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WELFARE IMPLEMENTATION AND ORGANIZATION PROCESS: AN ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLITICS

University of Hawaii

PH.D. 1981

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WELFARE IMPLEMENTATION AND ORGANIZATION PROCESS:
AN ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLITICS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE DECEMBER 1981

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Whatever understanding of organizational politics this dissertation conveys is surely the result of a process of natural selection. Relationships with supportive teachers, patient (if incredulous) friends, and helpful interviewees were indispensable. Most of my investigations would simply not have been possible without the patience and kind assistance of income maintenance workers in the Hawaii Department of Social Services and Housing, their supervisors, and other officials. While this analysis does not flatter the Department, as an institution, I believe it to rely upon fair and thorough characterizations of the work and relationships among departmental employees. The readers should not, however, read this as indictments of individuals. Those who would do so will have gravely misunderstood what is said here. Indeed, what is remarkable is the resilience of welfare employees at all levels who struggle valiantly against the iron cobwebs generated by public welfare policies.

My graduate studies were particularly enriched by Hawaii friends and co-conspirators Bill Chaloupka, Mike Launius and Ed Oasa. I have a huge debt to Martha Turnbull and Steve Miller who graciously welcomed my visit to Honolulu while I completed and defended the dissertation. I apologize for the bilious political scientist who stood in for their friend Scott.

I had the good fortune to do my writing while both a graduate student at the University of Hawaii and a visiting faculty at the
University of Kansas. Kansas colleagues Mel Dubnick and Barbara Romzek contributed immeasurably to my thinking.

Praising one's teachers for a "job well done" seems presumptuous. But I must say that something attributable to my association with them does seem to have happened to me. I am grateful to Harry Friedman, Neal Milner and Mike Shapiro for their encouragement and support.

Gary Hawes kindly consented to proof the final draft and to do a lot of indispensable legwork on my behalf. I hardly deserve such generosity, but hope that I can return it. Thanks, with hardy handshakes all around, to my cadre of typists: June Ward of Lawrence, Kansas; Judy Hutt of Bloomington, Indiana, and Tessie Hawes of Honolulu, Hawaii. A denouement would not have been reached without the intercession of the guardian spirit of UH Political Science graduate students, Freda Hellinger. She typed the final draft and navigated its passage through the hazards of university bureaucracy.
ABSTRACT

Federal welfare programs are influenced by the uneven reform and episodic political interventions typical of the administrative dynamics of interest group liberalism. Recent policies have simplified, mandated, and monitored increasingly specific state program elements. As a consequence of cumulative attempts to bureaucratize federal programs, the tasks of welfare operatives have become less discretionary and more clerical. The purpose of this study is to articulate the means through which implementation practices emerge from employees' accommodation to task requirements and from the confluence of organizational processes within a state agency.

A hermeneutical method is employed to study the conduct of employees of the Hawaii State Department of Social Services and Housing. Relying upon field interviews and documentary sources, analysis focuses on interaction structures in which income maintenance workers, line administrators, and staffs are immersed.

"Street-level" work is conducted under conditions of ambiguous policy direction and competing administrative and recipient demands for attention and action. The demeanor of operatives is constructive and judgmental. The disorganization and ambiguity of manual regulations force them to construct techniques for processing caseloads, while the morally charged nature of "people work" implores them to independently invent purposes for their efforts. Four types of worker orientation are distinguished, each manifesting a different manner of perceiving and treating recipients and of using regulations.
Departmental staff functions are either federally mandated or heavily influenced by other state agencies. A structural incapacity to integrate interdependent staff and line units permeates departmental dynamics and policy implementation. These influences persistently, if indirectly, fragment and ossify intra-organizational relations, thus truncating problem-solving activities.

An ecological perspective is employed to assimilate these findings into a useful theoretical framework. Policy implementation is concluded to be an emergent consequence of inter-organizational and intra-organizational relations. In the context of the multiple sources and loci of influences on public organizations, the ecological perspective presents explanatory advantages over mechanical and hierarchical models of organization and policy implementation.
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CHAPTER I

THE PATTERN AND IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL POLICY:
LEGACIES OF INTEREST GROUP LIBERALISM

Public policy emerges from the system almost as an afterthought, the shape of policy is a by-product of the way the system operates, rather than a consciously directed effort to deal with social and economic problems.¹

The goal of this dissertation is to extend the analysis of political systems and the emergent quality of public policy to the most ordinary organizational recesses of policy implementation. State organizations charged with sustaining indigent clients are settings where increasingly precise regulations are ambiguously combined and manifested in the service practices of welfare functionaries. As important and consequential as this process is, little systematic knowledge exists concerning organizational processes which mediate between high administrative decisions and mundane case decisions. In spite of renewed interest in policy implementation, the modelling of such settings is fragmentary.

The prevailing direction in federal income maintenance policy is "regulatory." The dynamics of income maintenance policy have their underpinnings in what Lowi calls "interest group liberalism,"² and in the resulting entrepreneurial politico-administrative policy systems. In this chapter, the outlines of this "anti-formula" of governance and its implications for the demeanor and direction of social policies and administration will be discussed.
The object of our attention is, however, a single state welfare agency. It is important in such a study to frame properly the political setting of the organization in its proper scope and context, for political processes remote from the immediate organization influence the mundane features of administrative practice. By employing a political model of interest group liberalism we will successively tease a theory of organizational political processes from the available literature on street-level bureaucracy. In considering these works, we will carefully consider accounts of street-level conduct drawn from field work in the Department of Social Services and Housing in the State of Hawaii.

Administrative behavior emerges both from its political setting and the creative accommodations of employees in the conditions of work imposed by policy, regulations, and formal organization, not to mention recipients. In expounding gradually the model of organization proposed herein, I will analyse a series of accounts and assemble elements of the fragmentary observations and frameworks of other students of street-level organization within one empirical setting.

Overall policy is not the primary concern of American national politics. Rather, it could be thought of as the ring which remains after the bathing of political actors and organizations. This characterization of public policy is not entirely facetious. The dynamics and demeanor of American political institutions toward public policy are questions of substantial debate among political scientists.

Since the publication of The End of Liberalism in 1967, Theodore Lowi's ideas on policy-making and policies have held increasing interest in the discipline. An integrative work, Lowi's draws upon several
nascent themes in political scientific thought. Among these is the idea that public policy is an emergent phenomenon. Rather than being unequivocally "made" and administered, overall policy is seen to develop out of wide ranging, ambiguous, but often highly institutionalized and cooperative systems of interest group, legislative and administrative relations.

Several trends have stimulated this dynamic. First is the fragmentation of the Congress into committee and subcommittee governments. Second is the delegation of authority to administrative agencies. Third is a disinterest in law, both as a benchmark of political formulae and as a regulator of political conduct. Fourth is the introduction of the "positive state." The transformation from "limited" to "active" policy-making and government was greeted in America by traditions of regional and group self-rule and served to institutionalize the ambiguous interest-group role in national policy-making.

The Weight of Entrepreneurial Patterns on Policy Making

The devolution of authority of legislative to administrative institutions has enabled further de facto drainage of public authority to private groups. The institutionalization of private power and the political entrenchment of groups through preferred access to administrative policy-making predominates in many policy arenas. The cooperative alliances among private groups, administrative agencies, and interested Congressional committee and subcommittee members serve to create policy which satisfies all three. Politics in these arenas tend to be "enabling" and encouraging of private groups. Agricultural subsidy policies, an
example used often by Lowi and others, require none of the directly affected parties to change their behavior. They serve only to encourage participants in the existing markets to continue to engage in the practices they desire. These "distributive" policies are the basis of the primary political alliances and legislative activity in the United States. The encouragement of distributive policies enables each member of the "triangle" to gratify the desire of each for institutional advantages. "Democratizing" reforms of the Congressional committee system have tied the hands of the chairmen to interfere in subcommittee affairs. The membership of an increasingly decentralized Congress finds itself increasingly able to distribute constituency services and accommodate interest group requests without the approval of senior members. This occurs in an era of increasing electoral instability and an exodus of the voting population from national politics. Administrative agencies which shepherd such non-formal, non-formulaic policy find that the fortunes of the political universe may shift considerably from year to year. Political executives thus find the satisfaction of interest groups to be a necessary political strategy.

With governance patterned by the centrifugal forces of subgovernmental policy-making, untempered by integrative counterweights in the form of party politics or a generally strong executive, policy problems are generally solved through the distributive mechanism. These conditions spawn a "hidden polity" in which the obvious public politics and rhetoric are but a misleading veneer concealing the particularistic strategies of private groups and the particularistic cooperation of administration.
At the same time, the stakes of politics grow, engendering a public fear and desire for symbolic reassurance.\(^7\)

The student of management will find difficulty in reconciling the administrative political process with the tenets of that discipline. Political strategy and institutional self-interest are as much parts of American public administration as paper clips and accounting ledgers. Best thought as holding pens for vastly different political organizations, cabinet departments display little of the hierarchical domination that administrative orthodoxy would suggest.\(^8\) Generally speaking, sub-departmental agencies are participants in different political arenas from their "sister" agencies. Conflict among "sister" agencies\(^9\) often persists because such agencies are kindred in name but not in political sponsorship or political interest. The public organization without a strong political constituency, such as the State Department, finds it necessary either to adapt its mission to attract political suitors or suffer the consequences of pariahhood, embarrassment and political dismemberment.\(^10\)

Political strategy is very deeply embedded in the national administration and colors many facets of administrative behavior. The multiplicity of constitutional sources of authority\(^11\) and the paucity of Presidential power\(^12\) encourage administrative politics. Executive political appointees find themselves committed to strategies often in direct contradiction to the Presidential priorities which occasion their appointments. The irony of political executives is that to manage an administrative agency, one has to allow the policies, missions and political alliances of the agency to persist.\(^13\)
The institutionalization of bargaining and reciprocal arrangements which define the interstices of "interest group liberalism," has been noted by other scholars besides Lowi. Redford coined the term "subsystem politics" in reference to the patterns of interaction among specialized political interest groups and administrative agencies. Concern with the normative meanings of politics and the substantive impacts of policies distinguishes the critics of subgovernment politics from its pluralist adherents. An interest in creating a responsible polity and generating political community marks the critics. By contrast, the pluralist theorists, particularly Redford, remain interested primarily in politics as an avenue for the development and satisfaction of private material needs and they emphasize the procedural, not substantive, aspects of the policy-making process. One of the more exemplary pluralist advocates, Wildavsky emphasizes the "insubstantive" nature of public policy processes. Policy then is not so important in itself, it is merely the currency with which groups trade in the political marketplace of pluralism.

