declining (Greenstein & Baranick, 1990).

As some people's wages have declined relative to prices, they are at greater risk of sliding into economic hardship when they are confronted with divorce, a major illness, unemployment, and an accident related disability. These families have been characterized as the "working poor" or "income marginals" because their persistently low-incomes always make them vulnerable to any loss of resources or supports (Rodgers, 1982; Wyers, 1988).

The working poor live in both rural and urban environments. Those who live in urban centers are often impoverished minority groups and displaced manufacturing workers who live out their lives in urban environments with declining public services and a high crime rate (Levine, 1987; Wilson, 1987). The working poor in rural areas are also confronted with abandoned manufacturing jobs and a growing number of service sector jobs that pay low wages. Over the last two decades the American
job machine has generated many more low-paying jobs as compared to high paying jobs and more companies are using sub-contracting as a means to reduce expenses (Belous, 1989).

A Future of Lousy Jobs

The growth of the working poor has taken place as a result of structural changes in the economy in which the number of working poor have risen, while the number of people on welfare (i.e., on AFDC), have not changed appreciably (Shapiro & Greenstein 1989). When people suffer an income loss they turn to other resources, such as family and/or savings. However, the working poor often have no savings and their extended families are often in similar fiscal straits. The present recession has shown the financial vulnerability of many Americans as the number of participants in programs such as food stamps, general public assistance, and Medicaid increases.

The working poor tend to have entry level skills and comparatively low educations. They were often raised in families with similar skills. Beginning in the 1970s the economy experienced a significant growth of low-paying service sector jobs and a decline in relatively high-paying manufacturing jobs (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982; Harrison & Bluestone, 1988; Murnane, 1988; Belcher & DiBlasio, 1990; Krugman, 1990; Wagner, 1991). Manufacturing jobs have traditionally employed people with low skills at relatively high wages, however, as these jobs continue to disappear, incomes will continue to decline for many unskilled workers. The state of Maryland provides a graphic example of this trend. From 1980 to 1986, Maryland experienced an 11.4 percent decline in manufacturing jobs. At the same time, service jobs increased by 41.7 percent (MDEED, 1987). Wages in these newly created jobs are as much as 80 percent less than in manufacturing (Kasarda, 1988). Many urban areas were radically changed in the 1970s and 1980s. For example, Baltimore, Maryland, which lost a majority of its manufacturing base, has been promoted as a city that moved from an industrial base to a more dynamic service industry (Frieden & Segalyn, 1986). However, the assessable tax base, which is a reflection of the incomes of city residents, declined by 49.5 percent between 1970 and 1985 (Budget in Brief, 1990).
Declining incomes and increasing economic dislocation is also highlighted by the fact that incomes have declined among all income groups, except those individuals earning over $50,000 or more a year (Horrigan & Haugen, 1988). Underemployment is increasingly becoming a permanent way of life for many Americans. Retailing jobs, which is one of the more rapidly growing sectors of the economy, pay wages averaging $2,000 less per year than the poverty level for a family of four (Moorehouse & Dembo, 1986). The proliferation of low-wage jobs has contributed to an overall decline in living standards. Since 1973, wages have stagnated. Interestingly, women between the ages of 35–44 with four years of college showed some increase in wages, while men, even with a college education, showed declines (Levy, 1989). The change in the economy towards jobs that pay low-wages is highlighted by the growth in the number of working poor people. The number of poor people who worked full-time year-round was 42.9 percent greater than in 1978. Full-time year round work provided them with low enough wages that they remained poor. Continuing income loss for a majority of Americans creates a window of opportunity to broaden asset accumulation among more income groups.

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 (TRA) and Recent Budget Agreement

The federal income tax provides the institutional means by which most Americans develop and maintain their assets. Therefore, it is important to review the most recent changes in the tax code and examine the support the tax system provides to the working poor.

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 (TRA) was described by President Reagan as “the best antipoverty bill . . .” and as a bill that would “keep America competitive” (Conlan, Wrightson, and Beam, 1990). The TRA did remove approximately six million poor people from the tax rolls by increasing the standard deduction and personal exemption and liberalizing the earned income tax credit. The TRA also repealed many deductions and exclusions, such as the deduction for state and local sales taxes and for credit card interest. On balance, however, the TRA retained the major tax shelters that enable people with higher
incomes to develop and maintain assets. These deductions include; the deduction for state and local income tax, real estate, and personal property taxes; the deduction for home mortgage interest on a primary residence and a vacation home; and the exclusion of employer provided fringe benefit. The deductions for contributions to individual retirement accounts (IRAs) and to 401 (K) plans were limited, but the limitations kept in force these provisions as tax deferred mechanisms to develop and maintain assets.

The TRA did not improve the ability of Americans with incomes below $30,000 to develop assets. The earned income tax credit was expanded, but only for families with children. Those families that were dropped from the tax rolls because of the increased standard deduction and personal exemptions will be better able to support themselves or their families, but their low incomes make them unable to take advantage of asset building tax strategies, such as the deduction for home mortgage interest. The TRA did not recognize the increase in social security payroll taxes that in tandem with already low wage bases resulted in less take home pay for many Americans (Aaron & Bosworth, 1990). The thrust of the TRA was to maintain this nation's preference in assisting Americans with asset accumulation who earn moderate to high incomes, but ignore the needs of lower-income Americans to create savings and assets.

The recent compromise to reduce the federal budget deficit also disproportionately taxes low-income individuals as compared to higher income individuals, because many of the tax increases are to levied on gasoline, liquor, and cigarettes (Greenstein & Leonard, 1990). It is true that the final budget package is more progressive than the original summit agreement. Nevertheless, wealthy taxpayers will retain most of the large tax cuts they received during the Reagan years. Therefore, the overall effect on the tax system is only minimally progressive and disproportionately taxes people with lower incomes so that people with higher incomes can enjoy asset building tax preferences. Leonard and Greenstein (1990) note:

The average tax burdens of people with incomes below $20,000 will decline when these people are considered as a group.
However, this decline is due entirely to the net tax credits for low income working families with children (p. 11).

Historically the federal tax code has set a precedent for "resisting fundamental change" (Conlan, Wrightson, and Beam, 1990). Crafted by congressional committees to placate lobbyists as well as the executive branch, the federal tax code is an example of creeping incrementalism. Therefore, while the federal tax code can provide some expanded opportunities for the working poor to develop and maintain assets, it is also important to craft strategies that can complement the federal tax code.

**Strategies to Facilitate Greater Asset Accumulation**

Declining incomes should be a sign that the nation needs to examine its mix of jobs and use a combination of economic development efforts and fiscal policy to create better paying jobs. The cost of certain essential services, such as health care, now consume such a large portion of the Gross National Product (GNP) that reform is also necessary to create legislation that both expands access to health care and controls its runaway costs through a national health care system (Belcher and Palley, 1991). Such a system will lessen the need for asset building strategies, because people will not have to prolong needed medical intervention. Nevertheless, people need assets to provide resources for food, clothing, and shelter in case of an income shock. In addition, people need assets in order to supplement social security at retirement.

Three strategies that can be enacted to complement the federal tax code and respond to the growing disaffiliation among many working Americans. These efforts concentrate on increasing and expanding the earned income tax credit, increasing home affordability, and expanding the availability of tax supported retirement accounts. These strategies will gain political support because they are broad based and address the concerns of the growing number of Americans who are experiencing a decline in their standard of living because of stagnant or reduced wages. One of the unfortunate legacies of the Reagan administration is a burdensome federal deficit, therefore, it is also important to pay for these strategies in ways that do not add to the federal deficit.
Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

In order to assist poor people in developing and maintaining assets, it is also necessary to increase the incomes of poor Americans. One way to do this is to expand and increase the EITC. The EITC already enjoys broad political support, because in order to qualify a person must earn an income. The EITC applies to families defined as a man, woman, and at least one child where at least one of the adult family members is employed at least part of the year. The credit is applied against earned income in a manner that provides an incentive for the family to earn higher wages. Shapiro & Greenstein (1980) provide an example of how the credit is applied;

For example, in 1989, a family received a 14 cent credit for each dollar earned up to $6,500. The credit does not begin to phase out until earnings exceed $10,240, and then does so at a slow pace (10 cents for each dollar earned) (p. 11).

Scholars, such as Ellwood (1988) have argued that the EITC should be adjusted to exclude more poor people's wages from taxation. One way to accomplish this goal is to make all working poor people regardless of family composition eligible for the EITC. As already noted the EITC was expanded for working families with children so that more earned income is excluded from taxation. Secondly, the 14 cent credit could be raised to a higher number, such as 18 cents, and the full credit could be applied to a higher income amount, such as $10,000. The EITC enjoys widespread support and some adjustment in it is likely (Shaprio & Greenstein, 1989). Paying for an expanded EITC can be done by raising marginal rates on higher incomes. Revenues from these taxes should be earmarked to fund an expanded EITC. The U.S. tax system is only mildly progressive and Americans enjoy one of the lowest tax rates for an industrialized nation.

The EITC is the engine for the other two initiatives, increasing housing affordability and the national pension base, because the EITC will place more money in the pockets of the working poor. This extra cash can expand the asset base of the working poor by providing them with the money for investment opportunities that have been historically closed.
**Increasing Housing Affordability**

Increasing the affordability of homes can be accomplished in three ways; first, real estate commissions should reflect the true cost of selling a home; second, the cost of borrowing should be reduced; and third, deductions for home mortgage interest should be graduated so that people with smaller incomes receive a greater deduction than those with larger incomes.

The first proposition, reducing real estate commissions is a thorny issue. Realtors do perform meaningful services, however, realtor's fees are often set and maintained by associations of realtors. For example, realtor's commissions are often set at somewhere between seven and ten percent regardless of the services actually performed. In many cases their service amounts to little more than facilitating the settlement. Nevertheless, the realtor still receives his/her seven to ten percent, which increases the price of a house. If realtor's fees were determined by the market and more buyers entered the market because of a greater supply of mortgage money available, realtor's fees would decline and the price of homes would not be inflated to reflect the cost of the more traditional seven percent realtor fee.

The National Association of Realtors is a powerful lobby and state realtor's associations are significant players in state legislatures. Discount realty firms, despite lower fees, have been unable to significantly penetrate the market. Increasing the market share controlled by discount brokers would increase pressure on full service brokers to reduce fees and would lower the price of homes by reducing an inflationary element in home pricing.

Three barriers inhibit discount realty firms in their quest for greater market share; first, full service realty firms control the multiple listing service; second, full service realty firms usually have special relationships with bankers to obtain mortgage money; and third, realty firms are a relatively self-regulated industry. The self-regulating nature of the real estate market shields realtors from public scrutiny and effectively enables full service realtors to collude to prevent discount brokers from capturing larger market share. Real estate laws vary from state to state, but the law in general does not prohibit discount brokers from becoming members of the multiple listing service. In
addition, discount brokers are not prohibited from developing relationships with bankers. An "old boy" network exists in the real estate industry that effectively excludes discount brokers because they have chosen to violate the rules of the network or club. Bankers are also part of the club. The rule that they have violated is simple; they compete against their peer real estate firms on the basis of price.

The most effective way to break the power of real estate firms is to investigate the real estate market for potential violations of state and federal anti-trust laws. It only takes one enterprising district attorney or states attorney, which could then act as a precedent for similar actions. In fact, the state of New York has begun such litigation (Belcher and DiBlasio, 1990). Similar litigation could be initiated in other states by class-action law suits.

Reducing the cost of borrowing is the second means to lower the price of homes. The cost of borrowing is not determined by the supply and demand for homes. Instead, the Federal Reserve controls interest rates through its actions (Greider, 1987). The Federal Reserve's (FED) actions are determined by the Federal Reserve Chairman and the Reserve Bank's judgement about whether inflation is rising or falling. The FED has tended to want to maintain low rates of inflation, even if it means interest rates are driven up. As interest rates increase more home buyers are driven out of the market and more people are excluded from the opportunity to develop and maintain assets. A lower mortgage interest rate can reduce monthly payments and enable people with lower incomes to afford housing. One way to lower interest rates is to raise marginal tax rates for individuals by one percent, which in 1989 dollars would raise approximately 24 billion dollars (Mann & Schultz, 1988/89). This money would be earmarked for housing loans. This program would be different than the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The FHA guarantees the loans of commercial banks, but the program does not create a pool of additional mortgage money that can be used to increase the overall supply of mortgage money available.

Banks are the usual conduit for mortgage money. For example, states have often used bonds to raise mortgage money. The money is then distributed by banks. Banks are able to charge
points and other fees to home buyers in order to obtain this money. An alternative approach is to set strict limits on the fees that banks can charge for these funds. In addition, the availability of these funds would be widely advertised to both full service and discount brokers to prevent any attempt by bankers to limit the availability of these funds.

It is true that an increased supply of mortgage money could place some upward pressure on home prices by increasing the number of home buyers relative to the supply of existing homes. However, demographic changes in the United States suggest that the number of people seeking single family detached dwellings will decline. Therefore, the two forces should balance out one another by creating competing pressures.

The third method to lower home prices, which is to graduate the home mortgage interest deduction, would enable lower income buyers to shelter income as well as higher income buyers. One alternative would enable home buyers to deduct a portion of their home mortgage interest up to a limit of $7,500 of interest. The remainder would not be deductible. The home mortgage interest deduction would also be based on earned income so that as income increased, the amount of interest that could be deducted would decline. Finally, low-income home buyers could take advantage of a special tax credit. This credit would refund a portion of the interest payment that they had paid. While the home mortgage interest deduction is somewhat sacred in the United States, other industrialized countries, such as Canada, do not support home ownership through the tax code. People in Canada still buy homes and realtors make profits. Therefore, it is important to educate the American public that other countries do address home ownership differently and in ways that can increase housing affordability.

The combination of these approaches would lower the price of homes and redirect investment into more modestly priced homes. As home builders found that buyers were unwilling to buy more expensive homes, they would probably respond by building lower priced homes. This is a long term process and the effects of these changes would gradually bring about a reduction in housing prices.
National Pension Base

A third mechanism to increase asset accumulation is to create a nationally based pension system. The working poor generally work in jobs where they receive only 25 percent of employer contributions to health and pension funds (Rothschild, 1988). This comes about because many of the working poor are employed part-time, seasonally, or they are underemployed and receive no pension benefits. In addition to the fact that many people are excluded from participating in a pension system, other people either loose the employer’s contribution to their plan because they terminate employment before they are vested or they quit a job and use the employer’s contribution for living expenses. Even the Bush administration recognized the fact that at least 45 percent of the workforce is not covered by a pension account.

A national based pension system would address some of these problems. All employees would have the right to participate and direct their employer contributions to the plan. Employers would have to comply with the employee’s request. In addition, all employers would be subject to a minimum pension tax for each employee, which they would have to contribute to the plan. The plan would be portable from employer to employer. Unlike the social security program, it would strictly be a pension program.

A universal pension plan was proposed by the President’s Commission on Pension Policy in 1981 in which three percent of an employer’s payroll would be dedicated to a universal pension system (Munnell, 1982). The plan was not enacted because of strong opposition from business groups who argued that it represented another tax on business. Without universal pension coverage, however, low-paid workers will continue to subsidize the pension savings of higher paid workers.

The 1990s are particularly critical times for American industry. Foreign competition continues to threaten both the market share and profitability of core American industries. Therefore, any additional tax on business might act to destabilize industry and further erode American productivity. One way to fund a universal pension system without negatively impinging on
American business is to provide business with an incentive to contribute to the plan. Business groups as well as many investors have argued for many years that the double taxation of dividends is wrong because it encourages business to take on too much debt and it also taxes capital twice (Shoven and Waldfogel, 1990). An alternative to the current approach is to allow businesses to deduct the cost of dividends paid out. This will enable businesses to gain a tax break, which will have been traded for a universal pension system. The revenue lost to the federal treasury can be made up by increasing individual marginal tax rates by one to two points. Another alternative is to exclude small businesses that have a certain number of employees and earn less than a certain amount of money from the law. Unfortunately, such an alternative would be difficult to enforce because businesses would tend to overstate expenses in an effort to evade the law.

A universal pension system will enable the working poor to move from job to job and remain covered. Participants would not be able to cash-in their benefits until retirement, however, they could borrow against their accumulated savings up to a defined maximum.

The three alternatives suggested can together include more Americans in asset development and maintenance strategies. These strategies can help some people avoid falling into poverty or more severe poverty by developing an asset that can be utilized during times of economic hardship. The universal pension system can act as a source of credit during a person's working life and can help a person avoid poverty in retirement by creating a supplement to social security. These strategies do not replace the entitlement based welfare system. Instead, they enhance it by providing more Americans with a means of saving for the future and avoiding economic dislocation.

The Political Challenge

Crafting the legislation described in the article and encouraging some enterprising lawyers to sue associations of realtors would not be difficult. The more difficult part is convincing the Congress that it should move beyond vested interest groups, such as the National Association of Realtors,
the American Bankers Association, and the American Manufacturers Association, and develop legislation that responds to the needs of the working poor. The thrust of asset development is that it reduces reliance on the welfare state by providing people with a cushion that can be utilized during economic hardship. The plan can be sold to the Congress because it does not add to the federal deficit, reduces reliance on the welfare state’s traditional entitlement programs, and enables more Americans to purchase a stake in the future of America.

Congress appears to be aware of greater voter discontent, but are either unwilling or unable to respond. As fewer Americans can afford to purchase a home or be protected by a pension plan, they have less incentive to support traditional politicians and are more likely to support political demagogues, such as David Duke. While some scholars, such as (Brown, 1991), blame the disaffection of the working poor, particularly white voters, on issues of race, the economics of low wages and the growing inability to achieve or even sustain a modest standard of living are the more likely culprits (Sleeper, 1991). Asset development is a way to bring the working poor back to the democratic process by providing them with some of the same opportunities afforded the middle class.

A recent example of a politician taking advantage of voter discontent and exploiting it is Senator Wolford of Pennsylvania. He defeated Dick Thornburgh by portraying Mr. Thornburgh as an insider and someone who had forsaken the needs and aspirations of working Americans. Political interest groups who support progressive legislation have a window of opportunity. As incomes continue to fall for many Americans the income gap between lower income groups and the lower middle income groups is narrowing. This phenomenon provides a unique opportunity to educate these two groups that they have much in common (Belcher and Hegar, 1991). Issues that have tended to divide these groups, such as race, will continue to be sources of contention, but the common bond of low incomes and shattered expectations can create leverage for change.

The reforms outlined to increase asset development and maintenance should be sold to Congress as a package. The package does make demands on the business community and
does limit the power of some groups, such as realtors. At the same time, the package provides business with incentives that will enable businesses to lower tax liabilities. Some individuals will have to pay increased taxes. In today's political climate the notion of raising taxes is usually met with immediate disfavor. Selling higher income taxes will be difficult, however, there is a growing sense among many politicians, scholars, and lay people that a tax increase is necessary. These taxes would be earmarked for a specific purpose, which might make them more palatable than arguing that they would go to support a bloated government.

There is no magic or secret to pushing through these efforts. They will require the support of a coalition of advocates that should include both traditional welfare type advocates and progressive business groups. The support of both kinds of groups illustrates the middle ground that these strategies attempt to achieve.

References


Poverty and Assets


Assets and Financial Management Among Poor Households in Extreme Poverty Neighborhoods

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Proposals supporting the accumulation of assets in poor households are hopeful of creating upward mobility. The experiences of poor families in managing assets and other elements of daily economic life were explored through interviews with low-income Hispanic and Anglo families. All families exhibited planning and management skills needed for assets accumulation, but were unable to escape the effects of unrewarding neighborhood environments. Assets did not provide clear avenues out of poverty. If assets-based programs are to raise the economic status of poor families in extreme poverty neighborhoods they must include mechanisms to protect value and reduce uncertainty.

In recent years a number of social welfare policy proposals and initiatives have addressed the ownership or control of assets among the poor, in the form of housing or incentives for savings. These proposals have assumed that opportunities for asset accumulation would encourage desirable behavioral changes—responsibility, planning and community involvement, as well as provide an avenue out of poverty. However, little is known about the meaning of assets in the lives of the poor or the value of household assets within poor communities. We examined the actual experiences of a sample of low-income families
in extreme poverty neighborhoods of Cleveland with the accumulation and use of assets. From in-depth interviews with twenty Anglo and Hispanic families we were able to conclude that assets in the context of poverty serve many purposes, and the behaviors and attitudes which are expected to foster assets accumulation do exist. However, the conditions within impoverished neighborhoods can threaten the accumulation and retention of assets, making it less likely that they can serve as a vehicle for upward mobility.

Assets and Social Welfare

Poverty and social welfare policy in the United States has focussed mainly upon income standards for the poor and upon the ability of the poor to purchase or consume a minimal supply of necessary goods and services, with the ultimate goal of enabling the short-term poor to regain their footing in the mainstream economy of paid employment and self sufficiency. However, family economics involves more than the balance sheet of cash flow (Strumpel, 1972; Segal & Felson, 1972; Varcoe, 1990). The focus upon income, consumption and short-term standard of living is insufficient to address the more complex and longer-term issues of family economic welfare and self-sufficiency.