Social Policy: The Politics of Organized Disinterest

Charles Lindblom noted in the 1950s that American politics possess an intelligence such that policies do not emerge as a consequence of conscious design. Rather, as in a marketplace mechanism, policies emerge from the collective disorganized attempt of public agencies to accommodate the groups which congregate around common objects of interest. However, to Lowi such an intelligence is incapable of planning and anticipating, largely because such activities necessitate a conscious
consensus rather than the emergent, unconscious pattern which prevails. Persons can plan; however, in political arenas characterized by interest group liberalism, governments cannot. Nor do such operations tend to elicit discussions of purpose and justice, much less to direct policies toward the realization of their ostensible goals. A norm of separation binds the distributive, entrepreneurial arenas of national politics much in the same fashion as the exclusionary norms of specialization and "reciprocity" found in the Congress. The horizons of the participants in interest group liberalism are confined to the strategic constraints of private self-interest and organizational survival. It would be unnecessary to concern ourselves with these horizons were it not for two related ubiquitous objective consequences of contemporary political economy: The problem of inequality and the problem of biological survival.¹⁸ Politics are partitioned informally into subgovernments each of which includes definable participants focused upon distinct subjects and problems.¹⁹ Given the fragmentation of the polity into subgovernments, the inertia of pragmatic private strategies obviates integrated and comprehensive political strategies of the whole, unless extreme crisis conditions obtain.

To view interest-group liberalism as it collectively responds to pressing issues of catastrophic proportion, as in the cases of mass unemployment, destitution, and poverty, it is best to view social policymaking generally as possessing two modes. One is a mode of impatient attention, and the other is one of neglect. Attention occurs intermittently when the system is agitated by the evidence and proclamation that something is appreciably wrong in the society. In "distributive" politics, wherein entrepreneurial pressures of all the participants are
brought to bear, these concerns serve to keep each attentive to their particular domains of interests.

The problem of poverty represents, on those infrequent occasions when it is attended intensively, an anomaly against the backdrop of negotiation and political problem-solving which characterizes the distributive patterns of the nation's high politics. It is particularly anomalous given the manner in which the direct and apparent fruits of distributive policies promote an image of prosperity, a prosperity "enabled" through that same entrepreneurial bargaining. Very little attention to domains of political action persist wherein the rewards of entrepreneurship are lacking. Attention to policies without entrepreneurial possibilities is likely to be fairly abrupt and crude. It is likely to gloss over fine distinctions in the definition of problems and the impacts of alternative policies such as those made among entrepreneurs and their sensitive and persistent beneficiaries.

The crisis emotion and the aura of surprise which typify the occasional initiation of reforms in the poverty area are testimony to the structure of attention which parallels the structure of entrepreneurial politics. It is no accident that the nation undergoes periodic "discoveries" of poverty, yet persists in learning little about the progress of poverty policies and the barriers to solving the problems of poverty. The structure of attention (or inattention) to poverty is consistent with policies that are intended generally to remediate individual instances of poverty, rather than to treat poverty through mass and structural means.

While ideological images stemming from individualism and the stigmatization of poverty are no doubt important, they occur in tandem
with a very strong institutional "attention structure" which is isomorphic with the entrepreneurial patterns characterizing "sub-governance." All in all, policy devoted to poverty is secondary to the larger projects of legislative participants who authorize resources and who frame (or persist in avoiding the reframing of) the priority and definition of national and state policy.  

The norm of "segmentation" and non-interference among policy sub-governments tends to reinforce the narrowness of political appreciation for broad tendencies in the society and economy. Examples are urban land use policies and structural unemployment. Both of these have far reaching consequences for health, education, and the distribution of incomes and opportunities among the population, but are made principally by and for private actors. Spilling over the bounds of sub-governments, social problems are left to flounder and persist even as great appropriations are made to declare wars on poverty, urban blight, and ignorance. Because the vision of policy-making is isomorphic with the pragmatic considerations of governmental institutions' sustenance, social policy is bound by a structural pattern of neglect.

Policies with few or no entrepreneurial possibilities follow a pattern described by Franklin and Ripley. No one has become famous for "making welfare grow." Social policies tend to wither with inattention. They may, however, become "converted" into distributive policies. The evolution of Model Cities from a community planning and development policy to a subsidy for the housing industry is but one example. By dulling and removing the regulations governing eligibility for Model Cities funding, the federal government removed the major incentives for
beneficiary cities to maintain the redistributive functions for which the programs were designed. Similarly, the reforms of the medical system designed to make health care more accessible to the poor have, under the guise of redistributing access to medical care, expanded the resources for medical practice in hospitals.\(^{21}\)

The fact that political representation tends to cluster around and mold particular programs also suggests that such political interest among the participants may result in diminishing the support for a policy or in changing it into another type. The fluidity of social policy is another of its empirical characteristics. Since most social policies take the form of grants to state and local governments, the aggregation of political interest around them would be obvious. However, for each program there are different clusters of participants, each attempting to shape programs into forms compatible with their own purposes. The professionalization of reform has been commented upon widely.\(^{22}\) The strategy of professional groups to mold policies into forms wherein they may husband resources for themselves is however, not exclusive to professional groups. At many points, governments\(^{23}\) and interest groups have attempted to obtain such a 'lock' on public policies.

The pattern of interest fragmentation and fluidity obtains across the spectrum of federal income maintenance programs. In an encyclopedic summary of the in-kind and cash assistance programs which comprise the federal income maintenance effort, Lawrence Lynn states:

Since 1935, the federal income-maintenance system has experienced virtually continuous evolution. The principal sources of this evolution have been, first, the pressures of program constituencies, including the programs' congressional sponsors, for expansion and modification; second, the discovery or emergence of needs or problems that existing programs failed to meet; and third, political competition: the search by both
parties and by individual legislators and committee or sub-committee chairmen for winning issues.

The outcome has been heavily influenced by the organization of the bureaucratic and political processes by which programs are initiated, designed, authorized and financed. Because federal, state, and local agencies, congressional committees, and private interest groups are divided into numerous entities concerned with substantive or professional interests, the resulting programs are fragmented. . . .

The term income-maintenance 'system' is merely a handy euphemism. . . . Each component of the system moves more or less on its own trajectory. Programs differ in terms of the coalition of interest supporting them, the value contexts in which they are reviewed and modified, the frequency with which they are reviewed, the methods of financing, the competence of the administering agency, and the political stakes in continuing or changing program objectives or design. Thus they develop and change in different ways.24

Lynn notes that in the income support system, Congressional jurisdiction over the Food Stamps, ADFC, Medicaid, student loan, nutrition, SSI, unemployment, veterans, and social security programs in 1974 spanned eleven House Committees and 10 Senate Committees. These programs were implemented by nine federal executive agencies.25

Fragmentation at the federal level is matched by the penetrability of the intergovernmental arrangements through which they are implemented. Administered by the states, the programs of income support are lodged in the nether regions of intergovernmental relations for which there is no handy political understanding or theoretical framework.26

"Vertical functional autocracies" mentioned by Wright seem not to exist anymore in the welfare field, although there are significant pockets of such exclusion and monopoly in the social services and vocational rehabilitation programs.27 Wright sees these autocracies as the intergovernmental complement to "iron-triangles" at the national level28 but the vulnerability of the social welfare area, particularly to intervention by individual members of Congress, generally tends to
mitigate against such autocracies. It is, however, not for a lack of trying that professional groups have failed to monopolize. But to say that the policies are not made by a small, closed self-interested group is not to say that programs are initiated and modified in a broadly representative process. Nor is it accurate to say that self-interest or a suspiciously compatible professionalism is not the primary demeanor of the participants. It is simply to say that the social policy systems, while accessible to the organized and narrowly interested, are fluid and somewhat unpredictable. Such policies are on the whole, as fluid and unpredictable as the opportunity and incentives for congressional participants to be excited into active involvement in those social policies. It is the ebbing and flowing of congressional participation which seems to have marked the development of policies in the past twenty years more than any other.

The ambiguous constitutional nature of federalism compounds the fragmented responsibility for program administration not merely in welfare programs but in most intergovernmental policies. Intergovernmental programs in the social areas seem to be derived from bargaining relationships among federal and state authorities and equilibria of tacit understanding, informal divisions of labor, and agreed-upon domain boundaries. It is the intrusion of Congressional initiatives that interrupt these cooperative equilibria.

The accurate response to the questions of where and how often congressional oversight occurs is, "It depends." The object of oversight is apt to depend upon the costs, opportunities and incentives for oversight in a particular area. The possibilities for creative policy-developing entrepreneurship are rather low in the social policy field.
This factor, in combination with the fragmented jurisdiction over administratively interrelated programs accounts for the sheer complexity, if not ambiguity, of many social policies. 35

Income Maintenance

Originating as a minor title of the Social Security Act of 1935, the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program was intended to supplant several widow and orphan pension programs. 36 Administered through a categorical grant formula, the appropriations for the ADC (later AFDC) program were and continue to be open-ended. 37 Annual authorizations are not required, sparing the program from the annual scrutiny to which most other programs must submit. Federal authority for administration is lodged in the Social Security Administration. The state programs are regulated by the SSA in an indirect fashion. Since the program is a grant program, the authority of the states to act in this area thus is different from federal preemption or conscription of states' authority. Regulation here takes place through an indirect mechanism. The states must submit an annual plan in conformity with mandatory federal guidelines in order to receive funds. Although federal program requirements are authoritative, they are not exhaustive. There are no two states which have the same type of program. Much of state practice is not specified in the federal program mandates. The regulatory mechanism enforced in the 1930s and 1940s established certain federal guidelines for acceptable personnel policies and fiscal accounting procedures. 38

A great deal of consultation and bargaining has apparently taken place in the implementation of new regulations, particularly between the federal agency and the larger states (New York, California and
Illinois, in which 30 percent of the total AFDC recipients reside). Regional offices of the Office of Family Assistance provide an intermediary between the policy initiatives in Washington, D.C. and the state agencies which implement them. Because of the variety of state practices and the separate informal arrangements which characterize the federal-state relationship, it is tenuous to indicate a dominant trend and practice while describing more detail. Indeed, the variety of the states' administrative practices suggests the wisdom of leavening an urge to generalize.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, policy initiatives in the AFDC area could best be described as inattention tempered by frustration and sometimes outrage. Since the genesis of the ADC program, the Congress, operating under the long-term expectation that the Title would "wither away," gave little attention to the gradual growth of the caseloads and expenditures. Infrequent minor reforms have attempted to resolve inflammatory elements of the program (such as parental abandonment or high cost) through fragmentary, "single-target" reforms.