As documented by Sherraden (1991), Oliver and Shapiro (1990) and others, wealth or asset accumulation, in the form of savings, investments, homeownership, retirement funds, etc. more accurately reflects the long-term economic well-being of a population than does income. At the same time, the distribution of wealth in the U.S. is even more skewed between upper and lower segments of the population than is the distribution of income, and it is becoming more so (Sawhill, 1988; Lenski, 1984). Blacks, Hispanics, and female-headed households fare far worse than the average in distribution of assets (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991; Blau & Graham, 1990). Sherraden (1988) argues that lack of access to wealth in the form of assets among lower-income groups is a major barrier to moving out of poverty.

Sherraden's (1991) argument is based on the fact that assets or wealth accumulate over time, build equity, serve as a buffer against unexpected crises, yield savings on the costs of living by
reducing transaction costs, and link owners to institutions and information which reinforce mainstream behaviors and values. Because assets, unlike income, can be transferred across generations, the possession of assets is seen as primary in encouraging future planning and long-term upward mobility. What asset-related policies and programs propose is to empower the poor (Berger and Neuhaus, 1977) by linking them with mainstream wealth accumulation structures such as savings, credit, homeownership, etc. Several federal and state initiatives now allow poverty-level families to save without penalty for asset accumulation such as homeownership, education, or small business development. Chances for economic betterment and successful marketplace behaviors are expected to follow as a result.

In spite of the interest raised by proposals to link the poor with asset building mechanisms, little is known about the experiences of the poor with regard to asset accumulation and the mechanisms and institutions that facilitate it. Often such proposals fail to consider the environmental conditions which bind their members to social and emotional obligations which are counter to the independence of the upwardly or outwardly mobile (Stack, 1974; Stolz, 1985). Furthermore, raised expectancies and motivational influences are conditioned by factors such as individuals' perceived certainty about environmental events (Arrow, 1984): Do job opportunities really exist? Will discrimination or lack of family support interfere with efforts toward advancement? Are benefit levels likely to be cut in response to efforts to save or purchase a home? A troubling source of uncertainty for poor households comes from conditions in neighborhoods which have lost their linkages with the mainstream, have high concentrations of social ills, and where housing values and the viability of the local housing market are in a downward spiral (Wilson, 1987; Coulton, Chow & Pandey, 1990).

This study began with two questions: 1) What assets do the poor have, and 2) How do low-income families manage finances in order to accumulate assets and maintain them. Sherraden (1991) defined assets as "rights or claims, related to property, concrete or abstract...enforced by custom, convention, or law." (p. 100). Assets include items that yield some type of earnings in the form of capital gains, rent payments,
interest, dividends, profit from sales, user fees, and household efficiency or reduction in transaction costs. We explored the following categories: real property, "hard assets" (jewelry, collectibles), savings (including cash, checking accounts, retirement funds, insurance), tools or machinery, autos and durable household goods. Besides these legally held assets, we also included access to credit as an asset category because of the close link between borrowed capital and entreprenuership (Sherraden, 1991). Respondents were also encouraged to identify other categories or items which served the function of assets to them. Thus we added some unexpected items such as social benefits (SSI, AFDC, Medicaid), to our inquiry. Financial management, such as planning, decision-making, and management of debt were explored whenever possible to understand how assets were or were not used to maximize benefits.

Methods

We interviewed ten Hispanic and ten Anglo urban families, all of whose incomes were at 150% of poverty or below. The interviewees resided in neighborhoods where the poverty rate exceeded 30%. All but one of the Hispanic families immigrated from Puerto Rico, Central or South America as adults. The sample provided an opportunity to compare those who were presumably acculturated to American institutional and value systems, and those who were not. We expected the Anglo group to have greater access to wealth mechanisms than the immigrant Hispanics, the former group perhaps benefitting from intergenerational transfers, better educational opportunities, and lack of discrimination. We also expected these groups to represent polar positions on a number of factors relevant to assets—institutional linkages, cultural values, awareness of the market system, intergenerational wealth transfer, among others.

We recruited the respondents through community agencies, who were asked to refer low-income working and non-working families with children. All respondents received a small ($20) stipend for the in-depth hour interview. The Hispanic interviewer conducted most interviews in Spanish, later translating them to English. The interviewers used a questionnaire which assured that all questions were covered in the same order and
Poor Households

with comparable wording, but allowed respondents to describe their personal experiences and explain their reasoning in their own terms. All but a few of the interviews were electronically recorded, with the interviewees' consent, and transcribed for future coding.

Seven interviewees were single or divorced female household heads (five Hispanic and two Anglo), the remainder were married or cohabiting and sharing incomes. In both the Hispanic and Anglo households, the females had more formal education than the males. Five females (three Anglo, two Hispanic) had one or more years of college, although none had degrees. Twelve of the households had at least one adult with a high school education or more. All households had one to four children under 18 years of age. Families in this stage of development are not likely to have accumulated much wealth compared to older families or families without dependents (Oliver & Shapiro, 1990).

Three-fourths of the twenty households received some form of public assistance—ADC, SSI, GA, or unemployment compensation as part of their household income. Parents, siblings, children or unrelated persons sharing the household were sometimes the source of these funds. Three households received Section 8 housing assistance. More than half of the respondents had some income from work, including paid employment in the market economy as well as the underground economy of crafts, baby-sitting, home repair, or training, often paid in cash. This is not unusual; many poor families supplement their income through the underground economy (Edin, 1991). A number of households had experienced repeated spells of poverty related to intermittent employment, involuntary movement from the manufacturing sector to the service sector of the economy, or changes in family composition due to divorce, death, childbirth, etc. Nationally, between 1974 and 1983, 26–34% of all households in the U.S. experienced at least one drop of 50% or more in their ratio of income to needs, with 11–18% falling to a level of 150% of poverty or less. The primary causes of these shifts in economic welfare are changes in family composition and changes in employment status (Burkhauser & Duncan, 1989). Thus the shifts in the financial welfare of the families in
this sample are broadly experienced, particularly in the current economy.

This small purposive sample, while useful for eliciting themes and concepts relevant to asset accumulation, provides little basis for estimating the magnitude of the phenomena discovered, or their generalizability. Thus, these findings should be interpreted as suggestive of relevant dimensions of assets, rather than confirmatory.

ASSET ACCUMULATION

Housing

In our sample there are three categories of homeownership status: renters, homebuyer (one family), and three homeowners. Some renters saw themselves as potential homeowners; most of them were very young families who saw public "dependence" as a temporary situation. The Hispanic family in the process of buying a home was waiting for bank approval.

The homeowner families experienced substantial difficulties not as much in obtaining their homes initially, but in maintaining their homes once they had them. In order to afford homeownership, they were limited to low-cost, run-down, inner city homes in crime-ridden areas. Taxes and utilities were high relative to income, and services were poor. Their homes were a constant drain on resources, both monetary and emotional. The owners spoke not of home equity, property values, or endowments for their children, but of keeping ahead of the code inspectors, the utility bills, and the burglars which had victimized all three households. They also feared that the home, for which they had sacrificed and which represented all their savings and much of their labor, would be lost due to debt in other areas. One household was filing bankruptcy in an effort to protect its home from creditors. Another was selling because costly repairs and insurance, robberies, and poor employment opportunities had been a continuous financial strain. A third homeowner family, Hispanic, in less than two years of occupancy had invested about $2000 in materials for repairs and improvements. Because this family's only access to lending
was through credit cards, property enhancement through family labor (an effective method of adding value to middle-class homes) was mitigated by the high costs of borrowing.

Two of the owned homes had rental units, often an asset in traditional terms. One had purchased the duplex to provide free housing and care for an elderly parent. Since the parents death, the unit had been either vacant, or served as a temporary shelter for a troubled adult child. The interviewee gave two reasons for not capitalizing on the rental potential, 1) The costs of repair, maintenance, and insurance were prohibitive for the rent (about $200 per month) one could expect, and 2) potential renters were perceived as undesirable. The other owner of rental property had similar problems, but, because of pressing needs, tried to keep the units rented often.

My husband's a carpenter by trade. There's nothing he can't do. We were doing real good up until a few years ago. But everything we were making we were putting into the property, so we didn't have anything, really. Then a couple of years ago the company he was working for started bouncing payroll checks. [After thousands in attorneys fees and no settlement he now works day labor for $5/hour]. It's been really hard. If it wasn't for the little bit of rent we had coming in, we would really be in trouble. At least they pay our food and mortgage. After next month we'll be in debt again because I don't have the money saved for the house insurance or taxes. We can't depend on both rental units being rented. Last year the $250 unit was rented all year, but the renter gave us a car with a broken valve to pay one month's rent. The $300 unit was rented only three months.

Continuous problems with renters—bounced checks, legal expenses, damages, disruptions caused by tenants, including a major uninsured robbery of a landlord's home by one tenant—did not facilitate the building of assets.

The Hispanic homeowner did not technically have ownership rights to the property. As part of an assisted homeownership program they lived in and maintained the home, paying into a fund established by a non-profit corporation which would transfer title after fifteen years. Should they choose to move before then, they will lose their equity. Even under this program
assets and opportunities for asset accumulation were neutralized by the expenses associated with residing in a high-risk neighborhood. During their brief tenure in this house the family lost $1300 in one burglary, excluding damages to the door and walls. Although the non-profit corporation helped with materials for the necessary repairs, their labor again went, not to improving the value of the property, but to merely maintaining its value. Tax benefits of homeownership to households at this income bracket were likely to be minimal, and the same could be said of the labor-added value to the home.

The commitment to homeownership was high, however, and the pride associated with having achieved this goal made one individual state that her home, purchased land-contract for $9000, was "worth a million to me." Commitment to homeownership was also evident in the psychological price that families were willing to pay. The Hispanic woman in the homeownership program intensely disliked the neighborhood where her home was located, but was committed to staying in the home fifteen years to obtain full possession. Another family sacrificed a planned visit to frail elderly parents in Peru to invest the money in homeownership.

About five months ago we borrowed some money [$3000] for a vacation to visit parents, and then we decided to buy the house instead. We deny ourselves, we always deny ourselves. I buy second hand clothes for my children. We do not have vices or go to dances or anything. We have the lights off as much as possible.

A health worker told the interviewer that this family does not eat properly: "too much soup and no meat".

The dream of homeownership was alive. All households were asked how they would use an unexpected lump sum of $3000, say from lottery winnings. Six Hispanic respondents would apply it to a down payment for a house. Two renters would use it for housing repairs. One family would repair a home abandoned in Puerto Rico, not for its improved economic value, but because it represented a link to home and the security of having a place they could call their own. Most of the respondents also indicated they would attempt to pay off current debt.
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Automobiles

Homes were not the major source of investment for most of these households, however. The major material investment, identifiable as an asset by the respondents, was an automobile. Autos served as an asset that reduced transaction costs and enhanced household efficiency. Cars saved lengthy and unreliable bus commutes to work or school, assured parents that their children arrived at school safely, and allowed their owners to shop in less expensive suburban supermarkets. Several interviewees mentioned that a car was required for the employment opportunities available to them, even day labor.

In spite of this asserted necessity, cars were also viewed as a drain on a family's resources. Several automobile owners saw their cars as either unaffordable and an invitation to trouble because of costly repairs, insurance premiums, and emission standards, frequent breakdowns, and theft.

We don't buy new cars anymore, although we used to. The new cars were a lot of trouble, and in this neighborhood you always have to worry about it getting stolen. A used car is cheaper and less likely to be stolen, so we buy used. [Anglo homeowner].

Ivan Illich (1978) suggests that possession of items such as automobiles, which dominate the major culture, but are less beneficial for the poor, transforms poor people into modernized paupers.

Tools

Respondents also identified tools and other smaller items as serving the function of assets in their lives. Home and car repair tools saved labor costs and improved property; typewriters helped with personal correspondence, could be used for typing services, and enhanced typing speed; sewing machines maintained clothing and produced some income from crafts or tailoring. However, these assets were very marginal as sources of income. Sewing machines trimmed only a few dollars off the clothing or gift giving budgets; to the neediest families a sewing machine would not even be an asset, as clothing obtained at second hand stores would be less expensive than the materials needed to make clothing.
Small tools were also priced for their exchange value. One Puerto Rican family purchased a portion of the plane tickets that brought them to the mainland with the money obtained from the sale of welding tools, the man's trade instruments. Because of the market or use value of these items, and their portability, tools, sewing machines and typewriters were often the targets of theft.

Savings

While few households had any long-term savings or investments, many had savings experience. Most savings which did exist were short term. Savings and checking accounts served as a safe place to put money until enough was accumulated to spend, or until an emergency came along. Two Anglo households with concrete plans to become homeowners repeatedly saw small savings for homeownership ravaged by bouts of unemployment, illness, or other emergencies—a broken down car, a social obligation, a utility disconnection, attorney's fees. One respondent described as a "savings plan" the practice of selling plasma twice a week and not cashing the checks until the week before her child's birthday, or until a month before Christmas. Savings come, and savings go. They are short-term, and they are vulnerable.

We've been planning for a wedding but it just seems there is never enough money to save. I'm making payments every month to an attorney to fight for the custody of the youngest children and there isn't any money left over. Another reason I haven't saved is that you never know with welfare if they'll take your money away. Do you take your chance and lose your check? Then what do you do?

Rather than concern with interest rates or return on investments, the primary concern among these savers was to protect their cash against loss through theft or service charges, and to reduce transaction costs. The benefit of a savings account was that checks could be cashed without paying a fee. In fact, most discussions of banking, checking and bill paying practices focussed defensively on how to avoid fees, not proactively on how to build assets. To many of these families "saving"
meant coupon clipping, bulk buying, energy conservation, budgeting, and managing benefit eligibilities to maximize financial rewards.

Financing of assets

Cars and other assets (such as the driveway improvement to one home) were often purchased on credit cards or received as gifts, hand-me-downs from relatives or friends, or in exchange for services. One woman painted the interior of an auto engine shop in exchange for a used car for her husband. Homes, too, may not be purchased through traditional market mechanisms, such as bank loans. A home purchased through a community program provides a different market experience. This type of asset financing does not lead to the educational benefits and institutional linkages that create a stake in the market system of savings, credit and planning for asset acquisition as Sherraden (1990) suggests.

The multiple costs of rental housing (rent = 30% of income for this sample; major repair needed in rental property; and losses due to housefires, water damage, etc.) was one of the largest barriers against these families accumulating or financing assets. Renters often contributed to the value of the landlords' assets not their own. One landlord's refusal to invest in a roof repair not only cost tenants loss to furniture when the roof fell in on their apartment, but they also did the repairing themselves.

They started to fix the roof. They tore the roof apart and they left it like that, without protection . . . At night we had a rain storm. Water ran down all the walls. During six months (including some winter months) this place was in terrible condition. We had to be helped by bretheren from the church. The plaster off the living room fell down on the floor and I had to take it out. People from the City came to investigate this. After six months . . . he bought the materials and I fixed it myself and painted it. If I had not done it, still it would not be fixed. But he took the money for the rent. [Disabled Hispanic renter (male)]

Two other respondents were the victims of housefires in rented apartments. A third tenant was thinking of adding an extra stairway to his rented house because of his fear of a housefire.
Credit and Debt

Three Hispanic families had no debt at all, and were the poorest in the sample. All other families had substantial debt. Four families had debt under $500, usually for unpaid utilities. Eight had debts in the $1500 to $5200 range for utilities and cars. The remaining five had debts over $5200. All were Anglo, perhaps reflecting differential access or acculturation to credit. Of these, three families had debts in the $7200–10,000 range, and two, debts of $24,000 and $28,000 (including mortgages). Five of the debtors, including both of the high-debt families, had substantial credit card balances. Generally, Hispanic families had less debt than Anglos.

Utilities and car debt were the major problems. A utility assistance program in the state of Ohio allows low-income customers to accumulate utility debt while paying a percentage of their income to keep utilities connected. This program, combined with the low energy efficiency of their housing, left many poor in substantial debt. A few had incurred educational debt for themselves or for private school tuition for their children. Medical debt was minor, since most of the families were eligible for Medicaid, and those who were not did not use medical services regularly. Two families had medical insurance through employment. At least one family left the labor market in order to obtain the medical protection offered by AFDC.

Families with substantial debt payed an emotional premium. Some simply lost hope of ever paying back debt and preferred "not to think about it." The high emotional and financial cost of living and the debts incurred to sustain it play into the financial, employment and social benefit decisions discussed in the next section.

Financial Management

In addition to asset accumulation, an important element of welfare policy, and particularly asset-development policy, is the development of appropriate marketplace skills, behaviors, and thinking so the poor can make it on their own in the mainstream economy. We found that many of the savings, planning and management skills necessary for marketplace success were evident to some extent among many of the respondents, but
were applied to far less rewarding contexts. Delayed gratification is appropriate in a market system as a means of asset accumulation, but when there is no gratification to delay, and market connections are few and tenuous, it may be unreasonable to expect rewards from delaying gratification. Sacrifices come from necessity, not choice.

Social Welfare Benefits

Social welfare benefits were viewed as assets by many of these families. These benefits could be counted upon for future security to a much greater extent than the employment opportunities in their experiences. Social welfare benefits provided for children with more certainty than child support payments did. Moreover, social welfare benefits could be managed to maximize rewards and offer a true sense of accomplishment at obtaining hard-to-get resources. Several families were aware that to be eligible for supplemental utility assistance, which becomes available in December each year, one had to have a disconnection notice from the utility company. So, in October or November utility bills were not paid, so the disconnection notice would come about when the aid program went into effect. The few hundred dollars saved by not paying utilities and receiving energy assistance was "the only way my family gets Christmas."

Supplemental food pantries, clothing centers, etc., which restrict beneficiaries to certain residential neighborhoods or certain times of the year (Thanksgiving baskets, school clothing drives) became part of the pool of resources which astute families could manage and coordinate to maximize their benefits. All of the families interviewed benefitted from food pantries and many admitted to "doing the rounds" of several assistance programs each month. Others talked about shopping mid-month instead of when the welfare checks first arrive, because "everyone knows the store owners raise prices on everything at the first of the month for the welfare checks." Generally, the Anglo families were more familiar with the intricacies of program eligibilities and benefits management than the Hispanics, perhaps due to longer contact with the system, greater familiarity with bureaucratic processes, or greater facility with the language.
Benefits management

If one defines eligibility for public benefits as an asset, which many of these families did, then those educated in the system, like good financial planners, could receive a much higher return. Those who knew how the welfare system works were more able to maximize its benefits to them. By inventorying available services, classifying categories of services and eligibility requirements, keeping annual calendars of when and where to apply for benefits, these families worked to survive within the confines of the welfare system. Knowing what to say or not say to an intake worker is a very complicated task especially when funding and regulatory changes cause eligibility criteria to continuously change. It is “work” to stay on welfare under these circumstances. Some interviewees admitted to operating, out of necessity, on the fringes of legality, for instance, selling Food Stamps to pay rent. While manipulation of benefits, such as the eligibility for utility assistance, may be socially condemned for the public assistance or charity recipient, these same skills, when viewed in an assets framework, are highly admired in a good tax accountant, insurance representative, attorney or benefits coordinator in the private sector, and the rewards are much greater.

Managing without

Although social welfare benefits might be a steady, reliable source of income, the demands placed upon household financiers were rarely as predictable. Resources seldom met all the subsistence demands. Householders had to make decisions almost daily as to what essential needs should not be met. This experience we termed “managing without”.

Economic behavior for the poorest of these families demonstrated weak links to the marketplace to obtain life’s essentials—food, housing and transportation. Many did not even have marketplace food or housing, relying on Food Stamps and church pantries, Section 8 housing, and utility assistance to get by. Most economic behavior was defensive, oriented to avert disaster: drastically reducing needs, spending the minimum always for every item—managing without. While not all families in this
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study fit this description, many did, warranting further examination as to how the planning and organization necessary to achieve asset accumulation would apply to their circumstances.

Managing without is different from saving, investing, making a profit, delaying gratification, etc. For the better-off classes in our society, self-denial is often the first step in a process that ends up in increased savings. Postponing gratification funnels resources into higher level options. For the extremely poor, however, self-denial means 1) compromising basic needs (nutrition, warmth) or needs that are standard in Western society (access to a clothes dryer, telephone, car, etc.), 2) failing to accumulate assets, and 3) living, perhaps permanently, without any goal achievement or reward in sight. There is no choice.

Smart shopping has a very limited function in this type of economy since survival is predicated on: 1) severely reduced consumption, 2) meeting the most immediate needs by buying the cheapest merchandise (regardless of its usefulness, quality, durability, versatility), and 3) dependence on charitable donations. Permanent and pervasive managing without amounts to dropping out of the marketplace.

Economic decisions made by those who managed without do not make sense from a market point of view. Managing without was seen as a permanent, inescapable burden. Relief from managing without came in temporarily avoiding the present economic circumstances and satisfying some longed-for need. For example, one respondent came to the U.S. shortly after completing high school. In the ensuing 13 years, she married, had two children, but never returned to visit her immediate relatives in South America. Last summer, while permanently laid off, she decided to borrow $2,000 which was her credit card limit, and visit her parents in a war torn country. While perhaps impulsive and economically unwise, the decision relieved a heavy emotional burden.

Now I am about to travel to my country because I have been here for thirteen years and I have never returned to visit my parents.... I cannot delay my trip because my brother-in-law has been assassinated. I came here when I was eighteen years old. We are in an economic crunch but my parents are asking me to go
there... I am afraid that I will not see my parents again, and my children do not know my parents. So, be what it might be, I am going there. My husband with his little job he has found will try to pay the bills. . . I want to [take extra money with me] to buy a stove for my mother. I want to leave a little money for them.

Similarly, three of the Anglo families, who initially responded that they would pay off debts with a hypothetical $3000 lottery winning, reconsidered their choice when they realized these debts would just accumulate again. They fantasized about exotic travel or an amusement park vacation for their children.

These decisions illustrate that sustained managing without in an affluent society encourages periodic self-rewarding behavior, even if circumstances make these choices appear irrational. Managing without, not delayed gratification, characterizes the economic lives of the extremely poor. In order for managing without to become the kind of longer-term planning and delayed gratification necessary for assets to accumulate in a real sense, basic needs must be met. If they are not, the small savings account will always be expended on an uninsured medication, a utility deposit, or a brief, but satisfying self-reward.

Conclusions

This study was initiated, in part, to expand our understanding of how targets of asset-based policies and programs actually see the role of assets in their lives. Results of this exploration with this small sample cannot be generalized to all poor persons, or to all residents of poverty neighborhoods. Nevertheless, important themes have emerged that should be studied further. Moreover, these themes suggest that contextual factors must be taken into account when developing assets oriented programs and policies for the poor.

There were not as many differences between Hispanic and Anglo families as had been anticipated, perhaps because economic status more than ethnicity dominates their decisions and attitudes toward assets. Anglos were somewhat more knowledgeable about the welfare system and had accumulated more debt.
Material assets such as homes, cars and appliances do not appear to benefit the people interviewed in the way they have benefitted the upwardly mobile. Nevertheless, there is an attachment to the values which promote homeownership and savings. There is evidence that planning, organizing, rational market-type behaviors exist. Managing without among the extremely poor is the antithesis of assets accumulation.

Environmental constraints and barriers must be eliminated to reduce the vulnerability of both assets and low-income asset holders, and to increase mainstream institutional linkages, before asset accumulation can really benefit these families. While asset limitations on public assistance eligibility may be a barrier to the accumulation and use of assets in the move out of poverty, it was not mentioned by many of the respondents. More frequently mentioned were the conditions of impoverished neighborhoods: vulnerability to robbery or fire; unreliable transportation; banking fees; high housing costs and absence of low-cost technical assistance (legal, accounting, consumer) prohibiting the ability to obtain, maintain or improve upon one's assets. Disinvestment in urban poverty areas makes it unlikely that property values will be maintained or increased at rates comparable to rates in other areas.

Recent studies which examine not only the incidence but the concentration of neighborhood distress in the Cleveland area suggest that the concentration of neighborhood distress is in itself a barrier to overcoming the conditions of poverty (Chow & Coulton, 1992). Merely providing opportunities for homeownership or savings without addressing the hostile environmental context of these assets will be insufficient to move these families out of poverty.

Nevertheless, there is value in pursuing homeownership and savings programs for the poor. A home or bank account symbolizes the realization of the American dream. Asset ownership is a rite of passage that gives the poor a sense of dignity and control that otherwise eludes them (Finn, 1994). Whether or not the home produces material gain is another issue and one that requires a broader package of policy initiatives than we have seen.
Among our recommendations for further research would be a determination of where on the income distribution managing without can become delayed gratification; i.e., where essentials of life are not neglected, and where the expectation of a material reward or payback can be termed realistic within a reasonable period of time. For these twenty families, all at 150% of poverty or less, there appears to be little possibility that sacrifices, such as those required to purchase a home, are worth it in an economic sense, although all greatly valued these accomplishments. Additional studies are also needed to determine the kinds of urban neighborhoods in which assets have a good chance of maintaining their value or appreciating.

All homes and economic environments are not equal in their potential to provide avenues out of poverty. For a marketplace policy such as assets to be effective, the same marketplace supports and protections offered other urban investors (legal and financial services, research data, loan guarantees, insurance, etc.) must be offered to those who are risking the essentials of life to better their futures through asset investments.

Finally, in most cases, the behaviors and attitudes of the poor we interviewed did not appear to be a major barrier to improving their economic welfare. In fact, many laudable behaviors that could work in the marketplace were evident in the daily lives of these families. Being able to apply these behaviors to situations where there is a resultant improvement in economic welfare is the problem. In order to effectively raise the economic status of the poor, better access to mechanisms for accumulating assets must be coupled with community building initiatives that can make these assets secure and allow poor families a greater degree of control over the now uncertain circumstances that effect the value of their assets.

References


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Housing strategies designed to create a sense of community for our nation's at-risk and poverty-stricken citizens continue to be a source of debate. One major issue is the degree to which criminal behavior exists within these environments. In this article, the results from a seven year study of one single room occupancy (SRO) facility in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania are described. Analysis of two models used for intervening with the vulnerable tenant population of the SRO suggest that a "strength-focused" strategy rather than a "need-focused" approach may be more effective in reducing crime and may contribute to the establishment of a viable resident community.

Introduction

Two issues are raised in this case study report. First, the social and organizational implications of two client-centered, empowerment models and the usefulness of these models for creating a sense of community in single room occupancy (SRO) environments are presented. Second, the ability of these strategies to account for the prevalence of social deviance in the SRO milieu is examined. These matters are addressed through: 1) a brief assessment of SROs in general and one Pittsburgh-based facility in particular; 2) a description of the two social work models developed within the Pittsburgh SRO; 3) a review of the facility's essential demographic features; and 4) an analysis of the building's amount of social deviance, following the two social practice strategies.
I. SRO Housing: The Emergence of Welfare Hotels and Wood Street Commons

An SRO is an apartment-style building where tenants occupy their own sitting/sleeping room. Each SRO unit includes several basic amenities (e.g., wash basin, bed). There are also common areas shared by the building’s residents (e.g., kitchen, lounge). The history of SRO housing has evolved in the twentieth century, especially during periods of economic change (Hoch and Slayton, 1989). These changes have been linked to the urban dweller’s perception of the city as both market place and home (Hopper and Hamberg, 1985; Erickson, Wilhelm, 1986; Caton, 1990). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s several factors contributed to the current mix of single room occupancy facilities and they provide an important back-drop for the case study which follows.

The domestic political economy during the 1970s and 1980s wrought devastating outcomes for housing and service assistance to disenfranchised citizens (Barak, 1992). An eroding manufacturing base supplanted by service-oriented industries and a fiscal crisis generated by over-production, severe downward turns in the business cycle, large numbers of unemployed skilled workers, and corporate bankruptcies exacerbated the affordability of low income housing across the United States (Applebaum, 1989; Kard, 1988). These conditions prompted federal withdraw of support for public housing programs and led to the government’s endorsement of mostly selective revitalization initiatives that ultimately benefitted the well-to-do (Coons, 1987). Thus, as the decade of the 1980s came to a close, the diminution of low-income housing stock reached crisis proportions (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1989; Rossi, 1989a).

In addition to significant changes in the political economy, a new generation of homeless citizens was increasingly evident during the decade of the 1980s. The new homeless included several marginalized subgroups: 1) persons experiencing persistent and severe mental illness (Wright, 1988; Bachrach, 1984; Lamb, 1984); 2) children and families living in Shelters or on the streets (Bassuck and Rubin, 1986; National Coalition for the Homeless, 1986; Redmond and Brackmann, 1999); 3) day laborers working in temporary job pools (Williams, 1988); and 4) AIDS victims
composed mainly of IV drug users, male homosexuals, minority group members, street prostitutes, and Vietnam veterans (Bayer, 1989; Ron and Rogers, 1989).

The shrinking domestic economy coupled with the new homeless constituencies influenced perceptions of the city. Moreover, the affordable housing crisis and the decline of subsidies altered the urban SRO's function. City restoration efforts prominent during the previous decades of promise (1950s–1960s), in time gave way to short-term measures for alleviating the plight of urban street dwellers (Hoch and Slayton, 1989). Disenfranchised city residents found themselves living in squalid conditions, often in run-down welfare hotels (United States General Accounting Office, 1985; Hopper and Hamberg, 1985). These hotels offered lodging to any person seeking shelter, provided a public assistance check or other entitlement subsidy accompanied the displaced homeless citizen (Zarembka, 1990). The urban ecology of the 1980s produced an "American nightmare" (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1989:1): a period of "national neglect and shame" (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1986:3) where both the inner city and its inhabitants were abandoned (Rossi, 1989a; 1989b; Ropers, 1988).

The development of a Pittsburgh-based SRO called Wood Street Commons (WSC) emerged in the mid 1980s in response to the housing needs of the city's most economically distressed and socially stigmatized residents. A number of research projects (Wilson and Kouzi, 1990; Mellon Bank Economics Department, 1984) and regional reports (United Way of Pittsburgh, 1985) addressed the state of existing service resources to the homeless (including the marginally housed) and overall trends in the local economy. A pivotal sponsor in the SRO's planning was Community Human Services Corporation (CHSC); a nonprofit agency which operated in conjunction with private philanthropic groups, public governmental agencies, and area service providers. Findings from the various Pittsburgh studies led researchers to conclude that the region was experiencing a low-income housing shortage, a local recession, and the presence of a "new vagrancy"—homeless subgroupings similar to those mentioned previously (Wilson and Kouzi, 1990: 109).
In response to these regional conditions, CHSC, property developers, and management consultants identified the city’s under-utilized, downtown YMCA as a strategically-centered facility for housing diverse, at-risk constituencies. CHSC had maintained a social service presence in the building during the early to mid 1980s and was very familiar with the existing tenant population.

During 1986 the YMCA was purchased by a for-profit property development organization (Mistick Associates), and renamed Wood Street Commons. The configuration of the Pittsburgh-based facility was comparable to many urban SROs at the time. Tenants occupied their own rooms and possessed a key to their SRO units. All rooms included basic amenities (such as, single bed, dresser, chair, walk-in closet, wash basin, and mirror). In WSC, five private bathrooms were found on each floor. Each floor of the building contained twenty-six SRO units. One common area was located in the facility. Situated in the lower level, this “congregate space” was an outlet for recreation and celebration (e.g., general socializing; breakfast and dinner meals; activities such as the tenant Newsletter, the resident advocacy group, generic crafts; and special events, including guest speakers and parties).

The essential mission of WSC was to provide safe, supportive, and affordable housing to the tenants residing in ten of the building’s sixteen floors. The other six floors were leased out to commercial tenants as a way of defraying operational costs and maintaining affordable SRO room rentals.

The identification and implementation of a viable practice model—a consumer focused approach that was empowering, peer-supportive, and least restrictive of the tenant’s autonomy—was critical to the facility’s social design. At the core of this mission was a commitment to fostering resident self-esteem, establishing healthy tenant relationships, and creating a sense of community.

II. A Comparison of Two Social Work Models

Within the SRO, the first strategy was fully operational only during Phase I of the building’s development (1985–1987). The second client-centered approach was utilized during Phase II of
the facility’s evolution (1988–1992). Both strategies were developed prior to CHSC’s involvement in Wood Street Commons. During this planning stage, the relative merits of both models were regularly assessed by staff, resulting, at times, in some strong sentiment about which strategy was best. The project’s leadership initially favored the need-focused strategy. However, after two years of struggling with the daily occupancy rate and problems associated with building infractions and ongoing evictions, a decision was made to try something different. Further, the necessity to change our social work approach was made evident, following the outcome of a building fire caused by several troublesome tenants.

**Phase 1: The Need-Focused Strategy**

The Phase I model was organized around a strong and sustained presence of professional social workers or community activists, advocating on behalf of the tenant population. Typically this approach entailed one-on-one intervention with residents around health or social service issues (such as, dental care, podiatry needs, entitlement assistance, job search, housing referrals, and literacy training). Underscoring this model was a belief that resident problems required intensive, sophisticated, and, when necessary, confrontative outreach.

The role of the WSC advocate was to broker for client needs, focusing always on the tenant as an under or non-served citizen. While this intervention model encouraged resident decision-making that was less participatory and was more deferential to the social worker, the relationship established between consumer and professional was regarded as healthy, ultimately enabling a more certain and effective delivery of services. Moreover, it was believed that the trust formed between tenant and activist would in time prepare (empower) the resident to take greater personal responsibility for the unresolved issues affecting his/her life.

2. **Phase II: The Strength-Focused Strategy**

The Phase II social work approach emerged out of a different set of governance principles. This organizational model emphasized active resident participation and advocacy. When
social workers intervened, small group or community meetings were held to discuss problems. Unlike the Phase I model, responding to resident health and social service issues was less important than identifying tenant competencies and skills. Underpinning this approach was a belief that thriving communities were composed of citizens who had something meaningful to offer their neighborhood. Recall here the previous description of the urban SRO's historical development, linked to the city as both marketplace and home. In this regard, ascertaining what generic skills residents possessed and then instituting an outreach program with service providers based upon sustained tenant participation and leadership was pivotal to forming a viable, consumer-oriented community.

The WSC advocate was to facilitate and to encourage responsible tenant involvement in the SRO community as a way of empowering residents to take responsibility for their own lives. While this strategy made the delivery of support services ancillary to the establishment of a community culture, it was assumed that tenants would eventually organize as task-oriented groups, producing several self-generating cottage industries. By cultivating tenant competencies rather than addressing tenant deficiencies, it was further assumed that residents in time would more readily and adequately resolve their own social problems because of improved self-esteem and because of their stake in the WSC community.

III. The Residential Demographics of Wood Street Commons

Five socio-economic indicators formed the basis of WSC's demography. These categories (age, race, gender, income/occupation and, housing level) were selected with the intention of establishing resident types most conducive to densely populated living in urban SRO settings. The belief was that by identifying tenant types most likely to integrate well into the SRO's social fabric, social deviance and criminality could be kept to a minimum.

A. Tenant Blending

The building's tenant blend was intended to replicate the demographics of the larger Pittsburgh region (Mellon Bank
Thus, from the SRO’s inception to its second phase of development, energy was directed at ensuring: a majority population age 40 and older, a racial minority constituency no less than 35 percent of overall occupancy, equal distribution by gender, and a majority of residents working at least part-time or more.

Blending the variety of residents in Wood Street Commons was an important consideration for minimizing the prevalence of social deviance. Rather than creating a facility designed primarily or exclusively for chronic needs individuals (for example: black males between the ages of 18 to 35 habitually unemployed, semi-skilled, and recovering from addiction), a mix of tenants was sought. Thus, the residential blend of Wood Street Commons also included: chemically-free black males gainfully employed; retirees on fixed incomes; unwed adult mothers attending vocational training or continuing education classes; and people participating in therapeutic learning programs, recreational activities, or peer support advocacy initiatives.

In their evaluations of crime and delinquency, both Hirschi (1969) and Kornhauser (1978) have described how the mechanism of “involvement” (i.e., investment in conventional activities) promotes social control and reduces the likelihood of individual deviance. Tenant groups described above were persons involved in a variety of work and leisure tasks and, thus, possessed less opportunity for engaging in deviant behavior.

The fifth index (the housing scale) included four different housing programs/levels, and tenant placement in any one of them was determined in relationship to the resident’s income and/or social and emotional condition. Thus, standing in any one program referred to the level of service a tenant required and the extent of financial resources the residents possessed to address their situations.

In Wood Street Commons, the housing program/level reflected the building’s desired tenant blend. Of the 259 SRO units, 15 were set aside for the chronically mentally ill (Housing Level Ia) and 30 were for homeless persons, recovering from chemical addiction and/or habitual unemployment (Housing Level I). Typically, these persons either worked in temporary
job pools or received cash assistance from the Department of Public Welfare.

The combination of Level Is and Level I tenants represented approximately 20 percent of the available units. Persons occupying these rooms were recognized as chronic needs tenants, requiring more intensive social work assistance. The position taken by staff was that the SRO could only handle about 60 or so chronic problem residents. Furthermore, it was understood that exceeding this figure would create asylum-like conditions where crisis resolution and warehousing would become the facility’s primary purpose.

85 rooms were earmarked for persons on fixed incomes but receiving job-related training or attending school, or for persons who worked part-time in the retail sales, the clerical, or the food service industries (Housing Level II). The remaining 129 units were available to persons working full-time in various employment markets or for individuals who had worked full-time in such markets but were now retired (Housing Level III). Here, too, the conventional wisdom was that legitimate work-related tasks would further reduce resident opportunities for engaging in delinquent patterns of behavior.

B. Resident Types

Identifying resident types (persons most suitable to living in densely populated, single room dwellings), was a prerequisite to achieving the desired tenant blend. Unlike the resident blend which focused on the mix of tenants (e.g., men to women; whites to non-whites; persons age 40 and over to persons under age 40) and unlike the housing level which identified the extent of service persons required, resident type referred to the tenant’s occupation. An assessment of empirical data (e.g., incident reports, eviction notices, and attrition figures generated prior to CHSC’s involvement with Wood Street Commons), investigations of the SRO experience in general (Hoch and Slayon, 1989; Smithers, 1985; Siegal, 1978), and research protocols addressing the low-income housing needs of Pittsburgh-based residents (Wilson and Kouzi, 1990), produced five tenant types. These included:
**Retirees**: 60 years of age or older, physically frail but essentially well.

**Full-time Workers**: employed in the service, industrial/trade, and administrative sector.

**Part-time Workers**: employed in light, low technical markets (e.g., retail sales and food service).

**Fixed Income**: governmentally subsidized persons disinterested in ameliorating their income or social status.

**Jobless**: including; situationally, recovering and chronic homeless.

Based on an evaluation of the available information, prospective tenants matching these types offered the greatest likelihood for minimizing the prevalence of criminality in Wood Street Commons. The number of tenants matching one type rather than another was related to the various housing programs and the importance of maintaining the established tenant blend. Thus, for example, a person fitting the "Retiree" category could be admitted into any of the four WSC housing programs.

A person's income and/or emotional status could also make the prospective resident more appropriate for one level over another. More particularly, in the illustration above, the senior citizen's race or gender (concerns related to tenant blending) could also influence an admission decision. Therefore, persons working full-time receiving low scale pay, for example, were sometimes placed on a waiting list when room vacancies existed only for jobless/homeless individuals. The point is that Intake criteria were governed by tenant blending and resident type concerns, limited only by the designated number of rooms for any one of the four housing programs.

With respect to the two phases in WSC's evolution, occupancy figures during both periods varied dramatically. The need-focused strategy of Phase I generated a daily occupancy rate of 54 percent based on a daily average of 100 residents. In contrast, the strength-focused approach of Phase II produced a daily occupancy rate of 95 percent based on a daily average of 245 tenants. Although building renovations limited occupancy capacity to 185 units during Phase I, the question remains which social work model fostered a greater sense of community in
the SRO milieu of Wood Street Commons? More indirectly, but equally as important, is the link between the individual strategy (need-focused vs. strength focused) and the prevalence of social deviance in the WSC neighborhood.

IV. Social Deviance in the SRO: An Assessment of What Interventions Worked in Wood Street Commons

Two indicators were used for assessing the prevalence of crime/social deviance in the WSC community: 1) **Evictions**—termination of residency because of either excessive or serious house rule violations, generated through resident and/or staff incident report writing; and 2) **Incident Reports**—individual instances of house rule infractions.

Table 1 summarizes these findings for both Phase I and II of the building's development. The eviction and incident report totals were based upon weekly data generated from an analysis of occupancy figures. In comparing the Phase I totals to their counterparts, the data indicates that the need-focused model was characterized by more than three times as many weekly evictions and two and a half times as many weekly incident reports. More specifically, the eviction figures during Phase II did not include any tenant terminations for drug abuse, violence toward others or violence toward property.

Another variable identified in Table 1 is the **Pathology Margin**. It represents the percentage of tenants troubled and at-risk (e.g., homeless, chronically mentally ill, chemically recovering), versus those not so troubled or at-risk as determined at Intake. Thus, the pathology margin is an independent variable. While the number of troubled residents remained virtually unchanged during both social work models (47 persons for Phase I and 49 persons for Phase II) the prevalence of crime was much lower during the strength-focused strategy. This fact is especially telling given that the population density of Phase II was approximately 150% greater than its Phase I counterpart. Typically, an increase in population density creates more opportunity for delinquent behavior, often resulting in more social deviance or crime. The strength-focused strategy of Phase II did not support this correlation.
Table 1

Prevalence of Criminality Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PHASE I</th>
<th>PHASE II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Eviction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Drug Abuse</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Alcohol Abuse</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Violence (Toward Others)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Violence (Toward Property)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other Minor Infractions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Failure to Pay Rent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Incident Reports</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Drug Abuse</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Alcohol Abuse</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Violence (Toward Others)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Violence (Toward Property)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other Minor Infractions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Pathology Margin</strong>*</td>
<td>N = 100</td>
<td>N = 245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pathology margin included the following sub-groups of tenants: the decarcerated, the homeless, the seriously mentally ill, the chemically dependent, and the chronically unemployed.