The 1962 Amendments were the first attempt to conceptually revamp the program. The means through which this was to be achieved was the introduction of rehabilitative elements into the execution of the AFDC program. The Kennedy administration reasoned that a rehabilitative program to counsel and reassure the poor, instilling proper work orientations and expectations among the recipients, would stem the growth of the poverty phenomenon. The 1962 Amendments marked the start of an era of "tinkering" with income maintenance recipients. Though prominent members of the social work profession were engaged in the deliberations over the
amendments, very little evidence was given for the broad claims of the profession to deal with the problems of the program growth.\textsuperscript{41}

The subsequent abandonment of the rehabilitative emphasis was marked by the 1967 Amendments whose purpose was work training for the poor. The Work Incentive (WIN) program was the vehicle for this. The WIN agencies were charged with preparing and training eligible recipients for the job market. Frustration with the continued growth of the AFDC population resulted in the Talmadge Amendment of 1971 under which recipients' placement in the WIN program was made a mandatory condition of receiving the AFDC check for certain classes of recipients.\textsuperscript{42}

During the 1960s and early 1970s considerable attention was given to the possibilities of reforming the entire AFDC program, but this era of active reflection was ended after the legislative failure of the Family Assistance Plan in 1973.\textsuperscript{43} If the demeanor of welfare policy-makers had been inattention tempered by frustration, what followed FAP was a series of fragmentary increments to regulate recipients. The tinkering, as well as the more dramatic reform impulses of the 1960s, was jettisoned as welfare activism and reformist opinion waned in Congress. The waning of institutional interest ushered in more specialized participants with more specific concerns such as diminishing the costs of parental abandonment and cutting costs. The result of economizing and moralizing which has accompanied many recent policy initiatives, has been to establish a regulatory emphasis in the program.

Since that time, the program fragmentation and fluidity have continued to exist as before, despite an increasing federalization of the program through a variety of administrative means. Actions taken during
this period were consistent with the Talmadge Amendment of 1971. That Amendment sought to regulate the work searching behavior of recipients through the means of mandating state action (by removing the case workers' discretion to exempt individual recipients from requirements). This emphasis in reducing the discretion in case workers' decisions was enlarged by the federal mandate (effective 1972) to the states that income support be administratively severed from social services and counseling. (The social work profession was thereby freed from the professionally unrewarding and messy business of granting money payments.) The attempt to bureaucratize and routinize the administration of welfare has proceeded apace since the 1972 separation. For example, it was followed by the Child Support Enforcement Act of 1975 whose purpose is the recovery of child support monies from absent parents.

The increase in the number of "mandatory case worker actions" is one sign of an attention to detail which has figured prominently in the recent design and implementation of AFDC. The mandating of "eligibility reviews" for recipients is another. In addition, a mandatory federal program of case decision "Quality Control" was begun in order to reduce discretionary decisions and enforce the regulatory welfare policies. This is the piece de resistance of the recent regulatory emphasis in welfare policy. The Quality Control program introduces, through the back door, an element of legal conscription of the state agencies by the federal government.

Though unintended in 1935 and subsequent years, the AFDC program is now a highly important cornerstone of welfare policy. It is generally only one of as many as five income maintenance program elements
administered by state agencies. Food Stamps, Medicaid, state general assistance (non-child, non-family) programs, and the Aid to the Aged, Blind and Disabled (AABD, now phasing out) are operational siblings of AFDC. These too have been frequently revised for better management, better accounting, simplification of regulations, increased state reporting, mandatory case actions and "quality control" of case decisions. Some, as in the case of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, were totally revised, requiring case workers to learn new program operations.

The "Society of Poverty": The Stakes of Social Welfare

The study of public policy has in recent years developed from obscurity to become an architectonic element in the social sciences. The impact of policies upon the texture of social and political life has remained largely outside the scope of policy research. In spite of this, there are compelling reasons to consider such impacts and the administrative systems which create some of them. They lie in the nature of society as a web of relations that are both directly and indirectly transformed by policies. Policies enable or disable, encourage and discourage conduct and social relations regardless of their intentions. While it is not the intention here to chart such specific transformations in the area of income support policies, there is evidence that such transformation indeed takes place systematically as a consequence of social welfare policies.

The applicant for income maintenance programs typically beseeches the welfare agency to intervene in his or her life. "Deserving" incapacity is judged by welfare workers. Eligibility and money assistance are granted to the applicant in accordance with statutory and informal
criteria. The apparent effect of the policy is to enable the recipient to receive money assistance and to "get along" as long as the recipient remains in an eligible incapacitated state defined by the rules of eligibility.

Rarely is this service or granting relationship informed by analyses of the milieu from which the recipient comes in the first place and in which he continues to reside. Whether or not the intervention is benign and "helping" in its consequences is a function not of the policy itself but also of the ways in which the policy or grant is used by the recipient within the society, the restrictions which precede the granting of assistance, and the effects that such conditions of grant-giving have upon the relationship of the recipient with his social milieu. To examine the impacts of social welfare programs, it may be useful to reflect on what it is that constitutes society and what it is that constitutes a "society of poverty."

Society consists of relations among persons. Relations have both instrumental and expressive functions. It is through relations and the institutionalizing of relations that patterns of culture and institutions are borne. Though social relations have instrumental functions, instrumental patterns bear with them not only the objective material and sustenance needed to survive, but also the regularity and certainty of those material relations which enable the social actor to undertake an economy of activity and permit other activities to be pursued as well. The predictability of instrumental functions and the stability of personal means for achieving access to material necessities have a value in and of themselves. An efficacious social being will thus not only have
strategies for the gaining of access to such goods, but will also require a stability and predictability in those relations to insure that such access is ensured for him.

Society is not merely a collection of relationships, but also the articulation of the conventions and knowledge through which individual action is rendered efficacious and competent. Social action is the strategic collaboration of the material and the ideal. Interventions of the actor are rendered competent by the degree to which strategies are appropriate and accurate and by the degree of stability in the environment which renders knowledge accurate and relevant. Finally, he is competent as long as the capacities of the individual are compatible with the institutions and persons with whom he must interact. Yet this competence is delicate, since the human society is often bound by narrowly pragmatic and utilitarian commitments, engendering both social change and the abandonment of individuals.

Such a view of human behavior is greatly at odds with "cultural," psychological, and "culture of poverty" theories, as well as others which define behavior as a consequence of mental dispositions. This view may be called a "society of poverty" perspective. Socially shared meanings and common strategies are dependent upon action opportunities and the compatibility of the projects and capacities of the individual with the surrounding social world. Public policies which render assistance to the poor and incapacitated must be viewed with these social milieux of the recipients in mind. This is especially true in the public assistance and social welfare fields because the institutions of public welfare are "treating" persons already in precarious states.
relative to the requirements of other social and economic institutions. At the same time these institutions undertake to compensate for 'deficiencies' they may also be, in effect, reordering the milieux of the recipients in other ways than a mere "replacement" of funds, shelter, etc. This effect upon the "society of poverty" is beyond the scope of policy evaluation and impact studies. It is perhaps because this form of impact, the displacement of milieux, is so difficult to measure that it is so rare a focus of research.

Several urban anthropologists have illuminated the outlines of the social impacts of public assistance policies. Though not an explicit concern of anthropologists, the model of social impact presented above finds support among works of the social milieux of the poor and the encounters of the poor with welfare agencies.

Gerald Suttles' examination of ethnicity and territoriality among Chicago slum dwellers shows a dramatic impact of policy upon the abilities of the poor to engage in economically rich social relations. By assigning prohibitions upon the residents of housing projects, the Chicago Housing Authority truncated potentially exploitable social network activities and limited the economic independence of its residents. By contrast, other CHA programs which did not restrict its recipients tended to encourage such independence and networking. The truncation of useful social relations contributes to the dependence of the housing authorities' clients.46

The network phenomenon has been noted widely among ethnographers of the poor. An adaptation to poverty, social exchange networks also contribute to the transience of economic surpluses among poor persons.47 Used for the immediate relief of temporary individual
scarcities of their members, such networks place their immediate burdens upon those who have temporary surpluses. In "poor society," surpluses are likely to be temporary. Alternatively, the participant may opt out of the network in an attempt to convert a short term surplus into a long-term investment. In so doing, however, he loses his insurance against adversity, since his or her fellows are not likely to welcome such a selfish member into a network he has forsaken.

Adversity is a condition of poverty, more than the mere economic fact of poverty; Oscar Lewis' brilliant ethnography of poverty notes that in poor society the chance of victimization is ever-present. Since rational investment requires long-term stability, such investment of surplus is for the most part an irrational choice in the use of temporary surplus. Short-term sharing for short-term adversity becomes institutionalized in networks whose overarching function is the protection of the members, obviating long-term individual investments. Rather, the society of poverty invests in the longevity of its members through the social appropriation of short-term surpluses.

Such patterns of resource sharing, however, must be hidden from the authorities providing welfare services. Carol Stack noted that the sustaining of survival networks among poor women required them to mislead welfare workers about the use of grants. Since the grants are intended for the use of individual families, the sharing of welfare monies with other families to meet a crisis (for which the welfare regulations are unprepared to contribute) is strictly forbidden. Welfare employees, acting on the suspicion of improper or infelicitous use of the monies, reduce grants on the basis of such suspicions.
Networks represent important social relations among the poor, and highlight the immediate social dimension of poverty and the means through which groups emerge as a consequence of the shared circumstance of poverty. Welfare dependency in some cases is linked to the absence of available networks through which employment opportunities, savings, housing, etc. are discovered and exploited. Handler and Hollingsworth's 1971 Wisconsin study noted that those women leaving the welfare rolls were those exploiting opportunities made available through social networks. Networks are an important element of social life and access to a variety of resources and relations are acquired through them. The intrusion upon or the truncation of network transactions of the poor are a type of policy impact.