As stated earlier, the demographics of WSC (including the projected tenant blend, housing programs, and identified resident types) were unchanged throughout the facility's development. This fact significantly challenges the effectiveness of WSC's Phase I model. Thus, the remaining portion of this section more closely examines the viability of both strategies for creating a sustainable community in the SRO milieu. The
assessment can be broken down into four areas: 1) staff perceptions of the social space; 2) staff perceptions of the residents; 3) staff movement and intervention; and 4) implications for the two social work models.

1. Perceptions of the Social Space

The need-focused strategy of Phase I identified several adverse and central building conditions that neutralized prospects for creating a self-sustaining community. Such things as modest room amenities, time restrictions on access to the congregate area, elevators routinely in disrepair, and on-going building renovations were perceived as circumstances jeopardizing the stability of the social space. Thus, staff regarded the building as pathological and endeavored to alleviate its pervasive culture of poverty and dependency through counseling and advocacy initiatives. The concern was that many residents would remain or become passive, anonymous, or alienated from the larger community—outcomes that could conceivably be devastating for the long-term stability of the SRO.

The strength-focused strategy of Phase II identified several critical and fundamental building goals that reaffirmed staff commitment to social designing for at-risk constituencies. Thus, the existing social space was understood to be a potential mecca for cultivating untapped consumer talent, and staff intervened accordingly. During this period, staff engaged in spatial reframing, that is, they perceptually reconfigured the facility. The SRO was acknowledged as a vital, holistic organism. The building walls that physically separated tenants from one another were conceptually shattered. While residents were interspersed among the SRO's various floors, these floors were much like city blocks that constituted a neighborhood.

The spatial reframing of Phase II was designed to promote community spirit, building integration, tenant participation, sustained activities, and overall empowerment. The social work team believed that these goals would be realized once staff engendered a more positive regard for the social space. While the need-focused approach of Phase I recognized the legitimacy of these goals, it was focused on present building conditions
perceived as problematic. Thus, on the one hand, the existing social space was regarded as a contributory impediment in the formation of a healthy, resident-driven community. In Phase II, the SRO building was considered to be a pre-constituted—though dormant—neighborhood, requiring staff direction and harnessing of under utilized resident energy and talent.

2. Staff Perceptions of Residents

Closely related to staff perceptions of the social space was overall regard for the tenant population of WSC. During Phase I, CHSC social workers endeavored to vigorously advocate for the unmet or under serviced needs of the resident body. Staff believed and eventually discovered that several individuals living in the SRO suffered from severe physical and mental health deficits, were illiterate or poorly educated, experienced problems with routine living skills (most notably hygiene difficulties), and possessed limited social and behavioral abilities (e.g., acted impulsively, immaturely, irresponsibly).

The Phase I social work team did not perceive these tenant limitations as insurmountable. Their agenda included acknowledging that society was mostly responsible for the victimization of the sheltered resident. In addition, the strategy insisted on a professional model of brokering for services that would afford time, space, and respite for the beleaguered and embattled street dweller. It was assumed that active outreach to service providers enhanced with generic, client-centered counseling, would re-stabilize the disempowered resident. Eventually, this sustained professional-client relationship, would enable victimized tenants to take back their lives and once again make decisions for themselves.

During Phase II, staff either sought out or invented creative programs and events that showcased tenant competencies and skills. These initiatives began as incubation projects with only a few SRO residents. Eventually, with the support of participating tenants who marketed the programs to others in and outside the SRO, many initiatives spread to additional low-income housing resources in the larger Pittsburgh community.
Staff of the strength-focused model believed that the SRO population was pregnant with budding or skilled artists, sculptors, musicians, cooks, sales clerks, custodians, carpenters, and other unknown talents. Developing and participating in a City-wide Homeless Sports League in which teams were formed from residents or guests of area shelters and soups kitchens became an occasion for the WSC community to parade its athletes and improve upon its leadership skills. Conceiving of and directing a Performing Arts Collective (featuring homeless/poor musicians, dancers, singers, actors, and comedians) became an opportunity for the WSC community to celebrate creativity and to better its organizational talent. Cultivating cottage industries, such as the training and hiring of tenants to cook hot breakfast and three course dinner meals to paying residents ($0.50 per breakfast and $1.00 per dinner), further advanced tenant competencies. Here, not only were residents prepared to eventually assume food service jobs in the larger community, but paying tenants demonstrated an economic investment in the stability of their neighborhood. The money collected from tenants was used to cover a portion of the program’s expenses. Further, by their participation, these tenant-consumers actively endorsed the latent abilities of those resident-cooks in training.

During the strength-focused model, little attention was given to how or why society had victimized individual tenants. Staff remained cognizant of health and social service issues that might impair tenants, but attempted to see beyond such deficiencies except when the condition was life threatening. It was assumed that on-going, resident-driven activities would empower the at-risk and poverty-stricken building constituents to rediscover their own inner strengths and resolve their own life problems.

3. Staff Movement and Interventions

The third staff feature that helps explain differences in the prevalence of social deviance/criminality during both Phase I and II of WSC’s development, is the method of intervention. Following perceptions of the social space and residents, the intervention procedures exemplify the essential nature of each social practice strategy.
The social work model from 1985-1987 emphasized sustained contact with individual residents. The results for this intervention approach included: creating a temporary dependency-based, professional-client relationship; recognizing society's role in fostering tenant victimization; perceiving the SRO as structurally pathological; accepting the relative, short-term passivity of disempowered residents and; stressing the effective advocacy and delivery of health and social services.

The social work model of Phase II stressed sustained consumer-generated projects, requiring the formation of various sub-group entities (such as, the Newsletter Team, the Resident Advocacy Group, the Performing Artists and Musician's Collective). The effects of this strategy included: fostering tenant autonomy and self governance; promoting active decision-making in building community matters; perceiving the social space and the resident corpus as essentially well; encouraging general participation in SRO events and; emphasizing the presence of generic activities as the vehicle to render the SRO as both a market place and a home.

4. Implications for the Two WSC Social Work Models

Both the data and the critical assessment confirm the viability of SRO social designing based upon strength-focused dynamics. While this conclusion is limited to an examination of only staff perceptions of relevant social and organizational matters, the presence of a fledgling community—vis-a-vis the existence of crime/social deviance—was more pronounced during Phase II. This study does not reject outright the importance of a need-oriented strategy in facilitating the establishment of a SRO neighborhood. Instead, the conclusion reached supports the ancillary role assumed by treatment or counseling-based interventions.

One possible explanation for the limited effectiveness of the need-focused approach is that is represented a *deficit* model of intervention. In short, tenants were benignly perceived as the collection of their fallibilities. By implication this meant that the resident body was also understood to be at-risk and troubled. Thus, tenants cast as social deviants may have fostered a secondary effect (see generally Lemert, 1967; Becker, 1963).
Another speculation relates to building tone, generated by staff attitudes and actions. The Phase I model stressed a near apostolic intensity with respect to advocacy and service delivery. The urgency, immediacy, and sustained attention on unmet needs may have been an overwhelming pressure for many SRO residents. Acting-out behavior may well have been a mechanism for ventilating latent hostility. Both these speculative explanations require further research and could be the source of important empirical data on effective social designing in SRO neighborhoods for the future.

V. Conclusions: Justice Policy and the Future of SROs

As a matter of policy, the acceptance of SRO facilities as potentially empowering communities is a relatively recent phenomenon (Hoch and Slayton, 1989; HUD, 1989; Kasinitz, 1984). Unlike their predecessors, these renovated structures no longer warehouse society’s most troubled and vulnerable citizens. Numerous social designing efforts debate how to construct supportive, peer-driven, least restrictive environments. Empowering people has become a popular slogan but not without costs. Fanning the flames of resident self-reliance is a subtle process requiring methodical, calculated precision. Attempts at quick and easy solutions produce only short-lived and sloppy results.

The Phase I social work model of WSC produced disappointing outcomes. Although acknowledging that at the core of its designing were people whose lives symbolized a generation of forgotten citizens, WSC staff attempted to restore tenant esteem through a need-focused approach. Measures used to assess the prevalence of social deviance/crime indicated that the community was not stable: occupancy figures were low, incident and eviction numbers were high.

The Phase II social work model offered more salient outcomes. Here, too, tenants were understood to be at-risk or poor but they were appreciated most especially for the untapped skills they possessed. Efforts at residential empowerment were governed by a strength-focused strategy. Under this approach, data assessing the prevalence of social deviance/crime pointed to a community that was healthier than its Phase I counterpart:
occupancy figures were high, incident and eviction numbers were low.

Creating a sense of neighborhood in an SRO environment requires that one seriously consider what intervention strategy, what social work model, will govern the building's development. In an age of scarce resources, attempts at housing vulnerable populations in single room occupancy settings can offer society precious human justice rewards. More than simply providing people with a place to live, the appropriate social practice model can ready the way for the most troubled of citizens to reclaim their identity and purpose. If further research on social designing and deviance is to be effective in urban SRO settings, sociologists, criminologists, social workers, community activists, city planners, and the like must re-create that notion of market place and home that restores the vitality in each of us. The strength-focused strategy operative in WSC was one model that offered transformative possibilities for its residential constituency.

References


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Symbolic Violence and Social Control in the Post-Total Institution Era

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Subsequent to the passage of the Community Mental Health Act in 1963, the "Total Institutions" described by Goffman have for the most part disappeared. Nonetheless, many writers charge that social control is still the primary function of mental health programs, even those that are identified as community-based. The new methods of control have not received widespread attention. In community-based programs control is operationalized in the form of "symbolic violence." This paper examines the various factors that contribute to this style of violence.

Clearly mental hospitals have never been very pleasant places. In the early days, these institutions were openly barbaric. Persons were placed in chains, beaten, and involved in dehumanizing experiments (Scull, 1979). There is little doubt that these activities were not therapeutic. The aim was primarily to prevent the mentally impaired from spreading their affliction to the remainder of society.
Due to the efforts of eighteenth and nineteenth century reformers, these conditions abated somewhat. In fact, various humanitarian themes were given some credence. Improved environmental conditions within hospitals were thought to contribute to helping the mentally disabled. Patients appeared to improve when placed in commodious surroundings, provided with a systematic behavioral regimen, and given medical attention.

Even though patients were no longer controlled through physical abuse, newer and more subtle techniques of control were developed. Michel Foucault (1965), for example, claims these less obtrusive means of restraint were invented under the guise of science. Consequently, ostensibly rational and tested practices were adopted to subdue patients. Although these strategies may have some medical justification, they are just as intrusive and dehumanizing as those used in the past.

During the 1950s in the United States, a host of writers confirmed Foucault's allegations (Kovel, 1980). Dehumanizing acts against the emotionally impaired were tolerated because of their alleged scientific nature. Thousands of lobotomies were performed, while the use of chemical and electrical shock was quite common. Additionally, the invention of Thorazine and other psychoactive drugs allowed patients to be systematically anesthetized. A sort of chemical straitjacket was now available. And due to the increasing prescription of these drugs, hospital wards became warehouses for those with emotional disabilities.

As Goffman (1961) illustrated, hospitals had become "total institutions." All that had changed was more sophisticated modes of constraint became generally accepted. Accordingly, the therapeutic worth of these institutions was certainly questionable. This state of affairs prompted President Kennedy to announce in 1963 that a "bold new approach" was needed to treat those suffering from mental illness (Mental Illness, 1963). For research seemed to suggest that mistreatment and hopelessness were still the norm on many wards (Pardeck & Murphy, 1992).

Following the passage of the Community Mental Health Act in October of 1963, care for the mentally ill is supposed to be more humane. Patients are to be treated in the "least
restrictive environment." instead of confined to hospital wards. To facilitate this change, community mental health centers have been built throughout the country. In this way, therapy can be provided close to home, possibly in a patient's neighborhood.

Furthermore, input is supposed to be sought from patients throughout the therapeutic process. For example, needs assessments are supposed to be regularly conducted, so that a community's view of a problem can be adequately understood. As a result, services can be provided in a socially appropriate manner.

At the institutional level certain policies are supposed to be operative. For instance, clients are to be informed of their rights upon entering therapy. And in order to insure that they have consented to the course of remediation outlined by the therapist, patients are required to sign their individualized treatment plans. Additionally, quality assurance teams are to be created to monitor care. Such scrutiny is designed to prevent clients from languishing in inappropriate and ineffective treatment modalities.

Subsequent to the passage of the Community Mental Health Act, clients have the latitude to freely initiate and terminate a therapeutic relationship. But as writers such as Scull (1984) maintain, this "decarceration" has not been complete. Although the total institutions described by Goffman may no longer be as widespread, social control remains a key function of mental health agencies. In this regard, Stanley Cohen (1985) contends that control mechanisms have become more subtle and inclusive. For the most part patients are not overtly accosted, but instead are entrapped within a procedural and symbolic web. Control is unobtrusive but just as effective as in the past.

Critics of community-based intervention have charged that the control net is currently wider than ever before (Pardeck & Murphy, 1993). While the proliferation of community mental health programs has been chronicled and their capacity for repression suggested, not much time has been devoted to discussing the actual mechanisms of control that are prevalent. Clearly the vehicles of control have been altered, but in what ways? The purpose of this paper is to address this question.
The Nuances of Symbolic Violence

Social control is sustained in the modern world, according to Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (1977), at the symbolic level. This demarche is thought to be much more effective than traditional methods. After all, physical displays of force tend to arouse the ire of the public, particularly in societies that claim to be democratic. For in this type of polity, no one is supposed to have the power to dictate how others will behave. Therefore, control must appear to be rational, innocuous, and support the common wealth.

But to say that control is symbolic does not mean simply that symbols are used to enforce order. Significantly more is accomplished through symbolism than focusing persons' attention, channeling emotions, and soliciting public support for an issue. Much more important, reality is manipulated and opposition to the status quo is subverted. Control is secured, in other words, through symbolic violence.

This kind of violence occurs when persons are cajoled to abandon their own views and accept another outlook. Overt force does not provoke this shift, nor does the free exercise of volition. Instead persons accept that their present orientation is indicative of irrationality or some other dysfunction. In this regard, little choice is involved in selecting new options, unless clients want to be known as abnormal. Moreover, because the basic values of these individuals are presumed to be problematic, any challenges from those who receive treatment pose to the dominant reality are discredited.

Fundamental to symbolic violence is that a particular interpretation of reality is given a seignorial status. A specific outlook is reinforced in such a way that it becomes almost inviolable. Mental illness, for example, is circumscribed through the use of medical protocol and identified as the complete absence of reason. And anyone who has the particular configuration of symptoms indicative of emotional disability is deemed incapable of voicing meaningful opinions and interacting sensibly. Presupposed by this entire process is a conception of reality that is never doubted.

Clearly, appreciably more is encompassed by symbolic violence than the application of labels. First, different conceptions
of reality are placed in an asymmetrical relationship. Second, the dominant viewpoint is allowed to determine the meaning of the rest. And third, the inferior views are stripped of legitimacy and rendered impotent. When persons are symbolically violated, their actions are not simply categorized and responded to in a unique manner. Instead, and far more devastating, their existence is eviscerated.

A definition of symbolic violence, therefore, must contain several elements. Building on the work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), symbolic violence occurs when a person's outlook is inferiorized and an asymmetrical relationship is established between this individual's worldview and competing conceptions of reality. This undermined viewpoint is abandoned out of logical necessity. The only reasonable action, in short, would be to suppress an inferior position.

As should be noted, symbolic violence is not just a version of coercion. Symbolic violence works from the inside out, while the reverse is the case when behavior is coerced. When symbolic violence is operative, persons may choose to have their values, beliefs, or principles dissected and repressed. In fact, this outcome is a regular part of many approaches to therapy. Such a result is truly violent, because self-destructive behavior is the end product. Demeanor that a patient feels comfortable with may be rejected, for example, because it conflicts with a clinically established norm. The self may be systematically dismantled and reconstructed according to a clinical ideal. Certainly such reconstruction is violent, due to the symbolic violence against the person's identity.

In actual practice, symbolic violence is often witnessed during the standard therapeutic encounter (Vega & Murphy, 1990, pp. 61–83). Psychiatrists and psychologists who possess a variety of diagnostic devices, drugs, and esoteric theories are easily able to regulate their patients, without overt coercion. In point of fact, many persons volunteer for treatment, in the hope of gaining some insight into their fears and desires. Nonetheless, the patient and therapist do not interact as fellow human beings, who regularly share information and give each other advice. Instead, therapists are expected to modify behavior and normalize persons.
Behavioral change is based on a diagnosis that is believed to represent an objective assessment. Politics, racism, or sexism is unimportant. The facts of a case are evaluated and a judgment is made. Indeed, patients are believed to be biased, while therapists are value-free. What this means is that criticism is deflected away from the psychological or medical establishment by a scientific diagnosis. Additionally, due to the exalted position of the therapist, any disagreement with a diagnosis calls into further question a patient's credibility.

Obviously symbolic violence is a means of control that is congruent with the tenets of community mental health, for the direct manipulation of clients is supposed to have ceased. But what about indirect coercion? If a patient's views are thoroughly inferiorized by a diagnostic scheme, does this procedure constitute the basis of social control? If patient input is believed to be uninformed due to certain theoretical considerations, can the claim be sustained that services have been truly humanized?

Inserting clients into a symbolic cage can be equally as damaging as physical violence. Subverting patient input symbolically and treating medical protocol as sacrosanct are inconsistent with the spirit and the letter of the Community Mental Health Act. Yet these and similar practices are present in mental health agencies today (Vega & Murphy, 1990). Therefore, these means of control must be illustrated and curtailed, if socially sensitive care is to be delivered.

Contributors to Symbolic Control

Dualistic Theories

Both the sociological and psychological theories that have dominated the intellectual scene prior to and since 1963 have been dualistic (Vega & Murphy, 1990, pp. 21-41). And due to this shortcoming, real community-based treatment could not be inaugurated. Remember that citizen involvement is supposed to be sought at every stage of program planning. But how can this occur when subjectivity is severed from objectivity, and the former is thought to block access to valuable information?

Niklas Luhmann (1982, pp. 353-55) notes that traditionalists adhere to a "centered" image of society. In other words,
order has been thought to be based on a foundation that is devoid of situational contingencies. Durkheim (1983, pp. 82-85), for instance, refers to this primordial condition as a "reality sui generis." Without this absolute standard, the belief is that the social world would rapidly devolve into chaos. For a vital activity such as the maintenance of reality should not depend on something as capricious as interpretation.

According to this view of order, social reality must be unassailable. This is possible only if objective norms and laws are available to socialize persons. Therefore, subjectivity or opinion must be kept from defiling objectivity. If this approach is successful, universal sanctions can be imposed on society.

The role citizens play in organizing services is seriously curtailed, however, when the differentiation is made between subjectivity and objectivity. And why should these persons be consulted? According to this form of dualism, rational planning can only be impaired by recognizing their opinions. Because subjectivity embodies various values, beliefs, and commitments, placing clients or other citizens at the center of an intervention would be considered a sign of incompetence. Surely no one wants to earn this unflattering reputation.

As a result, those who are thought to be objective, due to their managerial skills or expertise in research, have retained control of planning (Pilotta, Murphy, Jones, & Wilson, 1983). This situation will not likely change until the subjective-objective bifurcation is abandoned. Actually, many contemporary critics insist that this dualism is outmoded, because an essential relationship exists between knowledge and interpretation. For someone such as Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984, pp. 9-10), nothing escapes the impact of language. Every style of knowledge, even that associated with science, reflects a "language game." And once the human presence is understood to mediate thoroughly everything that is known, information is relativized.

Since all knowledge is shaped by interpretation, no source of input can claim to be inherently more objective than any other. Therefore, the worth of information must be judged in terms of its utility, as opposed to its pedigree. Hence citizen participation is not necessarily antagonistic to rational planning. Contacting citizens or allowing patients to formulate a treatment
regimen does not automatically call into question the validity of an intervention.

**Professionalization**

The introduction of multidisciplinary treatment planning was also a part of the movement toward community-based intervention. The purpose of this strategy is to diversify the information available to practitioners and patients. As a part of expanding the range of input, the advocates of clients could be members of the treatment team. In some instances, particularly in ethnic neighborhoods, those who are bilingual serve as translators for the therapist. At other times, "cultural brokers" are invited to provide insight into a patient's background and social milieu (Lefley, 1984).

Yet this undertaking has had only marginal success. One of the reasons why multidisciplinary treatment planning has not worked as anticipated relates to the emphasis that has been placed on professionalization (Vega & Murphy, 1990). The recent proliferation of new disciplines, degrees, and licensing and accreditation requirements has been phenomenal. Almost daily, new regulations are unveiled.

Yet in a significant way, the growth of these professional standards has been detrimental to patients. That is, patients are pushed to the periphery of the treatment team. Why this is happening is understandable. Most of those who receive services are not well educated, are often inarticulate, and do not possess a wide variety of social skills. Simply put, most clients are not professionals, and thus their ability to contribute meaningfully to the formulation of a treatment plan is viewed with skepticism. In contrast to practitioners, the knowledge possessed by citizens and patients is considered to be unreliable.

One of the key purposes of professionalization is to reduce discretion. Similar protocol are to be followed by trained practitioners in every situation. As a result, standardized actions are encouraged. But what would happen if patients were included in evaluations? Due to their lack of professional socialization, their responses would not be predictable. Consistency would thus be threatened.
As a consequence of professionalization, particular knowledge has been elevated in importance. This information, however, is not distributed throughout society. Clients and citizens are thus diminished in importance, because their knowledge base does not usually contain input that is valued by practitioners. Undermined by professionalization, in short, is knowledge that is outside of the limited realm created by this process of formalization.