A possible occasion for such policy impact is in the commission of "mistakes" by welfare workers. This is related to the larger dynamics of social welfare institutions in general, since American social welfare policies are largely directed at individuals. While attempting to assist the individual through the granting of resources, the public assistance policies may significantly regulate the relations of clients with their milieux. This impact may inhere in the nature of such policies and organizations themselves. This is the case when the state attempts to invoke strict accounting in order to insure that monies are being spent for proper purposes, which in practice serves to place significant burdens upon the recipients. In short, the problem is one of the states' assumption of a total responsibility for persons while confining the execution of that responsibility to harried welfare workers in large organizations.
The implementation of Federal Welfare Policy

Several unique characteristics mark the implementation of federal welfare policy. First, it is implemented through a grant-in-aid whereby the states qualify for the grants by complying with federal regulations. This means that an organization implementing the program will have a number of authorities with which it will have to interact, at both the state and federal levels. Secondly, the implementation of the program is undertaken at the operational level on a case-by-case basis, since the design of the program stems from the definition of poverty as an individual phenomenon. Unlike other areas of public policy, those in the more "primary" web of political relations, the welfare agencies oversee thousands upon thousands of recipients. The implementation of federal welfare policy is thus highly organized and bureaucratized so as to accomplish this mass processing of individual cases. This means that those implementing the policies at the operative level must arrange their activities so as to accord with the large variety and range of regulations which constitute the bureaucratic process. The twin features of individual treatment and bureaucratic organization mean also that most of the case decisions will be made at the lowest levels of the organizations implementing policy. The location of the decisions made in response to the individual recipient is thus a great social distance from the source of the regulations.

Finally, the implementation process in welfare differs from other policies in that the objects of the policies are other persons. It is one thing to bureaucratize and regularize the operations of an organization, but it is quite another to have this regime applied to the processing of other human beings. Such processing cannot only be
expected to be more complex, but also more socially ambiguous and charged with profound moral qualities.

The implementation of such individual people-processing policies has not received much academic attention. When those attentions are fixed on the subject, they seldom stray from the particular organizations themselves. The study of people-processing policies, particularly in the income maintenance area have not borne a perspective which encompasses national administrative politics, state administration and operational arenas of welfare policies. Yet each is intertwined with the others; in the complex and ambiguous setting of intergovernmental administration and politics; they are bound to be.

Images of Implementation

The scope of implementation analysis is broad enough to encompass these diverse but intertwined elements. However, the appreciation for operational and organizational processes in program administration is lacking in this literature which is, as a whole, more preoccupied with the techniques of control than the analysis of the relations which shape policy consequences. Anton has suggested that the scholars who study the policy formation process possess persistent images of that process which unfortunately truncate and disable their analyses. It could be said with equal certainty that the images of the implementation process conveyed by the literature create disabling consequences for the analysis of implementation.

Studies of implementation have generally viewed it as a concern of unitary actors or as a function of managerial authorities at the apex of public organizations. Thus Van Meter and Van Horn in the first major
conceptual essay of the field, suggested that implementation is a function of competence among the members of implementing organizations, the degree of hierarchical control within organizations, and organizations' linkages to law enforcement and policy-enforcement bodies. Similarly, Nakamura and Smallwood in a current synthesis of the literature of policy implementation, conceptualize implementation as a series of linkages among constituent elements of an implementation process. The appraisal of organizations' functioning is limited to a short consideration of "bureaucratic norms," which in their analysis are merely "troublesome" barriers to implementation.

The academic literature has tended to view policy implementation as a function of the commitments and actions of agency heads. While Bardach gives a glimpse of the recalcitrance of organizations to the reform of the California mental health system, the internal organizational sources of this recalcitrance and organizational resistance are not pursued. Indeed, if there is a theme persistently lacking in implementation studies, it is an analysis of the context and operations which influence the organization's collective response to innovations or reforms. The image conveyed of organizations is typically that of resisters to change. But what internal processes enforce that inertia? What commitments and functions are satisfied through that inertia? Unless implementation analysts are as a group content to suggest that all that organization do is resist, analysis must proceed to examine
the workings of organizations in different terms than have been employed. The image of organizations and the implementation process as a hierarchical and mechanical one is a persistent one.

A close companion image of hierarchy in policy implementation is the image of organizations as unitary actors or as coalitions of contending high officials. Some implementation studies portray the process as bargaining, conflict or mutual accommodation. These result in a more complex portrayal of organizations, but they are still limited. Most members of the organizations are left out of the picture. One analyst who avoids this unitary image is Berman, who explains the persistence of organizational innovations in terms of the adaptive behavior of service deliverers. The consequence of this adaptiveness is that the organization becomes embedded in the local setting in which it delivers services. In one of the few essays concerned with the utility of organization theoretic assumptions for implementation studies, Elmore examines four models of organization in order to highlight the necessity of clarifying the role and process of organizations in the implementation process.

Lipsky focuses upon the problem of implementation analysis in general, arguing that the concept of hierarchy is used as a map of the implementation process such that organizations are seen to be both hierarchically controlled and hierarchically linked to each other in implementation "systems." He concludes his essay by suggesting that hierarchy is something to be found out rather than assumed, no matter how comfortable those assumptions make the analyst.

**Images of Organizational and Work Processes**

Images of the organizational process contained in the organization theory literature, particularly among those works most respected by
implementation and policy analysts, are hierarchical and mechanical ones. The theoretical articulation of concerns about the content of work, however, seems to have halted since the human relations theorists of the 1930s. The articulation of technical operations was the centerpiece of Frederick Taylor's theories of "Scientific Management," wherein the constituents of physical labor were analyzed, broken down, and re-engineered in order to accomplish both greater work efficiency and control over production. The human relations theorists which followed also had an interest in increasing productivity. Their central concern was rooted in the assertion that the human organism possessed physical and affective qualities which can be manipulated in order to engineer both productivity and social harmony. Managerial practitioners were thus exhorted to soothe affective relations and sentiments among workers which, if allowed expression, would manifest resistance and unproductive work habits. Both the Scientific Management and the Human Relations schools, while focusing respectively on the physical and the affective dimensions of work retained an 'engineering' perspective. Engineering was intended to design and control the workplace. Workers, by contrast, were assumed to have no capacity or interest in the design of work.

Workers were seen to be separate from the techniques they employed. They were viewed as executors of techniques. The phrase, "to carry out the task," evokes the deeper expectation which is generally shared about the substance of work. The task was seen to be separate from the worker. This is an assumption and assertion which inheres in Weber as well. The training of the bureaucrat is reasoned to have made the individual official act in an impersonal manner. It is not the person
but the discipline of the rule-applier which is the true agent of the official act. That the human agent is trained so as to be replaced and to replace others in official roles is further testimony to the somewhat mechanical assumptions of Weber's discussion of bureaucracy.  

The nature and composition of the work task was a centerpiece, then, of what more recent scholars have retrospectively termed "early" organization theory. First articulated by Weber as a system of state organization and as a means of controlling functionaries of the sovereign to that end, bureaucracy in its early twentieth century American context was articulated by Taylor exclusively as a means of control over the physical minutiae of industrial labor. Later, major permutations of human relations theory studied the physiology of labor, an organismic psychology of labor, an affective psychology of labor, and a moral science of organization. The unifying theme of human relations scholarship was an attempt to engineer human work which accorded with observable principles of human behavior at the individual and cohort levels.

Organization theory has largely forgotten the more mundane operations of work and has instead focused on executive and macro-level aspects of organizations. Though postwar theories have discarded empirical research on "work," they have retained several of the commitments of their earlier counterparts which revolve around the characterization of work. Three major strands constitute this larger image of work. I refer to these elements as (1) prescription, (2) discreteness, and (3) passivity. These elements in combination are constituents not so much of a self-conscious theory as a rather unself-conscious image. Importantly, it is an image upon which many contemporary theories rest.
First, there is an assumption that work is prescribed to the worker by an external source, primarily organizational superiors. Second, work is composed of a series of separate, successive, serially independent discrete steps. Each finished task is succeeded by another one: that is, they are performed separately. Third the worker is assumed to invoke these discrete performances to a passive object. Furthermore, the worker is seen to be passive himself: he receives the object, and does not seek it out. This dual passivity of object and worker is consistent with the design of organizations themselves and the formal delegation of authority within organizations. The design of organization is created to deprive the worker of independent action. The consistent generalization of standardized operational performance on prescribed occasions could otherwise not be produced by large organizations.

This imagery is unfortunate if one is concerned with creating accurate and sensitive accounts of organization behavior in general and "operations" in particular. They distract the theory of organization from important processes in organizations and from variations in the structure of operational tasks. Finally, this is particularly unfortunate in the areas of street-level bureaucracy wherein the true policy outputs are often determined at the lower operational levels of organizations.  

Two leading works of organization theory exemplify the imagery of routine work discussed above and they each build upon this imagery in theorizing about organizations. One, March and Simon's Organizations, builds a theory upon the assertion that decision-making is programmable into discrete cognitive and behavioral elements. The other, James Thompson's Organizations in Action, proceeds from assumptions about
technical operations to propose a theory of organizations' interactions with their external environments so as to buffer this "technical core" from external influences. These are chosen to contrast with the empirical investigation of a street-level organization because they have wide currency in the field of organization theory and in political science. They are also chosen because they are, I believe, the most straightforward and articulate expressions in a field fraught with trendy, euphemistic language.

March and Simon's Organizations

March and Simon suggest that work operations are occasioned by action-eliciting signals:

. . . an environmental stimulus may evoke immediately from the organization a highly complex and organized set of responses we call a performance program, or simply, a program. 70

Most behavior, and particularly most behavior in organizations is governed by "performance programs." The decomposition of the tasks and the organization of its constituent steps into programs permit both control over the lower operations of an organization and the coordination of the variety of tasks which comprise an organization's entire production process. 71 Each unit of a task is broken into a "program evoking" step (a specification of circumstances under which a program is called for) and a "program-executing" step. 72 All such programs are not completely rigid and they may be adaptive to a large number of characteristics of the stimulus that initiates them. 73 The authors continue that the most repetitive activities "are handled in terms of fairly definite programs." 74 "The greater the repetitiveness of individual activities, the greater the programming." 75
The most perfect example of the performance program is the computing machine which is capable of carrying out programs consisting of several, even thousands, of steps. Programs consist of work whose constituent steps are detailed, sequentially arranged and whose products or outcomes are specified in advance.

Levels within organizational hierarchies are distinguished by the complexity of programs at the higher levels and the simplicity of programs at the lower ones.

The programs of members of higher levels . . . have as their main output the modifications or initiation of programs for individuals at lower levels.

The higher order programs are characterized by more general types of goals; that is, the programs are less specific and the meanings of the program-evoking stimuli are less circumscribed than the lower-level programs. Higher order programs occasion searches for satisfactory actions in response. Programs, both the program-evoking and the program execution halves, are derived from and specified by higher members.

Thompson's Organizations in Action

In his book, Organizations in Action, Thompson passes over the topic of work. However, his statements concerning technology and the "technical core" of organizations form the foundation of his larger theory and share with March and Simon an image of routine work.

While March and Simon suggest that "the stimuli which evoke programs come from outside the organization," Thompson submits that organizations buffer their core technologies from the external world so as to maintain an equilibrium between "input transactions" and "output transactions." He draws upon Parsons' distinctions among the technical, managerial, and institutional levels of organization:
In this view, every formal organization contains a suborganization whose "problems" are focused around effective performance of the technical function--the conduct of classes by teachers, the processing of income tax returns and the handling of recalcitrants by the bureau, the processing of material and supervision of these operations in the case of physical production. The primary exigencies to which the technical suborganization is oriented are those imposed by the nature of the technical task, such as the materials which must be processed and the kinds of cooperation of different people required to get the job done effectively.

The second level, the managerial, services the technical suborganization by (1) mediating between the technical suborganization and those who use its products--the customers, pupils, and so on--and (2) procuring the resources necessary for carrying out the technical functions. The managerial level controls, or administers, the technical suborganization (although Parsons notes that its control is not unilateral) by deciding such matters as the broad technical task which is to be performed, the scale of operations, employment and purchasing policy, and so on.

Finally, in the Parsons formulation, the organization which consists of both technical and managerial suborganizations is also part of a wider social system which is the source of the "meaning," legitimation, or higher-level support which makes the implementation of the organization's goals possible. In terms of "formal" controls, an organization may be relatively independent; but in terms of the meaning of the functions performed by the organization and hence of its "rights" to command resources and to subject its customers to discipline, it is never wholly independent. This overall articulation of the organization and the institutional structure and agencies of the community is the function of the third, or institutional, level of the organization.80

Technical rationality, "a system of cause/effect relationships which lead to a desired result," is "perfect when it becomes a closed system of logic."81 The closed system of logic contains all relevant variables. All other influences, exogenous variables, are excluded. The variables contained within the system vary only to the extent that the experimenter or the manager determines they should.82 Mass production, Thompson suggests, is most conducive to such a high degree of control and predictability over the factors relevant to the technology. Other varieties of "technology," including "intensive technology," a
people processing technology, conforms to the same basic closed
system structure.

[This] variety we label intensive to signify that a
variety of techniques is drawn upon in order to achieve
a change in some specific object; but the selection, com-
bination and order of application is determined by feed-
back from the object itself. When the object is human,
this intensive technology is regarded as "therapeutic,"
but the same technical logic is found also in construc-
tion and industry and in research where the objects of
concern are non-human. 83

The distinguishing feature of this intensive technology, to Thompson,
is not the nature of the "object." Both the "object" of the therapy
and the building under construction are literally "patient." It is the
fact that 'technical' action is undertaken around one "case" or
"project" on one occasion which distinguishes this intensive technology
from the serially interdependent technology of the assembly line. Con-
tingent upon the variety of problems present in the individual case,
the techniques occasioned vary among different cases only in the
selection, combination and order in which they are applied.

Unlike March and Simon, who apply a cognitive framework to the
problem solving elements of work, Thompson employs a purely objective
framework which views work as the implementation of a series of objec-
tive, proven cause/effect relations. To Thompson, what varies among
types of technologies is the manner in which techniques are deployed,
be they "serially interdependent" production techniques or the
"intensive technologies" deployed around a single case. Also unlike the
former authors, Thompson views the protection of its "technical core"
as the most pressing of managerial concerns. (March and Simon view the
role of management as a problem-solving one, achievable through
adjustments of lower level programs, the level of organization that
Thompson calls the "technical core." To Thompson, the technical core is not a malleable phenomenon but one to be perfected, not changed. Technology is the defining constituent, not the mere "implement," of organizations.

The rational organization must keep its technology pure and unaffected by the organization's external environment. Yet, being dependent upon the external world, the organization must somehow come to terms with it. These responses can be competition for external support or control over the elements of the environment on which the organization depends. What is important about the distinction is the assertion of Thompson that the autonomy of techniques from the environment is as important in Thompson's theory as is the autonomy of the technology within the organization and its separateness for any individual who "carries out" or "applies" a particular technical operation. While a highly abstract representation of technology permeates Thompson's discussion, technology is the centerpiece of the theory. While abstract, the imagery of technology presents a very visible representation of the features of operational work at the bottom rungs of the organization.

The image of work conveyed by March and Simon and by Thompson is consistent with those of classical organization in several respects. They exemplify the three interconnected strands of 'routine work' mentioned earlier—the prescriptive, the discreteness and the passive aspects of work. The worker in each is viewed as one who "applies" rules, "activates" programs, and "performs" techniques. He receives prescriptions and applies them to appropriate events and occasions.
With this general image of routine work which is evoked by these two organization theorists and theorists of street-level bureaucracy, we may now consider the empirical question of how work is done in one welfare agency. The Department of Social Services and Housing in the State of Hawaii also regards its street-level operation as routine. Several departmental officials at the higher levels of the agency regard the welfare manual, for example, as a "tool kit" which is seen to provide directives as to how to process various kinds of case actions. However, there is considerable ambiguity surrounding the manual, an ambiguity which is impressed upon the work of the income maintenance worker at several points.

Employing the assumptions of the prescribed and discrete nature of work process, it is difficult to assimilate an analysis of people-processing organizations with the distinctive aspects of people-processing suggested above. It is also difficult to assume the passivity of the functionary in relation to the human "objects" and outcomes of case decisions. A lack of fit also exists between the horizontally and vertically divided authority of the categorical program and the structurally fluid patterns of social policy making on the one hand, and the implementation literature, on the other. Likewise, with regard to policy implementation, little consideration is given to the structure of implementation involving grants-in-aid to the states or to the relations of organizations to their general political environments, to particular constituencies and to collateral organizations.

There is considerable evidence to suspect that organizational behavior, just as public policy, is an "uncontrolled" emergent
phenome~n. The question is broached in some organization theory works. More recently, Cohen, March and Olsen have suggested that organizations best be recognized as "organized anarchies," wherein authoritative policymaking within organizations themselves betray the fluid, emergent qualities similar in microcosm to what Lowi describes as the organization of the wider U.S. political system.

A central task, then, is to ascertain the emergent tendencies of conduct in one particular social welfare organization. What are the dispositions of street-level bureaucrats to act in implementing welfare policy? How attentive are they to recipients in the conduct of their duties? What features of the policies and the organization dispose street-level bureaucrats to decide and act? Where are the structural sources of this conduct?
CHAPTER I--NOTES


3. Ibid.


25. Ibid., p. 83.


30. Williams, "Implementation Problems."


37. Ibid., pp. 239-240.


45. See Edward Banfield, *The Unheavenly City* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970) for an example of this perspective.


54. Ibid., pp. 453-456.


57. Bardach, Implementation Game, op. cit.


65. Ibid.


67. Lipsky, op. cit.


70. March and Simon, op. cit., p. 141.

71. Ibid., p. 145.

72. Ibid., p. 146.
73. Ibid., p. 142.
74. Ibid., p. 142
75. Ibid., p. 143.
76. Ibid., p. 144.
77. Ibid., p. 144.
78. Ibid., p. 150.
79. Ibid., p. 149.
80. Thompson, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
81. Ibid., p. 18.
82. Ibid., p. 18.
83. Ibid., p. 17.
84. Ibid., pp. 37-38.
CHAPTER II
THE STRUCTURE OF STREET-LEVEL DISCRETION

The administration of public services, particularly those services wherein the applicant is also the object, presents somewhat of an anomaly for theorists of administration and public policy. Policing, public assistance, education, and health care are examples of such servicing. These so-called street-level bureaucracies have recently been subjected to greater political criticism and analytical scrutiny. The purpose of this chapter is to tease from the literature several theories of behavior of street-level employees and organizations. In addition, I will endeavor to compare and critique the adequacy and completeness of these concepts while attempting to explain the sources and structures of street-level organization behavior. Finally, an approach to theorizing will be explored which emphasizes the creative accommodation of functionaries to regulated, stressful, and ambiguous organizational contexts.

Discretion

The subject of discretion has figured prominently in classical and recent discussions of public administration, particularly those dealing with the problem of administrative accountability in democracies. The issue of whether democracy is possible in an administrative state, as well as the dangers of discretion for responsible policy implementation are two such enduring themes. Scholars of public administration, however, have avoided the discretion area where it concerns the mundane issues of administering to dependents or subjects of the state.
The subject of discretion predates the sociological theorist Max Weber. Under a civic order of well-defined doctrines and codes of law, discretion is conceived by Weber to be a miniscule exception to the larger successful enterprise of binding functionaries' actions to well-defined and articulated laws. Weberian bureaucratic systems have as their mission the removal of functionaries' discretion, particularly that of the lower representatives of the state. The historical trend toward state bureaucracy was to bind the representatives of the sovereign to the extent that independent actions, non-prescribed formula, and judgments would not occur. It is not unreasonable to suspect that, looking upon large formal state organizations, Weber would now use independent discretion of functionaries rather than law as his central organizing concept.

Unfortunately theorists of American administration have looked askance of the structure and the fuller implications of the processes of discretionary governance. Perhaps because of the anti-statist perspective of pluralist social science, the role and the functions of the state have not received their due attention by contemporary writers. Emmette Redford is typical of such theorists. He subsumes the issue of state power and discretionary behavior under a discussion of whether the power of bureaucrats is "independent" power, that is, whether or not it is "checked" in Madisonian fashion. Others have relied on the assumption that bureaucrats have inner checks of professionalism which prohibit a desire for power. The pluralists' approach to the problem of power and their reassurance that administration is not independent are
the two major sources of theoretical reflection which conclude that the
discretion of administrators need not occasion alarm.

Kenneth Davis, a scholar in the public law tradition, is not satis­
ified with such reassurances and counsels the removal of unnecessary
discretion. Davis defines discretion as a "gap" between the law and
what administrators do.4 The haze of unheralded authority, actions un­
authorized by laws, is anathema to civil government. Davis' perspective
is almost classic in its adherence to the commitments of the Weberian
ideal type.