Science and the Inferiorization of Clients

During the 1960s and 1970s the medical model was constantly under attack (Ingleby, 1980). This challenge to the dominance of medical science in the treatment of clients has abated during the past 10 years. At the National Institute of Mental Health, for example, planners who have a sociological orientation have become almost extinct. In fact, the majority of funding nowadays is directed to discovering the underlying physiological causes of mental illness. Genetic and psychopharmacological research has become quite popular (Pardeck & Murphy, 1993).

Accompanying this shift in emphasis is the belief that becoming increasingly scientific is crucial for making advances in the study of mental illness. Some critics even go so far as to charge that progress is delayed by wasting time and money on the development of social, as opposed to medical, interventions. Obviously in this environment not much effort will be devoted to understanding how patients or communities view their problems.

The stress that is now placed on becoming scientific is also manifested in other ways. The computer, for example, has become part of practically every area of service delivery. Many tasks, including in some cases the therapeutic relationship, have been completely computerized (Pardeck & Murphy, 1986). The purpose of employing this technology is to improve the accuracy of clinical judgments, as a result of organizing a vast amount of information in a systematic way. With the adoption of “expert systems,” for example, the interrater reliability of clinicians is cited to be greatly enhanced (Murphy & Pardeck, 1989).
To use Max Horkheimer's (1982, pp. 132-189) phrase, this adoption of computer technology represents the most recent "attack on metaphysics." By this he means that the social or interpretive side of any venture is obscured. At the peak of the anti psychiatry movement, during the late 1960s to the middle 1970s, clinical diagnoses were assumed to be replete with political motives (Sedgwick, 1982). Women, ethnic minorities, and a myriad of other groups were beginning to question the legitimacy of these decisions. Stated differently, these judgments were no longer thought to be value-free.

But once the computer enters the scene this criticism is minimized. For most citizens are enamored of logic and mathematics, and thus have difficulty believing that computers are biased. While criticizing this commonly held view of computers, Ashley Montague quips that the GIGO principle should be interpreted to mean "Garbage in, Gospel out" (Roszak, 1986, p. 120). For by following the schematics utilized in computer programs, making decisions is not thought to involve gaining critical insight into a problem. Doubtless, a person would have to be an expert at programming to understand how information can be distorted by computerization. But most clients and their families and friends do not have this skill. Therefore, in many ways treatment has been reified through computerization.

Due to the alleged comprehensiveness, accuracy, and objectivity of the information generated by computers, everyday experiences pale by comparison. As a result, computers are often treated as providing an unquestionably valid "second opinion" (Murphy & Pardeck, 1986a). Instead of consulting a variety of sources, clients rely mostly on computer printouts to verify a practitioner's diagnosis. Considering the public's fascination with technology, this finding should not be shocking. Nonetheless, the different experiences, belief systems, and commitments involved in making clinical decisions are ostensibly neutralized.

What can a client add to the data compiled by a computer? Most professionals appear to suggest little (Pardeck & Murphy, 1993). Therefore, data processing requirements have begun to dictate the type and amount of information that is included in clinical activities (Murphy & Pardeck, 1986b). At one time, long and complex interviews were conducted regularly to obtain a
holistic view of a client. But this approach to data collection has lost popularity since the onset of widespread computerization. For these so-called soft instruments are not considered to be very reliable by a large segment of practitioners. The knowledge that is procured is often ambiguous and subject to a variety of interpretations. Such uncertainty is not thought to be conducive to making sound judgments.

This desire to be objective has resulted in evaluation coming to be almost synonymous with testing (Matarazzo, 1986). Compared to ethnographic interviews, tests appear to be rigorous and thus unbiased. This perception has been reinforced by the development of computer programs that are able to administer, score, and interpret tests. Through the computerization of testing, the illusion has been perpetrated that tests provide decision makers with the most accurate and comprehensive information available. Additionally, those who control these tests have gained enormous status in agencies, because of their close association with scientific knowledge that is deemed to be extremely valuable (Pardeck & Murphy, 1986).

Through computerization the separation of fact from value has been encouraged. Since computers are machines and supposedly impervious to values, information that is computerized is used to counteract the influence of opinions. Thus the suppression of knowledge that is not programmable is thought to be entirely justified, because this input lacks exact parameters and is not scientific. Because science is presumed to be the paragon of rationality, all other kinds of knowledge are treated as superficial. Following this truncation of knowledge, patients cannot be allowed to influence significantly the organization of services.

**Bureaucracy**

Most mental health agencies are bureaucracies and thus are structurally organized in a manner similar to the older state hospitals. A major difference between these institutions is that community-based programs are not as expansive as hospitals. Nonetheless, the continued presence of bureaucracy has fostered the implosion of knowledge, in a manner identical to dualistic theories, professionalization, and computerization.
In order to appreciate this critique, bureaucracy must not be viewed simply as an organizational or management style. Rather, as explained by Max Weber (1958, p. 54), bureaucracy represents a unique conceptual scheme or "cosmos." Therefore, changes in organizational size may not have any impact on reducing bureaucracy. This mode of conceptualization can thus be found in practically every organizational setting.

Given the negative view of the bureaucracy, what are the benefits to be derived from this way of conceiving organizations? Claude Lefort (1986, p. 222) answers this query succinctly when he states that bureaucracies appear to be "ahistorical." His point is that because every activity is formalized as a result of bureaucratization, exact categories are available to process information and make job assignments. For example, due to the rigorous division of labor in bureaucracies, redundancy is thought to be avoided and efficiency improved. According to Lefort, criteria for decision making are introduced through bureaucratization that do not appear to be influenced by situational exigencies. Hence regulation is believed to be ultimately rational.

Yet this increasing rationalization, according to Weber, can also begin to cripple an organization. This is particularly the case if input is supposed to be sought from throughout an agency. For job assignments are made on the basis that requirements are not randomly distributed. Stated differently, strict adherence to the division of labor must be enforced, or persons will not be aligned to the proper jobs and efficiency will be compromised.

As long as organizational rationality is conceived in this manner, citizens and patients will exert little control over the intervention process. Why? Both of these groups are tangential to the operation of a bureaucracy, for they lack the training necessary for them to occupy influential positions. And if their role in an agency would be changed simply by fiat, no one would benefit. The rationale for this conclusion should be obvious: persons would be placed in jobs for which they are unqualified. Therefore, the operation of the entire organization may be jeopardized.
As long as bureaucracy and rationality are equated, the knowledge essential for planning will remain within a cabal of experts. Disassembling the rigid division of labor, in short, will not be viewed as prudent. Alternatives to bureaucracy have been proposed, but these options will not receive serious attention until organizational efficiency is rethought. Flat organizations, for example, must no longer be understood to decrease discipline and rationality. But the decentralization of authority is crucial, if citizens and patients are to influence significantly intervention activities. Novel input must not be curtailed by an outmoded division of labor.

**Symbolic Violence in Practice**

In both theory and practice the dualism that supports symbolic violence is difficult to overcome. After all, the prospect of discovering and possessing an unadulterated—apolitical, neutral, and thus valid—knowledge conception is what sustains symbolic violence. Recent talk about holistic intervention, systems theory, and constructivism, for example, circumvent this issue. Therefore, the door is left open for certain knowledge bases, methodologies, or images of the organization to retain a seignorial status, thereby curtailing attempts on the part of practitioners to become more inclusive.

For example, a lot of discussion has taken place during the past few years about TQM or Total Quality Management (Berwick, Godfrey, & Roessner, 1991). In a variety of health care settings, this practice is thought to be a panacea for organizational difficulties. The problem is that drastic managerial change is required if the widespread worker (or client) participation is to occur that is vital for TQM to succeed. For a variety of reasons—professionalism, fear of power shifts, or a lack of confidence in staff workers—the traditional bureaucracy has not been seriously challenged. An analysis of most organizational charts found in social service agencies will confirm this claim (Murphy & Pardeck, 1986a). The result is that staff input barely touches the core of organizational life, not to mention what clients have to say. Most staff persons are peripheralized because of the perceived need to retain a managerially sound and objective image of order.
The same dualism is found in much of the research on mental health issues that is currently funded (Vega & Murphy, 1990). It is no secret that during the 1980s the biomedical model was resurrected. Although biochemical considerations were supposed to be viewed simply as one set of factors among others, a pluralistic approach to comparing knowledge bases was not encouraged. Due to the prestige of biomedicine, and the accompanying positivism, non-medical variables and opinions were diminished in importance. Clients were either expected to relent and accept invasive treatments, based on physiological causality, or pursue alternative remedies that are heavily stigmatized.

In point of fact, Pardeck, Murphy, and Chung (in press) found recently that patients were unable to question extensively the judgements of treatment professionals. Even though patients are supposed to have an integral role in developing their treatment plans, this involvement is not often present. Clients reside at the margin of the treatment planning process and express hostility about the manner in which they are treated. Conversations with professionals, in sum, tended to be short, laden with jargon, incomprehensible, and thus insensitive to the client's wishes. Treatment accordingly turned into nothing more than custodial care.

Clients were not approached in their own terms, but instead their complaints were transformed into diagnostic idiom. Furthermore, practitioners felt uncomfortable believing a client until his or her descriptions were compared to laboratory or psychological tests. Once these objective measures were received, practitioners exhibited some confidence about making an assessment. A patient's insights could not be trusted until a reliable or scientific evaluation could be made.

In the end, the organizational and clinical status quo is preserved without firing a shot, so to speak. Any opinions that do not fit nicely into the body of conventional wisdom are systematically inferiorized and overshadowed by input that is allegedly more trustworthy. Only an unreasonable person would refuse to recognize that difference in quality between those two sources of information continues to give credence to unscientific views.
What practitioners must begin to understand is that allowing diverse types of information, along with different persons, to be introduced into the treatment setting does not necessarily culminate in pluralism. A proper environment must be fostered, accordingly, where disparate kinds of input can receive a fair hearing. In other words, the marketplace of ideas must be democratized, thus enabling every type of information to be introduced into a discussion without bias. The source or pedigree of data, for example, should not determine the utility of certain knowledge (Pardeck, Murphy, & Callaghan, 1994).

With regard to the use of computers by practitioners, for example, recent research has revealed some interesting insights (Pardeck, Umfress, & Murphy, 1990). Despite the fact that practitioners have minimal contact with computers and do not comprehend how they really function, intervention was thought overwhelmingly to be upgraded by the use of these devices. A halo effect was found, due possibly to the apparent scientific character of computerized knowledge bases, that resulted in a favorable attitude toward this technology. In short, computerized knowledge has more face validity, and possibly inherently wider applicability, than other forms of knowledge. But such a predisposition contributes to imploding the search strategy used by practitioners to discover the knowledge that will be included in their decision-making processes. The imagery of the computer, therefore, was able to subvert ostensibly less objective sources of data. This prospect is the hallmark of symbolic violence.

Conclusion

According to Foucault (1965), social control in the modern world has become more rational and less obtrusive. For the most part, control is not enacted through the use of brute force. Instead, science, technology, and reason have been enlisted for this purpose. Subsequently, practices that are inoffensive reinforce reality and undermine critiques of the status quo. This seems to be the case in mental health agencies (Vega & Murphy, 1990). The dehumanization of clients does not necessarily extend from incompetence, malicious intentions or actions, equipment
failure, or a general lack of humanness. Hence challenges are posed for those who want to study how patients are restrained in community-based programs. Specifically, attention must be directed to comprehending how reality is truncated by practices that are not overtly political or pernicious.

In the case of community mental health agencies, through rational and well-orchestrated maneuvers clients remain marginal to the administration of services. Reason and irrationality are juxtaposed in such a way that patients are effectively disarmed. Due to the recent professionalization of services, along with the emphasis placed on science and computer technology, these persons have become viewed as impediments to rational management. In Lyotard's (1985, p. 98) words, nonpractitioners have been symbolically "terrorized".

As is noted by Lewis and Darling (1990), the rhetoric of community-based treatment has obscured what is actually occurring in these programs. Community agencies may be smaller, located in neighborhoods, and less overtly barbaric than the mental institutions of the past, but these newer facilities are just as coercive and intrusive. Conflict with citizens and clients is neatly resolved, while attention is diverted away from the mental health system. The range of discourse and criticism is simply restricted, because science and technology are anathema to the ethical or political issues that are related to controlling persons. Why would criticism be counseled, when the scientific pursuit of truth is underway?

But as long as the focus is maintained on technique, writes Baudrillard, a lot may appear to change while everything remains the same (Kellner, 1989, p. 11). In other words, advances will be made in technology while the de facto manipulation of clients goes unchallenged. Simply because intervention programs are rationally administered, procedures are scientifically monitored, and the latest assessment techniques are used does not signal automatically that mistreatment has ceased. Neither patients nor citizens should be silenced by the apparent neutrality of science and technology. The ideology of science should not be allowed to restrict patients input and their control of mental health services.
References


Defining Success: The Politics of Evaluation in Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Programs

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Alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs must respond to several important stakeholders or beneficiaries of services who have an investment in how success is defined. Utilizing data from recent statewide studies of treatment outcomes of alcohol and drug abuse services, this paper concludes that a strict adherence to an abstinence-only model of success, rigidly adopted by many in the treatment industry is counterproductive. Multiple measures of success are essential to fully understand and assess a changing model of intervention in the chemical dependency field.

Cronbach and Associates (1980) eleventh thesis of program evaluation reads, "A theory of evaluation must be as much theory of political interaction as it is a theory of how to determine facts" (p. 3). Their thirteenth thesis states, "The evaluators' professional conclusions cannot substitute for the political process" (p. 3). While these admonitions provide clear guidance regarding the political nature of program evaluations in general, in the volatile world of assessing the value of alcohol and drug treatment, they have been elevated to commandments. This paper will explore the political process that envelops the initiation and use of outcome evaluations in alcohol and drug abuse treatment
programs. Specifically, the competing definitions of treatment success held by key actors and the subsequent ramifications of these differing standards will be discussed.

The total economic costs of drug and alcohol abuse in the United States is staggering. It has been estimated that the total cost of chemical dependence is over $200 billion a year (Kinney and Leaton, 1990; Hubbard and Associates, 1989). While the majority of these costs are derived from law enforcement expenditures and lost productivity, billions of dollars each year are spent to treat those individuals suffering from alcohol and drug abuse. These expenditures on treatment services suggest two important functions of the evaluation of those efforts. First, there is an increasing call for accountability from the public and private sector. Second, treatment programs theoretically are designed to benefit the consumer of service and the relative effectiveness of treatment should be demonstrated.

Concept of Prime Beneficiary

On close inspection, it appears that alcohol and drug abuse treatment services are asked to satisfy multiple actors, each of whom may support a definition of success. To examine this process, the concept of prime beneficiary as developed by Blau and Scott (1962) will be used as a point of departure. It is argued that the force of competing beneficiary claims shapes the effort to conduct outcome evaluations and to arrive at a consensus on client success in the field of substance abuse treatment. Blau and Scott identified four categories of potential beneficiaries of any organization: 1) public at large; 2) owner, politicians, boards of directors; 3) customers or clients; and 4) organizational members. Though more than one of these groups may benefit from the product of the organization’s activities, Blau and Scott contend that there tends to be one prime beneficiary identified. Accordingly, an organization is expected to be most accountable for its actions to its prime beneficiary. “Any benefits that accrue to other beneficiaries are usually viewed as cost and tend only to reduce the profit or surplus that the organization experience” (Weinbach, 1990, p. 39). It is in light of these competing agendas
of beneficiary groups, and the inability for a prime beneficiary to be designated in alcohol and drug abuse treatment services, that the politics of evaluation can be understood.

**The Public at Large**

The American public has become very sensitive to the scope of alcohol and drug abuse problems. Indeed, some polls indicate that the public views this issue as one of the major social problems facing the country today (Washington Post, ABC News Poll, 1990). National campaigns to combat drug use and abuse, drunk driving and fetal alcohol syndrome, and drug production have garnered much attention. The fear and trepidation that the specter of hard drugs such as heroin, cocaine, and crack promote in a community is well documented. Thus, much of the media spotlight focuses on the control of the supply of drugs and attendant crime that surrounds drug trafficking and usage. Treatment successes appear to be of secondary interest to the general public.

**Elected Officials**

The second constituency, elected officials, may have varying knowledge of the treatment process, but are acutely conscious of the political necessity to address this problem in some form. Realistically, this response is tempered by the diverse claims for attention and dollars. The task for elected officials is to weigh the claims of various interest groups some of whom may appear more deserving, more needy, more responsive, more helpless, or, on the other hand, more powerful, more militant, and more organized than others. For this constituency, definitions of treatment success are filtered through a long standing historical lens of law enforcement and efficiency.

**Clients**

The third constituency consists of the clients of treatment programs. It is generally agreed that approximately 5% of the population between the ages of 12-18 are having significant life problems with chemicals, primarily alcohol (Kinney and Leaton, 1990). Moreover, the figures for the adult population
experiencing problems with chemical dependence range from 7–10% (Ray and Ksir, 1990). Additionally, it is projected that for every one person diagnosed as chemically dependent, four family members are directly affected (Kinney and Leaton, 1990). Simply stated, there are literally millions of people in the United States who are living with emotional pain, economic hardships, and physical deterioration as the result of chemical dependence. In response, the number of treatment facilities have proliferated in this country commensurate with an increased awareness of the nature of substance abuse. Predictably, the primary client and involved others desire services that are effective and satisfying and assess the worth of programs in that context.

The Treatment Industry

Finally, there is the constituency of professionals, paraprofessionals, service providers, and vendors of various sorts, who profit from the problem of chemical dependence. These actors desire continued sanction for such programs and outcome evaluations can be viewed as supportive or detrimental to survival. Their concerns may result in rejection, resistance, and fear of evaluation. The rejection may stem from a belief that outcomes cannot adequately be measured and that lack of documented success will result in the discontinuance of programs. Evaluation can also be seen as supportive if outcomes indicate that programs are effective. However, as will be discussed, effectiveness can be defined in multiple ways and can be shaped by a host of disclaimers and qualifiers. Additionally, the disease model and a strict adherence to an abstinence standard of success is understandably widespread among many in the treatment industry who have benefitted from twelve step programs.

Competing Beneficiary Claims

The discussion of the claims of various beneficiaries has demonstrated a lack of congruence among groups. The existence of various claims results in differing outcome standards used to determine the relative effectiveness of substance abuse programs. Figure 1 compares the competing interests and the standard of effectiveness likely to be employed by each group.
Figure 1

Competing Interests of the Four Beneficiary Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beneficiary</th>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Desired Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public-at-Large</td>
<td>Protection, Punishment</td>
<td>Reduced Crime/</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reduced Supply/</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Incarceration of Abusers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Officials</td>
<td>Reflect public will Balance Competing Claims</td>
<td>Reduced “costs”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients</td>
<td>Adequate treatment</td>
<td>Improve life satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Industry</td>
<td>Increased resources; Acceptance of dominant treatment ideology</td>
<td>Abstinence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Politics of Evaluation: A Case Example

To ground this discussion, ongoing efforts by the state of Missouri to conduct program evaluations of its alcohol and drug abuse programs will be considered. The state has funded chemical dependency treatment programs for several decades through combinations of federal block grant dollars and state general revenue dollars. As a matter of policy, these detoxification, residential, and outpatient services have been provided by way of purchase of service agreements awarded to vendors through a competitive bid process. Despite the long standing nature of the delivery of chemical dependency services in Missouri, only in the last three years has there been any expectations that the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse demonstrate the utility of expending these dollars on alcoholics and drug addicts. In response to numerous inquiries from state legislators, the administrators of the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse developed a five year program evaluation plan. To that end,
several outcome evaluation studies have been commissioned to assess the affects of treatment services around the state.

Three evaluation studies provide the primary experience on which this paper is based. The first study was a precipitously commissioned and rapidly designed retrospective study done in 1990 of 242 completed telephone surveys with clients discharged a year earlier from state funded substance abuse treatment programs. While respondents were representative of the total population on a majority of identified variables, the responding sample did under-represent blacks, inner-city residents, unemployed and unmarried individuals (Hartmann et al 1990).

The identified flaws limited the degree to which results were generalizable and gave impetus to the second statewide study. This project is currently in the second year of its three year research design. It involved prospective contact with treatment programs and incoming clients to facilitate later contact and followup. Currently over 500 three month followup interviews (post-discharge) have been completed and there has only been about a 10–15% attrition rate at the twelve month followup date. Both interview points have successfully achieved representation of state funded clients. Subsequent interviews will be conducted at 18 and 24 months post-discharge.

The third study will be an evaluation of the implementation of case management services into substance abuse treatment programs. This project will allow in-depth contact with participating treatment programs.

Standards of Success

The assessment of treatment services has not produced any consensus regarding the nature of success. On the contrary, the process of performing the evaluations has generated more rather than less confusion about the definition of successful treatment outcomes for alcohol and drug abuse clients. The two primary forces or beneficiaries in this political struggle regarding the definition of success have been the elected officials who fund the various treatment programs around the state and the providers of those services.
As elected officials, they want to be convinced that the allocation of state dollars are having a positive effect on broad social concerns such as crime, unemployment, and the economy. They are less concerned about the change that occurs in any single individual life, unless of course it is one of their constituents.

While there has not been a negotiated concept of success between the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse and the state legislature regarding minimal or expected percentages of abstinence, the elected officials continue to fund the programs of the Division. Moreover, the legislature has recently agreed to significantly expand alcohol and drug abuse services under the state medicaid program. In Missouri, this program is referred to as C-STAR (Comprehensive Substance Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation). Though the state will have to provide 40% of the costs from general revenue, the federal government will be paying 60% for services.

These C-STAR services include the traditional services of detoxification, residential, and outpatient, but include an additional intervention method, namely case management. The case management services, offered in conjunction with the more traditional counseling and therapeutic interventions, concede a very important point. Some clients can be worked with even if abstinence has not yet been achieved. A case management model accepts the notion that stress can be a predeterminate to relapse or a contributor to sustained heavy drinking. Since the goal of case management is to enhance an individual's social functioning through assistance in such areas of daily living as employment, residential stability, family issues, it is inherent in the service that inevitably some clients will not be totally abstinent as they access the resources. As a result, the concept of abstinence in the mind of the legislature has been challenged. The evaluations have provided information about consumption, life style, and perceptions from clients and other family members that offers alternatives to an abstinence only orientation of success. While this concept of success may be subsequently challenged as more sophisticated measures of short and long term behavior are derived, for now, the Division has augmented earlier definitions, and the state legislature has tacitly agreed. The third evaluation will likely refine further these definitions.
The second major beneficiary of the alcohol and drug treatment system in Missouri are the service providers. As mentioned previously, the providers are significantly comprised of people who support conceptually the disease model or who they themselves have achieved an improved quality of life through the use of a twelve step program such as Alcoholics Anonymous which is based on the disease model. This group has traditionally been hostile to any definition of success that was not restricted to total abstinence as the goal. Relapse was expected, but relapse was seen as failure and sobriety, the measure of success was only counted from the last drink or chemical usage. Moreover, any attempt to consider success using any variables other than abstinence if abstinence had not been achieved and sustained was summarily rejected. Therefore, success was conceived of as an all or nothing phenomena. Since a very high percentage of people relapsed post discharge, there was predictable resistance from this group regarding any attempt to evaluate outcomes.

This resistance to evaluation was compounded by the history of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous which historically refused to participate in any kind of systematic research efforts. The rationale given is that an evaluation might compromise the anonymity of the members. While this explanation makes good sense, the tentativeness towards evaluation was also a function of the high drop-out rate. And, since there is no consensus about what ought to be the expected success rate, there was legitimate concern about what the appropriate levels of expected abstinence should be.

Lastly, treatment personnel are very aware of the variables that are harbingers of post discharge abstinence; length of drinking history, economic and employment status, residential stability, in place family and social system networks. The Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, by definition, is serving a poorer, more transient population. Agencies have purchase of service contracts with the Division to provide no or low cost treatment. It is a given that the clients have no or limited support systems and economic stability, certainly as compared to clients who access chemical dependency programs in the private sector and through third party payments. Thus, there is limited expectation
by treatment personnel that people utilizing purchase of service contract slots will have sufficient life supports that generally denote positive outcomes. On the other hand, treatment personnel, who subscribe to a disease model, are generally militant in their belief that services must be withheld from clients that continue to drink. To do otherwise, is to help the client maintain their dependent life style.

Dealing with Resistance

During the retrospective study, the first of the three outcome evaluations, there was considerable suspicion towards the evaluation effort. The Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse sent the names of all clients discharged from residential and outpatient programs in a three month period from the previous year, or approximately 1500 people. Each program was asked to fill out locator sheet information on their selected clients and send that information directly to the Center for Social Research. The locator sheet information was to include the client identification numbers, treatment center numbers, and as up-to-date addresses and phone numbers as possible. First, the agencies were very slow in sending the information. Second, some agencies did not send it directly to the Center, but sent it through the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse. Third, and most importantly, the necessary information was often missing, inaccurate, or illegible. As a result, for almost one third of the sample, there was absolutely no opportunity to reach the client for evaluative purposes. With another 600 clients, the information provided was so sketchy, that no contact could be made despite numerous efforts. Throughout this data gathering phase of the research, many treatment personnel were less than cooperative.

In order to overcome some of the methodological problems experienced in the retrospective study, the Division contracted with the Center for Social Research to conduct a prospective study of a similar group of clients. Each of the twenty five agencies that had state contracts to serve adult residential and outpatient clients were contacted and a training session was arranged. At these agency based training sessions, the purpose of the study, the intake questionnaires, consent to participate
forms, and the important locator information sheet were fully explained and discussed. Many of the trainings were positive and constructive, but some were very tense. Generally, the clinical director attended the training, but rarely did people who would actually be filling out the forms directly participate. Thus, the substance of the training was translated at least once to other workers. Also, each agency was given more than enough admission packets and self-addressed stamped return envelopes.

The resistance to the prospective evaluation project manifested itself in several ways. While not every agency was hostile or intimidated by the specter of evaluation, and specifically, feedback on the quality of their services, many were clearly concerned. Almost half the agencies participating had to be called to return their admission packets. One third of the packets received did not contain client identifier numbers so there was no way to link the data with the state's existing management information system. Many of the questionnaires were inappropriately completed. Though improved from the retrospective study, much of the locator information was either missing or inaccurate. Perhaps most telling as an act of resistance, approximately 30% of the clients refused to participate in the study. In checking on this high rate, it was determined that many of the workers at intake were negative towards the study and either actively or implicitly encouraged clients to resist.

As mentioned, the third evaluation will be conducted on the newly developed C-STAR program. A primary component of that program is case management services. While case management is an accepted and invaluable part of psychiatric services and services to the developmentally disabled, it is a very recent addition in alcohol and drug abuse services. During the training sessions that have been offered to date on the philosophy and goals of case management, the trainers have met with often undisguised hostility. The basis of the hostility is the ideological rejection of the belief that clients who are continuing to use substances are entitled to receive support services.

Discussion

It is the argument of this paper that outcome evaluation studies of alcohol and drug abuse services are subject to relent-
less political struggles. Much of this struggle is over the thorny issue of what constitutes a successful intervention with a client and by extrapolation, what constitutes a successful program. Incorporating the work of Blau and Scott, it is suggested that the absence of a designated prime beneficiary contributes to competing definitions of successful treatment. Furthermore, strict adherence to various ideological positions precludes a meaningful dialogue about reasonable expectations for treatment.

It appears that two prime beneficiaries have emerged in this political debate, elected officials and treatment personnel. Each stakeholder has an investment in the political decisions that are made in the area of substance abuse prevention, control, and treatment.

It is not uncommon for those in the treatment industry to condemn elected officials for insufficiently supporting alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs with funds to expand services, who rebel at the suggestion by these lawmakers that their services are ineffective, and who regard punitive measures as insensitive. However, if successful treatment is discussed only in terms of abstinence then it certainly is understandable, given existing data, why elected officials would opt to support the more politically popular law enforcement initiatives.

The treatment industry may unknowingly contribute to misconceptions about reasonable outcome expectations. These misconceptions occur as a result of the strict adherence by a powerful group of service providers who fail to consider alternative measures of success other than abstinence. Yet, Goode (1989) is not optimistic, "Abandoning the abstention-only model for treated alcoholics, even if they constitute only a substantial minority, represents something of a revolution in thinking about the subject" (p. 134). It is recognized that many, perhaps most people who seek treatment for alcohol and drug abuse programs, abstinence is the only viable treatment goal. Nevertheless, it is also recognized that levels of success can occur irrespective of chemical usage.

Thus far, the findings from the several outcome evaluations suggest that abstinence has been achieved for many clients who have completed treatment in state funded programs. Significant numbers of additional clients, while not remaining abstinent, have decreased their consumption. Moreover, commensurate
with those findings, is an overall increase in the employment status of clients, more stability in their living situations, and a decline in clients' involvement with the legal system. Other programs, with similar clients, have reached comparable conclusions. Each of these positive outcomes also results in reduced costs to society.

Unfortunately, many service workers in the treatment industry undermine their own success with clients by rejecting or denying the documented improvements. These workers have difficulty accepting anything but abstinence as a demonstration of an enhanced quality of life for the individual and fewer social costs.

This rigid, ideological position is potentially damaging to the abstinence-only group and the clients they serve. As the evaluation research evidence mounts, it is obvious that many clients do not remain totally chemically free, but have periods of sobriety and periods of usage or relapse. Yet, the clients' self reports augmented by substantial collateral data, strongly indicate that treatment made a difference in their lives and that their heavy usage had been altered through intervention. If an abstinence-only criterion is the sole barometer of success, then existing data argues that programs will be seen as not very successful (eg. 50% of the located sample remained abstinent during first year after treatment) and funding from elected officials will be adversely affected.

On the other hand, if success of treatment is viewed through multiple lenses including not only abstinence, but reduced usage, higher employment, better personal relationships, fewer legal entanglements, then programs can report better success rates. When such results are not communicated to elected officials, the treatment industry fails to capitalize on its own success.

Moreover, as the outcome information increases on the range of positive changes that occur with clients, individual treatment programs can offer and elected officials can expect a greater level of sophistication. Programs should begin to set measurable objectives for their clients. Making allowances for the chronicity of the clients, available resources, and relevant environments, programs should then be held accountable for
meeting their objectives. When objectives are not met, programs, especially under governmental auspices have a responsibility to analyze their performance and make appropriate adjustments. Such a process would not eliminate the politics in defining the success of alcohol and drug abuse programs, but it would make them more accountable for their services.

References


A framework is offered for making organizational assessment for change using feminist, labor, and organizational culture perspectives. A vision of a humane work environment is important. The labor literature provides the critical analysis, the feminist perspective provides alternatives, and the concept of organizational culture provides the tool for assessment. Based on an exploratory study with women administrators, the authors look at how differences in values are reflected in the administration and structure of feminist and traditional agencies.

Conceptual Framework

Feminist Literature  The literature on feminist organizational structure and service provision emphasizes a focus on women’s needs and of women taking control of their lives. There is a recognition that the issues facing women as workers are the same as those affecting women as recipients of service. Feminist practitioners attempt to structure the workplace in such a manner as to promote worker control, autonomy and empowerment (Kravitz and Jones, 1988; Schwartz, Gottesman and Perlmutter, 1988). Weil (1988:71) identifies feminist organizational alternatives as including the following components: 1) flexible teams with leadership emerging from expertise on the specific issue being addressed, 2) mutual planning and problem solving during regularly scheduled staff meetings, 3) strong emphasis on consensual decision-making and process,
4) nonhierarchical staff relations and decision-making, 5) an empowerment focus which includes staff, self help groups and the use of volunteers. Hyde (1989) adds the centrality of women's values, lives and relationships which include the concepts of relatedness and connectedness. The importance of staff support and development is noted, as well as the need for establishing a work environment that reflects women's values of nurturing, self disclosure, use of emotions, support and mutual dependence. Another ingredient in creating a supportive alternative work environment is the provision of constructive and sympathetic supervision (Weil, 1988).

The modified consensus model developed from difficulties in consensus run organizations. While acknowledging that consensual decision-making promotes the most democratic form of organizational structure, it can also be inefficient and difficult to maintain. Rothchild and Whitt (1986) point out that consensual decision making takes time, is emotionally intense and is difficult to maintain in the face of political, economic and social pressures. In response to problems in implementing a consensus governed organization, modified consensus models are emerging which distinguish between routine and critical decisions.

All staff participate in critical decisions while small groups concerned with a particular issue or program make decisions that are considered routine. This level of decision-making carries with it additional authority and responsibility, but it does not reinforce traditional dominant-subordinate hierarchical, bureaucratic relationships (lanello, 1992). Individual program coordinators are designated, but because this designation is based on expertise, all members have the opportunity to become coordinators as they develop expertise in a specialty or program area. Tasks are generally rotated with program coordinators changing in a deliberate effort to avoid hierarchical power relationships.

Labor Literature The labor literature, like the feminist literature, focuses on the nature of professional work, bureaucratization, specialization and the structural impact of external sources of funding (Fabricant, 1985; Braverman, 1974). Bureaucratic imperatives limit autonomy and decision-making while impinging on the use of clinical skills and professional
judgement. The techniques, scheduling, pace and evaluation of work are all subject to and based upon bureaucratic mandates reflecting such regulations and policies as DRG's, productivity quotas and billable hours. With this in mind, it is helpful to understand social workers as workers (as do feminists) with needs and pressures that are similar to other workers.

With the increase in bureaucratization and the changes in technology, processes of deprofessionalization and deskilling have been taking place. Deprofessionalization is a process in which organizational requirements and policies are impinging upon and eroding professional autonomy and decision-making (Arches, 1991). Deskilling is the systematic breakdown of the worker's knowledge and skills into smaller and smaller components. This disempowers the worker and leaves both client and worker disconnected and frequently isolated, seeing a myriad of of separate equally isolated "helping" professionals. This is the workplace situation that feminist models about organizational structure address.

The basic qualities attributed to professionals (Greenwood, 1957): monopoly over knowledge, autonomy and service orientation are subordinated to the demands of the organization and its funding sources. While social workers are socialized for their roles as autonomous professionals, there is another harsher reality they are likely to encounter and for which they are not likely to be prepared. Administrators, as well as workers, experience alienation similar to that traditionally experienced by blue collar workers. The modified consensus model advocated by feminists may serve to "de-aliente," with its goal being to "humanize the workplace, to put meaning and values back into jobs in order to reconnect the worker with society" (lannello, 1992:31).

Organizational Culture The organizational culture model by Schein (1985) provides a framework for assessment of an organization for change activities. It supplements the political economy (Hasenfeld, 1983), force field analysis (Brager and Holloway, 1978), and changing-organizations-from-within models (Resnick and Patti, 1980) that comprise the social work organizational literature. The concept of culture is familiar to social workers and administrators, especially those with social
science backgrounds (Schneider, 1992). It also coincides well with a feminist perspective because it is concerned with the subjective experience—the impact of members’ feeling and thinking about a range of organizational situations. Knowledge of the culture provides important data in a discourse that social work administrators and direct service workers can apply as they contemplate organizational change activities.

Proponents of organizational culture suggest examination of three levels from which one can determine its content: artifacts and symbols, espoused and revealed values, and underlying assumptions. The artifacts and symbols essentially reveal the values. Underlying assumptions are the shared understanding or expectations which members at various levels in the hierarchy have in common, and these can be discovered through hearing ideas about the organization and the way things are done from the organization’s participants.

Methodology

Using a cultural perspective, we searched for the “patterns of basic assumptions—invited, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with problems of external adaptation and internal integration—that have worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, 1990: 111).

In gathering the data, we made use of in-depth qualitative interviews with women administrators to determine the symbols, values and underlying assumptions Schein (1991) presents as a means for analyzing an organization’s culture.

The purpose of the interviews was to determine whether there were differences in the way an agency was experienced, administered, and structured in women-directed agencies when the agency espoused a feminist philosophy in comparison with agencies that had a traditional mission. Our assumption was that there are always difficult organizational situations with which administrators are expected to cope. We hoped to understand more about whether the ways of administering agencies managed by women differ if the agency embraces a feminist
philosophy or if it does not. The findings would be of significance for understanding workplace experiences.

Female administrators were interviewed from 10 organizations that were formed around 15 years ago, had approximately the same number of staff (between 7 and 11 workers) and employed social workers. The organizations included traditional social service agencies, those that referred to themselves as feminist and had mission statements affirming their commitment to feminism, and locals of unions with male and female members employed in both private and public sector social service organizations.

Of the feminist agencies selected, two were involved with providing services for battered women (one agency was primarily involved in running a shelter while the other provided extensive outreach and support programs for women and children), and two were concerned with mental health problems (one provided out-patient psychotherapy and the other was a residential program). The traditional agencies included family service, mental health, an employee assistance program and an outreach program for pregnant teens.

Both authors conducted the interviews which were held with either one or two administrators of the ten organizations. The responses to the following questions were tape recorded:

1. What are the history and goals of the agency?
2. What do you see as the accomplishments of the agency?
3. What are some of the problems you may have in meeting the goals?
4. Please tell us about your organizational structure and functioning?
5. How do you deal with accountability and evaluation?
6. What kind of education and professional socialization would your staff need to be prepared to work and effect change in your agency?

Findings

The concept of power emerged as a theme in all of the interviews. This included relations with boards, supervisors, other workers, funders, the community and clients. Shared power,
as opposed to power to dominate, is an espoused value in the feminist agencies. The feminist agencies clearly articulated their attempts to incorporate into their structure the feminist concept of power. Feminists view power as infinite, thereby rejecting zero/sum assumptions of who should have it. They rely on the belief that power can be shared.

The second concept that consistently emerged in our quest for understanding the values of the agency administrators whom we interviewed was what we are calling "connectedness". It is consistent with the women's literature, whether one is exploring women's emotional development and associated clinical concepts (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, and Surrey, 1991), cognitive development (Belenky, Clincy, Goldberger and Tarule, 1986) or our understanding of our relationship to bureaucracies (Ferguson, 1984). The sub-headings or values that are associated with this concept in the feminist literature are growth in relation, nurturing, caregiving, use of emotions, and empathy.

Feminist Agencies

1. The histories. Each of them developed in response to women's need for support and empowerment in their various roles. No other existing agency was addressing the specific problems that accompanied the powerlessness and paucity of resources that those particular women were experiencing. One agency emerged from mothers who had their children in the same day care facility and would get together to discuss child rearing. When it was discovered that several of them had been battered and needed help in determining how to deal with their feelings and change their lives, they developed services to meet these needs. The activities were developed as social change as well as individual change strategies and included outreach and community involvement, housing, employment, child care and emotional support. Another goal was to mitigate the emotional problems associated with sexual abuse and alcoholism.

2. Empowerment and equality: women as workers and clients. The nonhierarchical social structure of the agency, mutual decision-making, attempts to equalize salaries, and power sharing all emerged as values in the feminist agency interviews.
It was clear that in the majority of the agencies, the staff had a history of struggling to redefine power relationships. They had sought to make their agency a workplace where they saw themselves as workers, and as female workers who traditionally were disempowered, as opposed to professional workers who had become empowered at the expense of other staff and clients.

One worker responded to the question of what she would change if she had a chance by saying: “We have the power; things here are the way we want them. If we want something changed, then we make it happen.”

Another interviewee from a mental health agency put it this way: “Power is the prism through which we see everything. . . . The structure enables us to get away from setting certain people up as experts and it reduces the hierarchy.” This worker also explained how her agency had historically avoided taking on student interns as they were unable to figure out a way to eliminate the exploitation built into that role.

At agencies which made use of the shared administrative model (similar to the modified consensus model), we were told that the “shared administrators” have the power to change the structure if it is not responsive to the needs of workers and consumers. And, in fact, in all of the agencies that made use of this or a collective model, the structure had changed over the 15 years or more of their existence. The shared administrative model allowed them the flexibility to change the structure as the needs of the organization, its members and their development necessitated such changes. This model was described by a shared administrator at a residential mental health facility in the following conversation:

You get out of school and you think you’re going to change the world. Then you get into an agency that has no ideas about changing. You get into an agency and don’t even realize that there are alternatives. The shared administrative model is a microcosm. It’s an empowerment model where each person is held accountable to the group and is responsible for her own piece of work. It would be ridiculous for us to talk about empowerment for clients and have a hierarchical staff. It seems more natural for us to treat consumers and staff the same way.
In all but one agency, professional staff had actively worked to eliminate any hierarchical structure and consciously attempted to equalize salaries in an effort to change traditional power relationships. Educational degrees and licenses did not merit special treatment. In one agency there was no designation of director, rather titles reflected the program in which they worked and these had been rotated. Workers participated in several different aspects of the organization during their employment.

3. Mutual planning, staff connectedness and decision making. Knowledge of many aspects of the agency's function provides a mutual framework around which staff has a great deal in common and can coalesce. This agency eschewed status associated with professional identifications in case assignments and setting of fees. We were told that the entire staff shares responsibility for cases rather than each client-therapist interaction being autonomous.

The shared administrative model assumes that people will do specific tasks but that the whole staff will come together for major decisions. Each of us has a set of particular tasks but we all need to get feedback from each other. As a fundraiser I need to speak to the others so I know what's going on. Everybody needs to know all aspects of the agency. (Interviewee at a residential mental health setting)

In one agency that used the shared administrative model, any change comes before the shared administrative group which meets weekly. The agenda contains an administrative piece, direct services and money issues. Everyone has the opportunity to add to the agenda. The chair and note-taking responsibilities rotate each week.

A worker in a battered women's program pointed out that all the programs were initiated in a bottom up manner with a need being identified by consumers. Depending on the agency, workers, board members, volunteers as well as consumers figure out a program to meet that need. In another agency, teams became informed about particular issues relative to programming and then decided what small policies and procedures
should be implemented. If the policy was more complicated or involved a large expenditure, it would be brought to the entire staff for discussion.