While it is not my intent to resolve the theoretical problems of
discretion, it would be well to understand discretion. It is my project
here to illuminate several theories of the general phenomenon of dis­
cretion, among street-level bureaucrats. From the public law tradition,
we are no closer to a resolution, however, if there are enduring features
of street-level work which mitigate against the legalist approach to
service. From these, some coherent understandings about the structure
or architecture of discretion will be articulated. Discretion is not
a "gap." Surely, however, it is a realm of behavior and judgment which
is not bound to law. The question is what it is bound to, what char­
acterizes discretion and what influences the behavior of administrators
whose behavior is not bound, à la Weber, to the law? Here, then,
analysis must turn away from the legal tradition, which undergirds
Weber's and Davis' ideas about discretion, as well as the pluralist
tradition from which Redford emerges. This appraisal will deal with the
question of the structure of discretionary behavior as a sociological
one.
The idea of providing a service which would transform a person, transform the relations between a person and others or correct a deficiency, is radically post-Weberian in conception. Rules and regulations become less articulate insofar as assisting persons because of two unimpeachable sources of variation, one foreseeable and the other not. First is the *variety among types* of individuals serviced; different people express different needs and those needs will have face validity. Different categories of need exist alongside of different categories of treatment. The second source of variation which confounds regulation of street-level bureaucrats through the mechanism of law is the variety of responses to a treatment. That is, within the context of the encounter, or within the context of the client/recipient's response to treatment, persons have a variety of developmental paces and sequences. Individuals of the same "type" respond differently to the same treatment. For example, some counselees will immediately be responsive to a particular type of strategy, others will take more time. Some (seemingly) identical types of patients will respond differently to treatment. The burdens of this variety should be obvious. If one is to administer a service or treatment with the intention of responding to individual cases one must thus be sensitive to nuances, subtleties, and varieties of often unanticipated (and unforeseeable) responses.

The two dimensions of variety, *type* and *developmental*, lie at the root of the different relations of the street-level bureaucrat to rules, to citizen/applicants, and to the "work" in general. The relation of the ideal bureaucrat whose image saturates organization theory (and
particularly that of Weber and Davis) to the "work" is however an unequivocal one. It is clear what is expected of him. In a rule-bound bureaucracy, the rule defines the work. It is the referent and criterion for the functionary. Ambiguities in the application of rules or the occasional impasse in the application of rules to a case are resolvable by reference either to superior authority or to the superior rule from which the impassive rule is derived. Solace for the bureaucrat is not merely the existence of a hierarchy of authority but also hierarchical relations among rules. In this case functionaries' rules are derivative of higher rules. Of course, as the discussion in Chapter I pointed out, in the absence of clear law, it is not possible to have clear guides to functionaries' behavior. The administration may thus be politicized into a pattern wherein administrative directives are more as manifestations of strategic compromises among organizations and less as governing formulae. The veneer of legitimacy thus diminishes, as well as the capacity of functionaries to appeal to law as a guide to practice.

Essential to both the legalist perspective of the Weberian, rational-legal, ideal type and the contemporary "decision-making" or "neo-rationalist" perspective of Herbert Simon, is a mechanism to compel functionaries' compliance with the law and decision-premises, respectively. The organizational dominance of the individual bureaucrat's decisions is the key tenet in managerial strategies to maintain efficiency and guarantee measured, predictable performances from subordinates. Whether the technique of control is the law or loyalty to the organization, both require that collateral influences on bureaucrats'
judgment, originating from outside the organization, be absent.  

*Sine ira et studio.* The discipline of the operative is an imposed domineering one, not an equanimous one. It is a discipline without roots in the social world. Bureaucracy fundamentally represents a technology directed to the denial of the "outside" world, through the control of functionaries, in order to perfect the dominance of some sector of that "outside" world. However, the ambiguity if not independence among the parts of the world into which the functionary intervenes, has implications for the entire mechanism of control within organizations. If the work of the functionary is not defined by law and not by compliance to hierarchical authority, and is not defined by professional standards, then, in relation to what is such work defined at a practical level?

The work of the functionary is likely not to be as equivocal as merely "client-serving" or "rule-oriented" as some suggest. 7 This leaves the question open for the moment and for the moments to follow. What controls street-level bureaucracies? What controls the conduct of street-level bureaucrats? What implications do these patterns of conduct have for policy impacts? The examination of contextual factors in the street-level organization and the response of the worker to these factors will orient the responses to these questions.

**Lipsky: Efficient responses to conflicting demands**

Perhaps the most prominent writer on the subject of "street-level bureaucracies," the coiner of the term, is Michael Lipsky. 8 His recent works have attempted to show the enduring features of street-level work and the enduring types of worker response to street-level
demands. Lipsky's interest is not so much the elucidation of particular strategies of response as it is the detailing of the broad dynamics and implications of a pervasive organizational dilemma which is manifested by the worker's economizing or utilitarian responses. Inequity and deterioration of service quality follow from these responses.

Basically, there are two major elements of the model of street-level bureaucracy. The first is the conflicted context of work. Street-level organizations are over-burdened with goals; typically they deal with highly charged subjects: poverty, crime, and education. The number and conflict among the goals in a street-level bureaucracy leave the worker without a criterion for practice--which goals should be paid attention? The conflicted goals are matched by the absence of resources with which to effect reasonable approximations of these goals. These features are chronic in this type of work: High expectations, conflicted public expectations, and low and inadequate resources. The functionary's response is an individual one: He or she lessens these demands, either by cognitively "tuning out" client demands, limiting attention only to particular clients, adjusting expectations of the job, or by ignoring the admonishments and exhortations of superiors to perform in the formally sanctioned manner. The adjustment of the worker, by way of stereotyping, cynicism, detachment, and alienation thus accounts for the "slippage" between the policy intents and policy actions. The resources and time available are simply too short to faithfully execute one's formal responsibility. Thus, Lipsky concludes that street-level bureaucrats will always attempt to preserve and widen the limits of
their discretion so as to regulate more autonomously this individual economy of action.10

Regulations which proscribe discretion are avoided and even transgressed with impunity; the street-level bureaucrat is "anti-rule," because the equity standards which are represented by rules are barriers to the efficient disposing of cases. Through stereotyping, judgment of the client precedes the street-level bureaucrat's interaction with him. Judgments of the worthiness of the client/recipient color the bureaucrat's treatment.

The street-level bureaucrat, through the process of stereotyping, has a repertoire of categories which represent costs to the worker. "Hard to handle" clients will receive little attention, more responsive ones will receive more attention. The problem of discretion in judging the worthiness of the client for treatment becomes acute as the basis of judgment becomes moralistic, racist, or culturally biased. Lipsky concludes that these phenomena of oversight, neglect, and inattention are endemic to the "economizing routines" of the worker. The context of street-level bureaucracy mitigates against a helping orientation. The "need to control clients in order to process work efficiently overshadows other considerations."11

Jeffrey Prottas, a student of Lipsky's, has elaborated in a series of very short case studies just how the economizing/discretion-expanding process is undertaken in several organizational contexts, including a welfare agency.12 Prottas' study of welfare offices in Massachusetts illustrates the manner in which workers economize. Prottas' study is, however, confined to the client's initial intake interview during which,
he explains, the worker attempts to direct the interview toward "relevant" information only and provides subtle cues so as to direct the compliance of the applicant with this economizing procedure. The worker avoids questions from the applicant. Even so, the interaction is not entirely controlled by the worker. Since the applicant can impose costs on the worker by being "difficult," the worker must in some sense be responsive. Such responsiveness is severely circumscribed. Since both parties can impose costs on the other, without reference to external authorities, the interview takes on a ritualistic structure, marked by cautious cooperation. The worker employs greater knowledge of the agency and the application procedures to expedite the client's filling out the form and providing the appropriate supporting documentation.

To Lipsky and Prottas, the general disposition of street-level service agencies is a response to the stress and the conflict between organizational goals and resources. The "gap," defined in the public law tradition, is filled in by a form of judgment which is not tempered by policy rationales, but by the situational pressures toward personal (not organizational) efficiencies. The decisions are not autonomous in the sense that each has a rationale and can be defended as such. They are enforced by particular practical (not rational, or principled) manners of response to burdensome circumstances. The sole use of regulations is not possible because of scarcities of time and resources. To abide by regulations and not use extra-legal "shortcuts" would represent a too generous use of valuable energy.

One may conclude from Lipsky's paradigm of street-level work that the institution of street-level bureaucracy imposes a style of
making determinations and that the persons who make them are merely incidental to a setting. The situational logic may be seen to overpower individual rationale and initiative. Lipsky's work raises fundamental questions about organizations' capacities to deliver services under the increasingly ubiquitous conditions of scarcity which define (in his formulation), the street-level setting.

Goffman: The regime of institutional power

In examining the structure and enduring impacts of social relations in total institutions, Erving Goffman's research precedes the recent concerns of policy analysis. The "total institution" (Goffman's phrase) is unparalleled among organizations in possessing a broad scale of responsibilities for the patient/resident. Indeed, it is the totality of the institutional responsibility which forces upon the institution the primary character of internal relations and social dynamic.

Many total institutions, most of the time, seem to function merely as storage dumps for inmates, but . . . . they usually present themselves to the public as rational organizations designed consciously, through and through, as effective machines for producing a few officially avowed and officially approved ends . . . . This contradiction, between what the institution does and what its officials say it does, forms the basic context of the staff's daily activity.

To the staff, which inherits this work setting from the wider society, the basic overwhelming fact of working life has to do with their work dealing with or processing inmates:

This people work is not quite like personnel work or the work of those involved in service relationships; the staff, after all, have objects and products to work upon, not services, but these objects and products are people.

The omnipresent fact of total institutional life is derived from the contradiction between the human responses and qualities of the objects of
work and the institution's own interest in efficiency. Efficiency is practiced through organizational routines, enforced conformity among inmates, uniformity of organizational attention to inmates, and following strict time schedules. The impersonality of institutions is a condition, then, of the expectations placed on it and the enforcement of efficiencies to preserve the outward appearances of fulfilling those expectations. Goffman notes the bizarre and grotesque ways in which the physical and psychological identities of inmates are disfigured and disrupted ("mortified") in order to achieve these efficiencies. Since the institution deals with so many aspects of the inmates' lives, numerous institutional repertoires to fulfill a variety of physical functions are necessitated. Compliance of the inmate is managed by the organization so as to compel a general demeanor of pliability. It is not enough to be compliant, one must be pliant in a total institution. Identity itself is a threat to institutional order. To remove the threat, inmates' identities are continuously truncated or "mortified" during one's inmate career. Identity of the inmate's self in an efficient institution, is both without expression and without want of expression.

Goffman is quite explicit as to how this regime differs from that of "normal living."