The workers using the collective and shared administrative model felt they had power over their lives and actively worked to promote programs for empowering consumers. This was reflected in the words of one worker who put it this way:

In most agencies there's a lot of going back to the consumer with information rather than having the person sitting next to you make her own decisions. A lot of agencies spend a lot of time and energy trying to figure out what is good for the consumer, not what the client wants... In school you don't learn about letting people decide what they want to do.

Reflecting on the planning process we were told, "Traditionally the grunts do the direct service work and the administrators do the policy work. Here we wear both hats. It means a lot more planning."

The use of space was symbolic of nurturing and intimacy in all of the feminist agencies. The only totally private offices that were visible were in the out-patient mental health center in which individual psychotherapy as well as group therapy were conducted. There were large areas for staff meetings or group meetings in that agency. This and three other agencies had their meeting rooms near obviously well-used kitchens. We were offered coffee and cake. We witnessed warm, familiar interactions among staff members with some laughter.

The evaluation process is another example of a more egalitarian way of relating. Three of the feminist agencies had mutual evaluations. The staff are asked to say how they feel that the organization can support them in their goals as well as a supervisor saying what the staff person needs to do to maintain her working well with the organization. Or, there is a peer supervisory process.

4. Boundaries. The social distance between clients and workers is not as great in the feminist agencies as one is socialized to expect in traditional social worker-client relationships. Workers in three out of the four women's agencies who have
experienced battering or mental illness will refer to it as they work with the clients. In fact, their experience of having "been in the same boat" is a positive criterion in their being hired as is being a person of color or bilingual in two of the four. One of the administrators said:

You use your own life experience to make a connection. It's important to let the person know that you're really there for them. You have to be there for them emotionally. Even if you haven't had exactly the same experience, you may have had a piece of an emotional response to a situation that will help your connection with them.

It is important not to make assumptions that other people feel the same way as you do. The women's diverse cultural backgrounds will mean that they will have a different response to battering than, perhaps, we do and the advocates have to be able to understand and connect with that. For example, the Cambodian women will not want to leave their husbands, so we have to provide and support outreach for them for a long time.

One of the leaders of the mental health residential facility explained that their workers do not think of themselves as rescuing the clients but in a peer-like way helping them to make the choices that will best coincide with what they want for themselves. The workers are not set up to be the experts, thus the tendency to exacerbate a dominant-subordinate relationship that is more likely to exist in a traditional agency is diminished. All of the feminist agencies had the theme of working closely with women to help them cultivate skills for taking care of themselves, but not taking over.

In the feminist agencies, there is a conscious effort to help women overcome dependency. In this way, programs contribute to liberation as opposed to social control. There is an active effort to include consumers in decision making positions at every level. Shared responsibility and mutual support stand out as striking features most clearly defined in collective, shared administrative models presented.

In summary, the feminist agencies tended to redefine power relationships by eliminating the hierarchical structure, reducing the division of labor and specialization, sharing programmatic
decision making, equalizing salaries, and focusing on a model that empowered themselves and their clients. Most of the agencies had former consumers on staff and/or the board. The staff felt supported by the board, attended board meetings and sat on board committees with power being shared. The intensity of the mutual task orientation resulted in enhancing the connectedness that women so frequently seek.

Traditional Agencies

In the traditional agencies the directors clearly had the power over their staffs but tended to use that power to generally nurture and support as well as to make policy. These administrators also had a board, or another organizational level to which they were held accountable and who ultimately held power over them.

While the administrators wanted to create a work environment in which their workers were shown respect and where consideration was given to their input, the hierarchical structure in these agencies limited the extent of staff’s participation. One administrator explained that there was gross inequality between the workers on her unit and workers in the rest of the agency, and while she strongly supported her workers advocating for higher salaries she knew that given the financial situation, the person in power was not about to make any changes. She herself felt powerless to do anything about this. As much as the administrator wanted to foster empowerment of her staff there were certain structural limitations which she felt could not be changed. The team was not involved in programmatic decisions. This particular administrator tried to work within the hierarchy to push the limits of worker empowerment through the organizational culture. If they could not control programmatic and salary decisions made by those above them, they could at least have control over their space in the hierarchy.

This was a theme that was consistent for the other traditional agencies as well. In one agency the workers challenged a very stuffy organizational culture when they painted and reupholstered the furnishings in their offices and significantly altered the ambiance of their work environment.
When I came here morale was crawling on the floor. There was a great deal of ill will. All the office doors were closed. Another social worker and I opened the office doors and started painting them—we chose pink paint. We were laughing a lot in the process and pretty soon people came to see what was going on and we were initiating a much more open door policy. I use a team approach and bring in all the staff who have anything to do with the clients. If the workers are going to be relating to families in a constructive, positive, warm way I think that it is important that we relate to each other in those ways too. The team meeting can be an in-service education time or just a time for people to be together. If you don’t set aside time for that and sanction it, you can’t get people together. We use every opportunity we can find for celebrations—birthdays, holidays.

Another type of caregiving was expressed by an administrator who is protective of the social workers’ time. She explained that board members would like social workers to attend board meetings but the social workers do not want to because it means attending work related meetings on their own time. The director would prefer that the social workers only have to use “off hours” for the clients’ benefits eg, being on call.

All the administrators expressed support for their staff and acknowledged the importance of their input for their own clinical decisions. Only one specifically mentioned that if staff wanted a new program, they could bring it up in a staff meeting and it would be brought to the board for discussion and possible approval. This director, as did the others, saw herself as a mediator and advocate for her staff with the board.

The vehicle for staff input in all the agencies was the team meeting. There was an active attempt to make this a place where issues of work could be discussed in a supportive environment. The content tended to be limited to sharing administrative information and discussion of clinical issues. One administrator shared an example of worker input in which her staff had been annoyed that she answered the phone and the door during supervision and thereby was giving her workers less than her full attention. When one supervisee finally mentioned this to her in private, she followed up by acknowledging her insensitivity
to this issue in a staff meeting and assured the group she would work to change. For her birthday the staff bought her a \textit{DO NOT DISTURB} sign for her door, which she proudly uses. The problem was resolved amicably.

Another director described her meetings with staff in which she asks their opinions and gets feedback about how procedures should be implemented. She also uses the opportunity to give them as much positive feedback as possible verbally as well as in "well deserved" time off when they have special situations. She helps them find the areas in which they excel and consciously tries to contribute to their individual professional goals as she supervises them individually.

The traditional social worker-client relationships, relative to connectedness, prevail in each of these agencies. However, the emphasis on home visits in three of these agencies led to inevitable reduction in role distinctions that accompanies visiting of clients in their own settings rather than the agency.

\textbf{Discussion}

The relationship between organizational structure, work conditions and organizational values is clear, especially as it relates to power and connectedness. The organizational culture perspective helps reveal the symbols, values and assumptions to assess their impact on the structure and administration of the organization, and, can shed light on problems of the organization and its potential for change.

In the feminist agencies, the shared power models provided administrators with concrete opportunities for empowerment through mutual decision-making and sharing of responsibility. The feminist agencies tried to redefine power relationships by acknowledging the impact of bureaucratization, addressed in the labor literature, and by eliminating the hierarchical structure, reducing the division of labor and specialization, sharing programmatic decision making, equalizing salaries, and focusing on a model that empowered themselves and their clients. Three of the agencies had former consumers on staff and/or the board. The staff felt supported by the board, attended board
meetings and sat on board committees with power being shared. This contributed to feelings of empowerment, connectedness and well-being that made up for their low salaries.

The traditional agencies, because of structural aspects of bureaucracies, such as boards of directors, hierarchy, and the division of labor differed significantly relative to worker participation and decision-making. Their administrators demonstrated concerns about aspects of the agency vis a vis worker cohesion and connectedness but the tension between what could be done and their feelings of powerlessness was expressed and felt. The administrators carried much more responsibility for the well-being of the programs and for “their” workers. The analysis of the workplace, from a labor perspective, explains the structural limitations exerted on these administrators.

In both feminist and traditional agencies, it was revealed, an awareness of who makes decisions and how, strengthens the workers’ ability to intervene at the system’s level where they are most likely to be most effective. Workers can benefit from the knowledge of organizational analysis and assessment based on the criteria discussed e.g. knowledge of the hierarchy, division of labor, connectedness, decision-making, history, the mission statement, supervision and evaluation. Familiarity with the mission statement of an organization can be a way to hold the organization accountable and assess its potential for change. Assessing the board and being able to intervene “where the board is at” is a skill that in some agencies will open the door to organizational change. It was clear from the interviews that workers need to go to board meetings and have a direct working relationship with their boards. At these meetings participation in critical decision-making might include economic issues, finances of the agency and sources of funding. Such meetings can serve to underscore areas of agreement and to define mutually necessary organizational tasks and goals as well as to provide an ongoing forum to discuss areas of discord and change.

This research began as an endeavor to discover if there were differences in values and administration in women administrators in feminist and traditional agencies. What we did learn was that the shared administrative model helped administrators, and seemed to promote “de-alienation” (Ianello, 1992). The
laughing, statements of power and symbols of connectedness were outstanding compared to the statements of frustration, isolation and resignation echoed by the traditional administrators.

References


Writing a book is challenging. However, the process of writing becomes much more difficult when an author attempts to connect multiple academic areas of study, two continents, different cultures and various divergent theoretical perspectives. Yet, this is the challenge that the author undertook in this book of readings. The book bridges the fields of law enforcement and social work and the academic areas of social work, criminal justice and criminology. It links the continents of Europe and America. It connects the various subcultures of law enforcement, violence, mediation and conflict management. It also applies different ideological, theoretical and philosophical perspectives.

The book consists of twenty-three short essay chapters that are organized into five main topical sections. The first section introduces various philosophies and theories of community violence, police intervention and conflict resolution. It links the experiences of British police with those of American police in dealing with the problems of community disorders.

The second and third sections present antithetical perspectives on issues of community violence and police intervention. The second section presents the community’s perspective, while the third presents the police viewpoint. The fourth and fifth chapters focus on the roles of police mediators first the United States and then in Great Britain.

The sixth and final section presents a series of essays that focus on analysis of social conflict, crisis intervention and post-crisis intervention. The last essay in the book draws these discussions to a coherent conclusion.

The book is not a comprehensive analytical analysis of scholarly literature on civil disorders and the police role, although it does contain some scholarly research material. It is not a “how to mediate social conflicts” manual for police, although the book also does contain some of this material as well. The entire book can be summarized in a few sentences, drawn from the author’s
conclusion. "This book is not intended to provide answers so much as possibilities; nor explicit techniques so much as orienting principles. Nevertheless, certain recommendations emerge relatively clearly from among the various contributions, written as they are from a great variety of standpoints."

The approach taken by the author may be called a bridging work. In fact, the book tries to link so many divergent perspectives that its conceptual organization might be described as an iconoclastic network of bridges linking numerous disparate human thoughts and actions. It connects the real world of policing to the scholarly worlds of social philosophies and community theories. These worlds are divided by deep gorges that are filled with different experiences, perceptions, mistrust, conflicting ideologies and myopic convictions of what constitutes life. Like other academic-real world bridging works, this one may not be well received by some people on both sides of issues. The book’s unusual character is both its weakness and its strength.

The book has several weaknesses. One is that scholars from any one of the many paradigms presented will probably find this work to be superficial and lacking in serious scholastic value. Its review of literature is reasonably comprehensive, but its analysis and discussion of complex and enigmatic issues is cursory at best. In addition, the writing is too often uneven and gives simplistic interpretations to complex social, legal, law enforcement and research related issues.

The book also makes a feeble and unsuccessful attempt at trying to conceptualize community violence within a clinical “social disease” framework. The author simply fails to provide a valid theoretical framework, empirical research or diagnostic evidence to substantiate need or utility for this approach.

Traditional law enforcement trainers will tend to find the book less than useful for uncovering pragmatic solutions to serious community order problems, although the bibliography may be of some value. Still other readers may reject the work because it rambles around issues without providing a consistent theoretical context within which to study them. Yet, the book is not without considerable merit.

Scholars and practitioners alike who are looking for an easy-to-read book for students and one that can serve as a platform
for discussion and debate will find this to be an interesting and instructive book of readings. The organization of the reader is clear and could serve as an outline for a series of class lectures. When augmented with other materials, the book could be a valuable teaching aid. Its bibliography is also one of its strong points.

Another strong point is that the text has significant value for the areas of international criminal justice and comparative criminology. On every issue the author presents material from both Great Britain and the United States as well as limited materials from other countries. It presents valuable comparative information that allows the reader to appreciate a variety of different points of view and international experiences. Taken together, these make it possible to compare the experiences of any single country or those of any single community (such as the Los Angeles Riots of 1992 in the United States) with community disorders of other cultures and nations.

Finally, the book, even with its shortcomings, serves as a valuable interface among the areas of social work, criminal justice and criminology. Students from all three areas can gain a better eclectic understanding of commonly shared problems and appreciate the unique contributions of each academic area.

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Both the print and electronic media are bombarding the public daily with dramatic and shocking reports of violence including drive-by shootings, drug busts gone awry, and other incidents involving the actions of youth. Not uncommonly, the violence is ascribed to gang activities. These two books present
illuminating perspectives on the headline-grabbing phenomena of juvenile or youth gangs.

The Cummings and Monti edited volume with 13 chapters involving 14 authors is organized into three parts. Part I, "What We Know and Do Not Know About Gangs," has two chapters. The bulk of the book is Part II, "The Behavior and Organization of Gangs in Different Settings," with ten chapters dealing, for example, with descriptions and discussions of a wilding gang, the working gang, and gang graffiti. Part III, "What Can Be Done About Gangs," contains three fascinating chapters: "Moral Panic and the Response to Gangs in California," "Gangs and Civil Rights," and "Public Policy and Gangs: Social Science and the Urban Underclass."

Resisting a potential impulse to define a gang, the authors' more credibly list some of the more common traits of gangs. These include "age-and sex-segregated cliques of young persons, sharing a certain group identity and occupying particular geographic territory, often in opposition to real or imagined 'enemies', and who frequently behave in a destructive, disruptive or illegal manner" (p. vii). This work presents scholarly discussions often framed around these traits involving research engaged in by the authors. Particularly in the first chapter, Frederic Thrasher's pioneering research in Chicago resulting in the publication of The Gang in 1927, is acknowledged and tautly discussed.

Important points are underscored in the book relative to the prominence of intergang conflict and violence in which innocent bystanders may be victims, the unintended consequence of incarceration and detention of gang members serving to reinforce gang membership and commitment rather than achieve rehabilitation, and the fact that while drug involvement, including dealing, is frequently associated with gang activities, it is not necessarily a paramount function of gangs. Similarly, in discussing gang violence and individual violence in the context of stereotypes about gangs, Joan Moore observes that violence around drug marketing and other criminal activity may more accurately be characterized as activities of individuals (who may be members of a gang) rather than gang-related violence. This distinction has potentially important implications for the future
of gang members who have not consciously engaged in criminal activity that is violence-prone.

Cuming's chapter, "The Anatomy of a Wilding Gang," discusses his study in Fort Worth, Texas, noting the interracial and social class context of the wilding gang violence including the escalation of collective violence involving brutal murders. Wilding gang violence was distinguished from violence related to the protection of turf, drug monopolies, and group reputation and honor, as presented in other parts of the book. Cummings also offers a set of generalizations regarding wilding gang violence as hypotheses for further research.

It is noted that automobiles, school desegregation, and drug sales have made gang members mobile thus impacting both the growth of gangs and the environment of the schools. In addition, the two foci for policy responses to gangs have been prevention oriented and deterrence or suppression oriented.

In his potent discussion of gangs and civil rights, Robert A. Destro develops working definitions of "gangs" and "civil rights" and presents an analytical framework applicable for examining the civil rights aspects of gang control policy and legislation. Also, he cogently notes that any civil rights inquiry is indeed a dual one. He states, "... the first inquiry concerns the rights of individual citizens and their families to be protected from intimidation and harm. While this may seem obvious, it is far too often the missing variable in 'rights' discussions in the field of criminal law" (p. 287). Destro further states, "The second inquiry, into the civil rights of gangs and their members, is both more specific and more familiar. . . . It is nevertheless difficult because it involves an overt balancing of individual and associational interests against the individual and collective security interests of those who live and work in a community in which a gang and its members operate" (p. 288).

This chapter "concludes with the observation that, to the degree that the law retains a traditional criminal law focus on illegal conduct, it will avoid the most significant civil rights problem of all: a decision to base surveillance, arrest, conviction, or punishment on factors other than guilt" (p. 278). Clearly, this elegant point has profound implications for all United States residents.
In the final chapter Cummings and Monti underscore the need for social science research that focuses on (1) psychological factors relative to selected aspects of gang behavior, (2) the relationship between community structure and gang activities, and (3) underclass theory as a valuable base for studying gang violence and drugs.

Cummings and Monti offer a concluding comment: "Based upon the evidence and arguments presented by the authors in this volume, we suggest that social program strategies dealing with economic development, education, and job training will be the most effective policy interventions directed toward gangs" (p. 306).

In the last chapter the editors integrate their recommendations and discussions by drawing on the contributions of the authors (social scientists, scholars, and authorities in the field) of the previous chapters. While this is welcome and needed, it would have been useful for the editors to have provided an introduction to the three parts of the book to better integrate and tie together the admirable array of chapters that make a collection that is authoritative, stimulating, and impressive in content and scope. Surely this book will be included in required reading lists in courses dealing with juvenile justice and delinquency, social policy, and urban studies.

In *Juvenile Gangs* Covey, Menard, and Franzese pursue an ambitious goal: "to provide breadth and generality that may help to put separate studies of gangs in particular times and locations within an appropriate historical, comparative, and theoretical context" (p. ix). They do so through eleven chapters that deal with important topics including chapters entitled "Contemporary American Juvenile Gangs," "Juvenile Gang Violence," "Race, Ethnicity and Contemporary Gangs," "Female Gangs and Gang Members," "Comparative Perspectives on Juvenile Gangs," "Typologies of Juvenile Gangs," and chapters discussing classical theories of gangs, interventions, and the future of juvenile gangs.

Chapter IX, entitled "Theoretical Propositions About Juvenile Gangs," merits particular attention. The authors indicate that the formation of true juvenile gangs seems to have the two preconditions of (1) critical mass and (2) social disorganiza-
tion. The presentation and discussion of twenty-nine theoretical propositions serves to construct an integrated theory of juvenile gangs that begins with gang formation, then moves to gang evolution, gang membership, gang delinquency, race, ethnicity, gender, and gang structure, social ecology, and gang longevity. This excellent chapter not only incorporates theoretical perspectives into a valuable unified theory, but it also serves to give an integrative structure for the entire book.

As does the Cummings and Monti book, this one pays tribute to Thrasher’s monumental study of 1,313 gangs in Chicago.

The authors discuss the suggestions that factors contributing to the promotion and spreading of gangs across neighborhoods include court-mandated bussing, and the availability of mass transportation and automobiles. In terms of gang membership, “even with all of the variation in gangs, gangs can be characterized as predominately male, young, urban, lower class, and minority” (p. 17).

Observing that gangs are organized along ethnic lines, the authors provide a discussion of African American gangs, including the Bloods and the Crips, Hispanic gangs, Asian American gangs, Jamaican posses, and white ethnic gangs including skinheads.

The concept of the underclass receives substantial attention in various parts of the volume. The evolution and development of the underclass is attributed in part to the lack of low-skilled jobs in many parts of the country. Furthermore, the economic factors responsible for excluding some people from participating in the mainstream of the economy are dominant forces in this regard.

In the chapter that deals with gang interventions, a number of programs are reviewed. Mobilization For Youth, the Urban Leadership Training Program, and others are discussed under the rubric of opportunity and social change as characterized by Cloward and Ohlin’s differential opportunity theory. Social intervention programs, including group guidance and detached worker programs, are discussed. Gang suppression programs also receive attention. The authors conclude, “Simple projections of past trends would suggest that juvenile gang activity will continue unabated into the foreseeable future, that juvenile
gang violence will remain the same or perhaps escalate, that juvenile gangs will continue to recruit new members from an increasingly large population base, and that with the growth of suburban areas and small towns, juvenile gangs will become present and active in places largely untouched until now by juvenile gang activity" (p. 249). They indicate that they expect gang policy to continue to be fragmented, largely uninformed either by theory or research, with the intervention of detached workers, counseling, and outreach programs, and suppression being the strategies employed, in spite of the evidence that they are basically ineffective. Strategies that would offer the most promise, those involving long-term social change, employment, education, gun control and school reform are least likely to receive appropriate funding to produce a substantial positive impact on the problem of juvenile gangs. Although this may appear to be a pessimistic assessment, one would conclude that the expectation is indeed realistic and credible in the context of the material so thoughtfully and well presented throughout the book.

In short, this work makes a substantial contribution to the literature regarding juvenile gangs, and it does so in a cohesive, integrated fashion. Again, the integrated theory developed in one of the chapters should prove to be a major contribution to the criminal justice arena. One would only hope that it receives the wide attention that it merits.

James W. Callicutt
The University of Texas at Arlington


This book is an excellent example of what can be done with the subject of police in society by avoiding the encyclopedic or catalog treatment, which seems to be typical of so many of the other textbooks. This book forces the reader to think in critical terms about the relationship between police and their society, thus avoiding the, now rather boring, monologue of other texts in this area. While providing material for critical
thought, the authors have not ignored information which is applicable to the tactical operations of policing. At the same time they have provided the reader with important strategic information concerning the role of police in society. The sociological/political/cultural approach provides a refreshing respite from the usual police-in-society textbook. The authors have reminded us of the depth of the conflict faced by both the police and the society when formal policing is adopted into a democratic society.

Another useful element of this book is the extensive treatment of minorities and women in policing. The authors have set aside an entire chapter to discuss this much-overlooked topic. The historical treatment of the various aspects of policing was also refreshingly unusual. In addition to the standard chapter on the history of policing, the authors have presented the independent histories of such topics as police professionalism, police behavior and control, and police patrol and investigation. In other words, the authors have avoided the monolinear approach to the history of policing that has predominated in other textbooks.

The text is organized into five major topical areas, which include the democratic process of policing, organization and professional development, police behavior and control, police operations, and contemporary issues and the future.

The first topical area, the democratic process of policing, includes chapters on the process of policing, the roles of the police and the history of policing. The most interesting of these chapters is the process of policing. Very few texts in this field even discuss the relationship of the police to society in terms of the social contract. Although these authors failed to use the term "social contract", they did deliver a somewhat unique discussion on the subject. In the second chapter, issues concerning the actual versus the perceived roles of the police were critically reviewed.

In the second topical area, the authors discuss police organization and management and police professionalism. Police organization and management was thoroughly and effectively covered; however, in the police professionalism chapter, more
could have been said concerning the professionalization of the rank and file police officers.

Section three discusses police behavior and discretion, police authority and coercion, and controlling police behavior. The authors discuss these topics in a social, cultural, legal and political context. The presentation is lively and informative and allows for discussion of the critical issues surrounding the use of authority in a democratic society.

In section four, police operation, the authors attend to the nuts and bolts of the selection, training and development of the police officer, as well as discussing police patrol and investigation. Both of the chapters are discussed from the police manager's point of view. The study of these issues from a managerial point of view is vital to the development of the criminal justice student, many of whom aspire to reach the management level in policing.

The final topical section, contemporary issues and the future, is unique in the amount of space given over to police education, as opposed to the traditional discussion on training with a passing comment on higher education. The second chapter in this section discusses issues concerning minorities and women in policing. This is one of the more important chapters in the text, because of its critical yet informative discussion. I have yet to find another text in the field of policing which explores the subjects women and minority issues in the depth with which this book covers the subject. Included in the section on contemporary issues is the subject of stress, health and safety. The authors discuss the causes and the treatments for stress in policing. This particular chapter should be a reading must for all police administrators, because the authors suggest that treatment of an officer (salvaging a police career) is preferable to termination of the officer. The final chapter of the book provides a critical review of the new (or relatively new) concepts in policing, such as community policing. This is one of the most forthright discussions of community policing that I have ever seen in a textbook.

The positive aspects of this book include its coverage of women and minority issues, its critically insightful delivery of all of the topics, and its organization. Future editions of this
book should include some discussion on comparative perspectives in policing, and further development of civil liability in the chapter on controlling police behavior. I also believe that the authors have missed a golden opportunity to discuss the link which binds the police and the community, by not fully developing and discussing the concept of the social contract in the first chapter.

All things considered, this is one of the best textbooks that I have read and it is certainly the best textbook on the subject of police and society.

Larry A. Gould
Northern Arizona University


Today, crime has again become a critical national issue. Recent opinion polls reveal that Americans regard crime as the country's most pressing social problem. Many politicians have responded by clamoring for ever more harsher punishments appearing to ignore the fact that the use of severe punishments has increased steadily over the years only to be accompanied by an inexorable rise in the crime rate. As they scramble for electorate advantage, many have abandoned their responsibility to inform, educate and guide public opinion. And yet, most know that crime is inextricably linked to wider social realities which retributive punishments alone cannot address.

Every politician and concerned citizen should read Lawrence Friedman's excellent history of crime and punishment in the United States which demonstrates time and time again how the phenomenon of crime (and the institutionalized mechanisms which have evolved to respond to it) have been shaped by wider social forces. Friedman defines crime as forbidden behavior to which the community and its law enforcement agents respond through the use of coercive power. But, Friedman contends, there is little else one can say about crime in absolute terms. The types of behavior that are defined as criminal, the persons who are identified and processed as offenders, and the means used to respond to crime have all varied enormously since the nation
was founded. Acts that would be regarded as quite normal today were severely punished in colonial times. Conversely, there are many offenses which did not exist in colonial times. Friedman notes also that many responses to crime which are institutionalized today were not used in the past.

It is Friedman's contention that these variations in the way crime is defined are not haphazard temporal vagaries but easily recognizable reactions to changing social realities. Changes in beliefs, cultural attitudes, economic activities and wider social structural arrangements have all influenced the way crime has been defined and the way society has responded to it. This fact is amply demonstrated by a vast array of narrative material which provides at times horrific and at other times amusing illustrations of Friedman's thesis. The power of superstition in colonial society, the dominance of slavery in the South, the emergence of industrialization in the North, the ruthlessness of the frontier all affected the way crime was defined and processed in different social economic and cultural contexts. Particularly apposite is Friedman's discussion of how crime today is influenced by a wider narcissistic culture which demands expressions of individualism. Contrary to popular belief, Friedman argues convincingly that the determinants of crime and punishment are to be found in the changing social and cultural context in which individuals function. This is an uncomfortable thesis but one that needs to be reiterated at a time when simplistic responses which attribute the crime problem to individual pathology are again being advocated.

Although the theme of Friedman's book has been articulated in academic circles before, this is probably the first time that it has been made so accessible to a popular readership. The book is readable and engaging. While academics may have wished for more analysis and a little less descriptive narrative, the extensive use of narrative is an effective means of communicating an important truth. This book deserves to be widely read. Hopefully, its message will be understood by those who are responsible for formulating criminal justice policies today.

James Midgley
Louisiana State University

The authors begin this 112 page text with a brief description of the relationship between social work and the legal system, setting forth their conceptions of ten different role functions of a forensic social worker. These functions include the social worker acting as an expert witness, mediator, court evaluator, educator and regulator. The remainder of the book explores a variety of specific issues. Malpractice actions, what they entail, how to avoid them, and how to prepare for litigation as a defendant are discussed. Ethical dilemmas, particularly those involving confidentiality and the "duty to warn", are presented, followed by a chapter that describes the social work regulatory and professional review response to alleged ethical violations. A considerable amount of time is devoted to a review of the use and value of verbal and written contracts between workers and clients, with the authors proposing a model contract that essentially spells out what the client can expect from the social worker and the therapeutic process.

Of course, a comprehensive review of social work-legal issues would demand hundreds of pages of text. Clearly the authors intended this book to be an introductory discussion of forensic social work. As such, the book does offer some material that serves to whet the intellectual appetite. Chapter one sets out ten functions of forensic social work, an imaginative list of roles for social workers seeking to expand their practice into the legal arena. The chapter on testifying as an expert witness adequately addresses the knowledge and skills one must possess in order to be an effective witness. The authors accurately portray the role of expert witness as one that is both challenging and intimidating, and caution that it can be "a most unpleasant and costly experience" (p. 15) as well. The inclusion of a substantial bibliography is of assistance to the reader left hungry for more detailed information about a variety of forensic topics.

Despite the book's strengths, it has numerous weaknesses. Indeed, most social workers will find the book both inadequate and frustrating. Rather than expand on the ten functions of
forensic social work by detailing the duties of these ten functions, the book veers off into other areas and fails to offer research and legal support for many far-reaching assertions. Additionally, the book places the practice of social work within the questionable framework of a medical model. Barker and Branson suggest that the social worker “require the client to get a physical examination” prior to starting therapy (p. 33); should always consider a referral to a physician first if a client suffers from anxiety or depression; and should “be careful not to encroach on the physician’s activity” (p. 38). Also recommended by the authors is a written contract that requires the social worker to periodically write the client’s doctor about the client’s progress, based on the assumption that such “information should be included in [the] doctor’s medical record (p. 65). Finally, the authors suggest that when sued for malpractice, the social worker should visit a physician to discuss the “anticipated stress” (p. 106) caused by the litigation.

Despite Barker and Branson’s emphasis on social work ethical issues throughout this book, their suggestions are ethically questionable. They recommend “protective incarceration” (p. 37) of a suicidal client or, if this is not possible, that the client’s family and friends be recruited to watch the client. In the discussion of the duty to warn (now more commonly cited as the duty to protect third parties), the authors take a risky position by suggesting that because there will be many occasions of threats, but few occasions when threats will be acted on, the worker should not give warning to the intended victim until after repeated threats are made. When the worker does decide it’s time to warn/protect the intended victim, the authors suggest that “it is better when the warning comes from the legal authorities rather than the worker” (p. 52). This advice is in direct conflict with the NASW Code of Ethics and numerous licensure statutes.

As the authors note, mental health professionals are increasingly finding themselves confronted with demands from the legal system, both as witnesses and as defendants in malpractice actions. Despite their presentation of some valuable information, Barker and Branson have largely failed to deliver on their
promise to adequately introduce social work professionals to the legal aspects of social work practice.

Margaret M. Severson
Louisiana State University


Tyson had an article published on the same subject in the November 1992 Issue of *Social Work*. It prompted a statement of strenuous objection by no less than forty-two social work scholars in the July, 1994 Issue of the same journal. What subject could possibly prompt such profuse opposition?

The subject is a proposed paradigm shift from positivism to the heuristic paradigm. What is being proposed is a shift in the fundamental image of social work, including the meaning of truth; the values informing our search for the truth; the rules followed in the pursuit of knowledge; and the methods ordained as suitable for obtaining information about the profession. No wonder there is vigorous opposition to innovation in such essential beliefs and practices.

Such a sweeping challenge to the academic establishment should consider social work history, epistemology, research, and professional practice. *The Heuristic Paradigm* does just that, and does it in an engaging, precise, comprehensive, understandable way. Here, for the first time, in one central location is the entire case to be made by proponents of "postpositivism", an ambitious synonym for heurism. It is a genuine addition to the social work literature for a variety of reasons. It is a compilation of writings which describe two diverse points of view about the nature and methods of social work research. The work of many eminent scholars is presented without losing the central focus on social work. This is a rare treat in a sometimes insular profession. It makes, what will be for some, a compelling case for an emerging paradigm. Specific, concrete examples of the practical application of heuristics are provided. Critics have argued that such examples are sorely needed.
The ambitious scope of the work is reflected in the first sentence of the Editor's Introduction: "What is truth?". Ann Hartman's superbly crafted Introduction follows the Editor's Introduction. The Preface is written by Martha Heineman Pieper. Pieper's work is the exemplar for the heuristic paradigm in social work. Pulling no punches, Heineman Pieper gores such sacred positivistic oxes as the concept of reliability. Calling it "overvalued", she suggests that credibility is more important. And this is just the Preface!

The main body of this big book is divided into two major parts: Evolution and Debate, and Applying the Heuristic Paradigm. Part One describes in detail the history, the context, and the comparison with the positivistic paradigm. The contemporary debates centering around Martha Heineman Pieper's seminal papers are presented in their entirety, together with the verbatim writings of the most ardent of the loyal opposition which helps the reader to weigh much of the evidence presented by both sides. Part Two fully discusses and illustrates the application of the heuristic paradigm both within social work and in related disciplines.

One possible flaw is in the organization of some of the content. It is possible to become confused in maneuvering through the book. Is the Editor's Introduction written by Katherine Tyson? Why not identify the author by name, as is done with the Introduction? The discussion questions sometimes follow the chapter introductions, and sometimes come at the end of chapters. It would be more tidy and predictable for the discussion questions to always appear in the same location in each chapter. But these are minor complaints.

This is an important book which challenges us to expand our intellectual horizons. Nowhere can be found a more scholarly, more comprehensive treatment of this controversial and timely subject. Like it or not, the heuristic paradigm has arrived, and this is the place to read all about it.

Gary Mathews
Western Michigan University

Although the United States spends more on crime and corrections, and has more incarcerated felons than most other Western industrial nations, its crime problem continues to grow and there appears to be no solution to the problem. While academic research into crime and related social problems has also increased, there is little evidence that this research has made a significant contribution to addressing the problem. Despite the existence of numerous academic departments and specialized research institutes concerned with criminal justice issues, the crime trend and the numbers of offenders committed to prison, continues its inexorable rise.

One explanation for this apparent paradox is the deliberate politicization of crime issues by political leaders who ignore research findings that contradict popular beliefs about punishment and retribution. While serious academic research has conclusively demonstrated the futility of incarceration as a rehabilitative mechanism, politicians continue to garner public support by calling for longer and harsher prison sentences.

Ohlin and Remmington’s edited collection deals with the issue of discretion versus mandatory approaches in the criminal justice system within the context of a major national study of crime and criminal justice in America. The findings of the study, which was commissioned by the American Bar Association in the 1950s, have previously been released in the form of reports and monographs. However, this is the first comprehensive analysis to be published in book form. Although the survey dates back to the 1950s, its findings, the editors, suggest, have direct relevance to the issue of discretion today. With the current clamor for mandatory prison sentences and particularly for the “three strikes and you’re out” approach, it is to be hoped that this book will persuade at least some political leaders of the pointlessness of using incarceration as a primary means of addressing the nation’s most critical social problems.
Sociologists have made an enormous contribution to understanding the nature and causes of crime, deviance and social problems over the last fifty years. But their insights have not produced a uniform theoretical perspective which structures and organizes the diverse findings of research in the field. Today, very different conceptual approaches compete with each other, and there is little agreement among sociologists about which of their theories offer the most useful framework for analyzing crime in society today.

While many will be critical of sociology's inability to formulate a coherent body of theory on crime and deviance, it should be remembered that the subject is very complex and that there are many different facets to the issue. It is not surprising, therefore, that sociological analysis should reflect different facets and accentuate different aspects of the problem. In addition, it can argue that the existence of diverse theoretical insights contributes to the richness of the field and fosters deeper insights than would be possible through adopting any single perspective.

The fourth edition of Traub and Little's successful textbook on theories of deviance reveals the richness of sociological research into crime and deviance. The book is organized chronologically covering the well documented functionalist, social disorganization and anomie approaches as well as the interactionist labeling perspective. Attention is also given to existentialist, phenomenological, Marxist and other less well known approaches. The final section, which deals with new direction in deviance theory, is particularly interesting. This textbook is comprehensive, useful and highly recommended for student use.


It is a well established axiom in criminological research that there is a direct relationship between crime and social class.
Low income people and those from ethnic minorities are over-represented in the proportion arrested and prosecuted for criminal acts and in the proportion accommodated by the correctional system. The popular assumption that this skewed representation reflects the true distribution of crime patterns in society has been challenged by those who claim that agencies of social control discriminate in the way they select people for processing by the criminal justice system. In addition, they argue that these discriminatory tendencies reflect wider inequalities in power and wealth in society. The criminal justice system does not operate primarily to protect the community against criminals but to maintain existing structures of power and inequality.

Although the issue is not a new one, Bridges and Myers point out that the relationship between crime, social control and inequality it poorly understood. This book presents the findings of a group of twenty scholars drawn from different social science disciplines who met at the University of Georgia in 1992 specifically to investigate the issue. The book deals with different aspects of the problem including the theoretical basis for discussions about crime and inequality, the role of the police, racism and gender discrimination in punishment, the treatment of minorities by the criminal justice system and the role of social agencies in controlling behavioral variations among children. Two chapters dealing respectively with white collar criminals and lynching and capital punishment in the South are particularly trenchant. The book is essential reading for anyone interested in the issue of crime and inequality today.


The 'War on Drugs' has been waged for many years but there is little evidence that drug consumption has decreased. Although vast sums of money have been spent on law enforcement, expanded prison facilities, interdiction and similar programs, drugs continue to play a central role in American society. In the light of these facts, the continued pursuit of policies designed to suppress drug use appears to be futile. Their
futility are only more evident when sociological studies of drug use, such as those provided by Patricia Adler, are examined.

This book reports on a follow up study of drug dealing in an upper-middle class Californian community. The original study was undertaken in the late 1970s, and its findings were published in 1983. As the issue of drug abuse became more prominent, Adler sought to trace the careers of the drug dealers she originally interviewed. Using ethnographic techniques, Adler presents a powerful analysis of the reasons people enter the dangerous world of drug dealing. Her research contradicts popular images of drug dealers showing that they come from diverse backgrounds and interact symbiotically with 'respectable' society. Her finding that drug dealers are motivated by the same values and aspirations that drive America's obsession with success and glamour has profound implications for policy.


This book reports in considerable detail on a study undertaken for the West Yorkshire Police in Britain into crime against women and the ways in which such crime can be prevented. The authors begin with the premise that crime against women is extensive but under-reported. They review numerous studies which show that much violent and sexual crime against women is committed not by strangers but by persons who are intimately associated with their victims. In addition, the way the criminal justice system responds is highly colored by gender stereotypes. Both factors contribute to the popular but fallacious perception that women are only marginally affected by crime. In fact, as the author's reveal, women are the most fearful population of all social, economic and cultural groupings in Britain today.

The study's major goal is to foster new criminal justice strategies that provide improved services to women. Particular emphasis is placed on prevention. The book combines an analysis of quantitative research with the insights of qualitative studies which focus on personal experiences and subjective
interpretations of events. Information about the attitudes of women towards crime is presented together with an account of the way they are currently served by both statutory and voluntary agencies. The responses of the police and lawyers are also examined. The book concludes with a detailed set of recommendations for improving the situation. At the time of publication, the book’s major recommendations had already been adopted by the West Yorkshire Police. Its recommendations and findings deserve to be widely read, analyzed and implemented.


The political activities of students, poor people, welfare recipients, oppressed minorities and others during the 1960s has been well documented. Less well known are the efforts of prison inmates at the time to organize themselves and to express their frustrations through political activism. Although the inmate movement emerged in several states and in other countries as well, it was particularly forceful in California where a highly organized convict movement attracted national attention through its persistence campaigns to improve prison conditions, and secure public support for its activities.

Cummins has written a gripping book which contains a detailed narrative of events in the California prison system during the 1960s and 1970s, as well as important sociological insights into the way prisons operate, the way prisoners are treated and the way they respond. The book focuses on the most celebrated events of the period—the efforts of Caryl Chessman to escape the death penalty, the imprisonment of political activists such as Eldridge Cleaver and George Jackson, and the creation of the first prison unions. The book shows how these activities failed in the face of a brutal reaction to secure meaningful changes. Its conclusions are depressing in light of the inexorable rise in crime during the 1980s and 1990s, the rapid expansion of the prison system and the perpetuation of simplistic beliefs about the possibility of prisons solving the nation’s crime problem.
While few would deny that the United States has a drug problem of alarming proportions, there is little agreement about the best way of dealing with it. However, many experts believe that the 'get tough' policy of recent years has been a dismal failure. Not only has it failed to reverse the trend towards greater narcotic consumption, but it has fostered greater drug-associated violence, dramatically increased the prison population and wasted hundreds of millions of dollars on interdiction programs that have not curbed the flow of illicit narcotics.

There is no doubt that new approaches to dealing with the drug problem are urgently needed. This book suggests the most radical of all—decriminalization. Previously dismissed out of hand, de-criminalization is now more openly discussed both in politically conservative and liberal circles. Many experts now believe that a proper debate on the advantages and disadvantages of legalization is urgently needed.

Bayer and Oppenheimer's wide ranging analysis of the issue provides an examination of this kind. Contributors to this important volume deal with diverse facets of the topic and cover critical legal, political, economic and treatment issues. The book contains particularly interesting chapters on the needs of women and children, on the relevance of the Prohibition Era to the current debate, and on the experiences of other countries. This book is an extremely useful source of information and essential reading for anyone interested in the issue of decriminalizing drug use in the United States today.
regarded as a minority sub-specialization within the discipline. While there are many plausible reasons for this state of affairs, a lack of intellectual sophistication cannot be one of them. While several other sociological specializations lack academic rigor, sociological explanations of deviance have produced numerous accounts of substantive theoretical importance.

A cursory examination of Miller and Holstein's two collections will support this assertion. The constructionist interpretation of deviance offers a conceptual view that is fascinating in its use of imagery and profound in its explanatory power. Originating in the 1970s with the work of Kitsuse and Spector, constructionism has certainly not attained canonical status and many who work in the professional field will not appreciate its analytical insights. But few would deny that its framework fosters an innovative way of viewing deviance. Its central claim that deviant behavior is not a personal or social pathology rooted in psychological or social absolutes but a relativist social construct is a critically important one.

This claim is, of course, problematic and Miller and Holstein have performed a major service by bringing together a wide variety of opinions and commentaries on the constructionist approach. Some of the contributions make fascinating reading. Anyone working in the field of deviance, or anyone who has a liking for theory in the social sciences, should read these books.
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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. Since manuscripts are not returned by reviewers to the editorial office, the editorial office cannot return them to the 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 120 days. 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 both sides.

Anonymous Review. To facilitate anonymous review, please keep identifying information out of the manuscript. Only the file 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, p.3). 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 typeset in italics.

Gender and Disability Stereotypes. Please use gender neutral phrasing. 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.

BOOK REVIEWS

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