In civil society ... issue of the correctness of his action arises only at certain points, as when his productivity is judged ... He need not constantly look over his shoulder to see if any criticism or other sanctions are coming. In addition, many actions will be defined as matters of personal taste, with choice from a range of possibilities specifically allowed. For much activity the judgement and action of authority is held off and one is on one's own. Under such circumstances, one can with over-all profit schedule one's activities to fit into one another—a kind of 'personal economy of action,' as when individual postpones eating for a few minutes in order to finish a task. ... In a
total institution however, minute segments of a person's line of activity may be subjected to regulations and judgements by staff; the inmates' life is penetrated by constant sanctioning interaction from above, especially during the initial period of stay before the inmate accepts the regulations unthinkingly. Each specification robs the individual of the opportunity to balance his needs and objectives in a personally efficient way and opens up his line of action to sanctions. The autonomy of the act itself is violated. 19

The totality of the control of the inmate defines the central practical object of the institution—maintaining efficient processing of the people who comprise the inmate population. However, the tensions which emerge from this attempt to control confounds its unequivocal implementation. Efficiencies then generate resistance; the potential for resistance and the immediate reciprocal "feedback" of physical violence upon the staff mediates the efficient regime in peculiar ways. Unable to ensure total control, the functionaries or staff maintain a somewhat "collaborative" stance toward the inmates. 20 Since the staff is in close proximity to the inmates, since they are in an important sense dependent upon them to follow the efficient regime of the institution, the response of the inmates to their incarceration is one of the prominent features of the work of such employees.

It is the particular situation of the staff members which generates the particular types of demands to which they must respond and manage. The author discusses two types of adjustments inmates make which underscore the vitality of prison and other total institutions' social organization. 21 One is the "primary adjustment" of inmates. These are the adjustments which the inmate must make as a direct condition of compliance with institutional requirements: The entry, dehumanization and mortification processes in addition to the inmate's incorporation of the
discipline of the institution, complementing and mirroring the efficiencies of the mass feeding, clothing, moving and treatment of inmates of which one is a member.

Primary adjustments are those made by the inmate to live within the total institution. "Secondary" adjustments are made to get along with the social organization which is generated by the total institution. Adjustments of this kind are necessary to maintain inmates' access to illegal values.

The strength and stability of the pressures toward secondary adjustments particularly in light of the inefficiency of the coercive use of force as an institutional means of order-keeping, provides the compelling reason for the staff to collaborate in and benefit from these secondary adjustments. And the resiliency of the pressures for the measured accommodation provides a stability to the cooperative system which in fact defines the total institution as a social system.

Informal adjustments of the regime which elicit cooperative relations among staff and inmates are required in order to gain inmate compliance and maintain the veneer of order demanded by the wider society. The inefficiencies of violence, though such means are available, dictate that in the long run, the total institution must permit an economy of compliance through which exchanges and favors of important privileges, sanctuaries from routine, and sources of valued goods cement an institutional regime of cooperation through selective reciprocity between staff and inmates.

The lower level functionary has the important function of linking, on the one hand, the institution and the superiors on whose behalf he is formally dispatched and the inmates, on the other. He is a "boundary"
person, whose accommodations to the rigor of institutional life are neither sanctioned by superiors nor agreed to by inmates. He is the meeting of two worlds and undertakes the same responsibilities as the governor. And he is without moral favor from both worlds.\textsuperscript{22}

\textbf{Ethnomethodology: The episodic construction of social action}

Harold Garfinkel and the school of sociology he has encouraged have attempted to show that the activities of humans engaged in any activity are rational when appreciated from the standpoints of actors-in-situation; such actors are architects of the activity which is so "situated."\textsuperscript{23} The primary position of this phenomenological school of social science is that social actors' primary task is to render situations intelligible so that outcomes expected by others can be elicited in satisfactory ways. Humans are constantly under the burden of having to render situations accountable, or to put it differently, to make sense of them. Sense inheres in mind not in institutions, but institutions are saturated with "senseless" lacunae.

For the purposes of the study of street-level bureaucracy, it is appropriate to view work as a "setting" which has to be rendered sensible to the actor(s) and the response will be based on the emergent sense which actors bring to the particular situation.

Ethnomethodological studies are a protest against social scientific inquiries which categorize social action within frameworks which are irrelevant or obscure from the standpoints of the actors. An ethnomethodologist would cringe, for example, at the statement, "Employees in the cotton mill are irrational because they engage in work slowdowns, even though they are receiving piece-rates." The standard of
rationality and the "worth" of the activities are dictated by the
definitions of the situations among those in question and the pro­jected goals in which they were interested. Irrational action is impossible.

Students of ethnomethodology have split in a variety of ways in
the study of the "mundane" and several have enlightened the study of
institutional settings, particularly those in large organizations. The
works of Garfinkel and Sudnow are particularly interesting. Each
assumes the ethnomethodological stance in a different way, though the
utilities of the perspective, when shorn of its obscure rituals, will
become apparent.

A study of jury behavior concluded that juries are essentially a
"put-on" of officially mandated logic and form in the rendering of ver­dicts. 24 Jurors' activity made use of two resources, one which is a
veneer of official, appropriate form, the other, a more familiar, less
structured casual or common sense reasoning process. This obtains even
though it is officially expected of the jurors that common forms of
judgment employed as means of checking the trustworthiness, the moral
worth, and "truth-telling" of the persons to whom inquiry is directed be
suspended. Yet jurors are not barristers and their judgments on the
case are formed in tandem with the presentation of the case in its
immediate succession of unfolding evidence. Jurors' ground deliberation
then is a veneer of justifying prior decisions and commitments. The
model of individual decision-making is one in which the person, bound
to the presentation of decisions proscribed by particular forms 'defines
retrospectively the decisions that have been made.' 25 The discussion
of juries becomes relevant to behavior and decision-making in formal organizations since actions are often taken without clear or familiar guidelines for making them. The actor decides in a particular way and later recounts it in a manner which (fraudulently) assures the audience that the ritually appropriate (justified) formula was employed.

In a well-known essay concerned with urban criminal courts Sudnow extends the analysis of judgment and behavior. One of the few ethnographic accounts of the lower courts, it provides insights into the situational definitions and actions of persons involved in the administration of justice. Sudnow is interested in how lawyers structure the mass processing of cases through the definition of the "normal crime." Sudnow argues that it is inappropriate to employ the classification of crimes based on etiology or motive. Rather the operations of the courts' officers themselves and the classifications employed by them in disposing of cases through plea bargaining are appropriate foci of operational classification and case judgment. The concept of "normal crime" is a convenience of administrators which has little to do with the range of statutorily sanctioned courses of action which would be applied to a particular offense or complaint. There are several "normal crimes." They are broad categories of offenses, each type of which has typical features in common. Each of them includes several particular offenses in order of 'seriousness' from which charges can be lessened by defender and prosecutor to induce the defendant to accept a plea.

Each normal crime category evokes a generally used category of "criminal type" consistent with place of commission, and the personal demeanor of the accused. But it is not the accused offender or the
particular acts which fall directly under the scrutiny of the public
defender or the prosecutor, but an "offense type" which evokes the
standard imagery of the type: demeanor, location of the crime reported,
and personal appearance. The "type" precedes the defender's entry
into the legal system and no steps are taken to disclaim those
typifications, since the typifications are the necessary cognitive
foundations of fast justice. Defendants are recruited into offense types
on face validity. Such arenas of socially constructed definitions are
part of the regime of "situated" actions whose discovery excites the
ethnomethodologists.

Muir's Street-Corner Politicians: The maturation of moral beings

Rarely does the study of careers enter into the study of public
administration or organizational theory, much less the policy making and
implementation process. Sociologists have surprisingly little theoretical
interest in the development of careers among functionaries of any
kind. The importance of the functionary's career as a unit of analysis
is demonstrated by Muir as he graphically shows that the job of policing,
far from being unequivocal and straightforward entails the incorporation
of two extremely subtle skills which embrace all of the multifold tasks
of policing. Following Weber's famous essay "Politics as a Vocation,"
Muir posits that individual police develop an intellectual framework
incorporating a causal knowledge of society in which they intervene and
a set of moral criteria regulating the use of coercion.

These two skills are essential to what Weber calls the "mature
man," and to Muir's "professional" policeman, capable of understanding
the social world which makes demands on him and capable of interceding
in that world in a principled and proportionate manner. Muir builds on previous works which posit that the threat and employment of physical violence is an essential feature of police work. It is omnipresent in the minds of police and is a fact of the job of policing. Muir asks the question, "How does this fact of violence enter the discipline of police?" He suggests that the fact, though weighing upon the police, is nothing so clear as a simple "back-of-the-mind" cautious expectation and guardedness. And there are a variety of situations in which the use or suggestion of coercion is common, besides those dealing exclusively with the apprehension of suspects. The "extortionate transaction" is ubiquitous in the work of police. However, the deployment of force and the reciprocal nature of physical force, occasion some profound moral paradoxes. The particular manner in which these paradoxes are resolved undergird police behavior. Departmental policy may act to restrain or encourage particular resolutions of moral and intellectual paradox, but they do not define or shape behavior in direct ways. The task of police is to learn both how to deploy coercion and threats of coercion in both an effective and principled manner AND to understand the settings in which they move in such a way as to engage in "order-keeping" in an efficient and safe manner. It is this process which Muir states underlies the just use of police coercion in urban society, the tempering of force with empirical understanding and moral appreciation for the limits and boundaries of its deployment. Muir attempts to gauge the definitive qualities of the work. He traces the manner in which the work is learned and through which equanimity, moral dispositions, and understanding evolve by police responding to and initiating violence in the process of
encounters. He argues that the consequences of these learning episodes form the general demeanor of police conduct. It is the individual's own striving to incorporate and mold his actions within a moral framework, that occasions a search for measured, rather than massive, uses of his coercive authority.

Street-level bureaucrats, in Muir's formulation, both respond to and participate in the constraints of the job. They participate in violent encounters, and in the process many come to transform their understandings of the social world, their explanations for the compelling motives and causes for human conduct. This capacity for constructing and reconstructing the social world is the major resource which the functionary brings. He is constructing the world in the process of acquiring better skills for encountering it. The reciprocal interchange between the "sociological" and "moral" learning defines the career of the proto-professional. Police work, Muir suggests, is the product of intellectual and moral learning over a long period of time. Competence as a police professional who has achieved the cognitive efficiencies of understanding human motives and the integrated morality of the principled use of coercion, is a characteristic of the laborious process of discipline of the self.

Of course, not all, perhaps not even the majority of the police, are professionals in this sense. Others maintain a more rigid understanding of human behavior or have not acquired a moral equanimity toward the use of force. Muir arranges these other responses along with the professional one in a four celled matrix. (See Table I below.) They may be resolved, as in the case of the "enforcer," by maintaining a rigid demeanor, to "show force," and initiate
Table I

Typology of Police Dispositions
According to Intellectual and Moral Qualities
of Policemen's Outlooks*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intellectual Understanding of the Social Context and Individuals</th>
<th>&quot;Integrated&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Conflicted&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tragic Perspective (universal; social situational understanding of human action)</td>
<td>&quot;Professional&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Reciprocator&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynical Perspective (dualistic, individualistic understanding of human action)</td>
<td>&quot;Avoider&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Enforcer&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Taken from Muir, Police, p. 57.
compliance-enhancing methods. Such an overall demeanor would be reinforced and complemented by a "dualistic" understanding of human behavior which organizes the human condition into dual categories such as "law-abiding" versus "law-breaking"; "good-guys" and "scum." This is opposed in the professional model by what the author calls a "tragic" understanding of human behavior, a pattern of explanation which is not merely an extension of the policeman's personal fears and likes. It finds an explanation for why "good people" would fly off the handle or become involved in a police encounter (a disorderly, public dispute) by virtue of their membership in a family or group. Inherent "goodness" or "badness" of people are categories which are rejected, since action, in the professional's perspective, is contingent upon surrounding influences not always under the person's control.29

Discussion

Muir's model of accommodation to the street-level context is an active, not a passive one. The professional and non-professional policemen both are intellectually constructing their social universes. Such construction parallels a moral project, not merely an "economizing" (Lipsky) or an "episodic coping" (Garfinkel) behavior. A table below displays these four schools and categorizes them according to

(1) the clarity of expected work practices or the "technique" of work;

(2) the primary motive dilemma or circumstances which each author sees as compelling the responses of street-level bureaucrats;

(3) the type of response to such dilemmas and circumstances;

(4) the strategy or social process by which the street-level bureaucrat responds; and
Table II. Typology of Elements of Theories of Street-Level Work, Response to Dilemmas, and Decision-Making Dispositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>theorist</th>
<th>essential basis of work practices</th>
<th>source of dilemmas</th>
<th>type of response</th>
<th>strategy</th>
<th>judgmental criteria in specific instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lipsky</td>
<td>rule: clearly prescribed</td>
<td>scarce resources</td>
<td>'amoral adjustment'</td>
<td>economy; autonomy</td>
<td>personal bias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goffman</td>
<td>social: clearly articulated</td>
<td>reciprocity of violence</td>
<td>'collaborative management'</td>
<td>reciprocity</td>
<td>order-keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnomethodology</td>
<td>ambiguous</td>
<td>'situational' lack of sense, meaning</td>
<td>'creative passivity' or coping</td>
<td>episodic coping</td>
<td>'getting by'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muir</td>
<td>social: ambiguous</td>
<td>morality of self-conduct</td>
<td>active intellectual and moral configuration</td>
<td>reflection experimentation</td>
<td>'ethos'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(5) the criteria for action and judgment employed in individual instances of street-level bureaucrat's encounters with clients.

The strengths of the various schools of thought detailed above are perhaps obvious as explanations for specific aspects of organization behavior in street-level bureaucracies. However it is "aspects" which direct their specialized attention to street-level bureaucracy. They tend, by themselves, to be fragmentary. The task of each author is not oriented to the questions of what it is that structures and compels conduct in such organizations. Lipsky's interest is to examine the enduring features of a type of dilemma, not to elucidate organizational behavior. The implications of the conflicting goals and the shortage of resources occasion some dilemmas which are broadly experienced in service organizations. Likewise, Goffman's analysis charts the general social dynamics in a "total" institution, not to inform a theory of organization.

The Ambiguity of Work Practices

Lipsky's model of adjustment is useful as an explanation for service inequities and for the purposes of illuminating the processes of slippage between policy intent and organizational outputs which frequently create a quandary among students of policy implementation. There are several features of organizational practice to which Lipsky's model is not sensitive. First is the assumption that the means through which policy is implemented by street-level bureaucrats is clear and unambiguous. Garfinkel, Sudnow, and Muir confirm that ambiguity is the hallmark of even the most mundane of organizational practices. For instance, the rules and regulations of the agencies analyzed did not provide direction to the operative. Lipsky and Prottas are close to making the Weberian assumption that rules can specify functionaries' actions and judgments.
However, tasks undertaken to perform the work are more ambiguous than they assume. The struggle of the policemen in Muir's study was directed toward the evolving appropriate understandings and actions with which to deal both "effectively" and "morally" in the street-level context. "Techniques" were in fact part of a highly ambiguous project which were not prescribed or specified. They are achievements, acquired through long and arduous discipline.

The ethnomethodologists' hallmark is ambiguity. To them, there are no sociological "facts" or "givens." The fruitfulness of the approach, in spite of the rather obscure outline of ethnomethodological science, is no better demonstrated than in the illumination of the practices of mundane social actors about which most organization theorists tend to impose frameworks rather than investigate. The inner logic of mundane social action is potentially the richest datum of all. But it is the totality or multifacetedness of human projects which seems to be lacking in Lipsky and the ethnomethodologists. The context of meaning to the worker, so central and analytically provocative in Muir, is lacking in others.

Active Configuration: Meaning and Career

Though Lipsky attempts to analyze the operations of the bureaucrat from the standpoint of the bureaucrat's own experience, the scope of experience he examines is truncated and the inner life of that experience seems hollow. Though it is the ethnomethodologists who lay claim to illuminating the inner meanings of social action, their episodic definitions of action leaves their projects barren of essential meaning. To the extent that social actors possess and create meaning, the ethnomethodologists would have us believe that social life is a series of
individuals' disconnected episodes, and that personality is merely the accumulation of such episodes. Muir, however, is especially adept at rescuing us.

It is the resilient project of moral striving which defines the germ of Muir's examination of street-level bureaucrats. The dialectic interchange between context and the enduring creative resiliency of the individual provides the core of an adequate organization theoretic understanding of such behavior.

While Lipsky's bureaucrat is creatively managing episodes, Muir's moral actor is "configuring" both the elements of his own understanding and of his own interventions in the world by reflection and experimentation. The creativeness of the street-level bureaucrat, so well displayed by Garfinkel, is arrayed in a much more enduring and appreciable way when understood as part of a career (rather than an episode), of paradox, struggle and incorporation of conduct within a principled discipline.

The street-level bureaucrat's mastery of the social and technical obligations of the workplace is central to the launching and continuation of a career. The particular configuration of paradoxes is likely to be reflected in the pattern of the initiate's "learning the ropes" of his job. The means through which particular disciplines develop and mature thus require this time element in a research design.

Judgmental Dispositions of Street-level Bureaucrats

Each of these four schools of thought suggest that the attention to and perceptions of the clients of street-level bureaucrats are truncated in some way. Intervening between the worker and the client are events, influences, and projects remote from the direct encounter. These authors
suggest that the disposition of the bureaucrat toward the clients is mediated by the individual employee's project of accommodating conflicting pressures and acquiring a disciplined demeanor.

The question raised here is how workers perceive their subjects. What compels or intervenes in this perception? Ralph Hummel suggests that relations between bureaucrat and citizen take on, to the bureaucrat, the features of what Alfred Shutz termed "They-relations," in which the seer's perception of the other subject is mediated by time or distance. The relations are "anonymous"; there is (cognitively) no "subject" due to the intervention of time or distance. The other "subject" is apprehended cognitively as an object.

Stereotyping is an necessity of social life. "Objectification" serves "as more or less enduring indices of the subjective processes of their producers, allowing their availability to extend beyond the face-to-face situation in which they can be directly apprehended." Objectification is a means of organizing experience of the actor through the fixing of meanings, in turn, through the creation of signs. For the possessor objectifications are the shorthand which permit the managing of one's experience.

Signs and objectification are also a cognitive precedent for action. They inform images both of assumptions and of self-conscious theorizing. Officials' images of persons precede strategies of acting upon those persons. This objectifying cognitive activity occurs in tandem with street-level bureaucrats' responses to the organizational situations they inhabit. The objectifying of signs underlies and reinforces the structure of bureaucrats' dispositions to pay attention, to make
judgments, and to expend resources on behalf of clients. However, objectification, so necessary to human society can become ossified such that perception comes to evade some knowable and important realities of the "perceived" persons:

... reification can be described as an extreme step in the process of [objectification], whereby the ... world loses its comprehensibility as a human enterprise and becomes fixated as a non-human, non-humanizable, inert facticity. 34

The objectification of street-level bureaucrats becomes a policy issue to the extent that they underlie the treatment of the client population. This is particularly relevant to the extent that some objectifications may be at once well-adapted to institutional pressures described above, but evade the perception of important facts about the lives of clients.

Our four schools of thought suggest that the root of potentially adverse forms of objectification lay in the interstices of the work situation among street-level bureaucracies. Another way to state this is to say that the street-level bureaucrat's attention to the constellation of technical and social factors in the workplace which comprise part of the "work," in effect, "compromises" interactions with and perceptions of clients. Perceptions of the clients are thus mediated, or "interfered with," by other considerations. These considerations have been suggested: Economy (Lipsky); reciprocity (Goffman); coping (Garfinkel); and self-reflection (Muir).

The particular criteria employed to resolve the tensions and dilemmas of street-level work are noted above and in Table II. The criteria are further evidence for the marginality of clients in the perceptions of
bureaucrats. The criteria are employed to solve the enduring situational problems noted. Though applied in instances of clients encounters by street-level bureaucrats, the criteria are "nothing personal." "Personal" modes of communication with clients and non-pragmatic forms of objectivation are barriers to the satisfaction of formally sanctioned pressures and exhortations. In the institutional regime of the street-level bureaucracy, such perceptions of the clients, central to the bureaucrat's dispositions of action and attentiveness toward them, remain incidental to the clients themselves.

The question of the dispositions of bureaucrats raised here is directly related to the manner in which organizations of this type function to constrain perceptions of clients by their employees. It is also profound in its implications for the manner and extent to which organizations and their employees learn and perceive their consequences upon the client population for which they have so great a responsibility.

Social Relations and Organizational Influences: The Importance of Context

Since it is the unique circumstance of street-level bureaucracy which generates the peculiar dilemmas and ambiguities in the task of the employee, the context of street-level bureaucracy should inform us about some influences on bureaucrats' conduct. However, this theme is not well-developed in the aforementioned works. We have the broad contextual strokes of Lipsky, but contained therein is little examination of the particular relations among peers and between the street-level employees and their superiors. Perhaps it is an unfair criticism of Lipsky on this point, but for our purposes, it is essential to examine the ways in which these relations mediate the various practices of street-level employees.
Garfinkel and the other ethnomethodologists have little appreciation for the wider context which, if different research agendas were employed, might prove fruitful as mediating influences upon street-level practices.

An understanding of the social dimension of behavior is absolutely essential to formulate a model of organizational relations. How these social relations mediate work conduct is, however, an open question. We know for example that peer relations are important mediating influences on the practices and development of policemen, although these relations tend either to be very intense, as with one's partner, or very episodic, as with one's peers at staff meetings and roll-call. On the other hand, in welfare organizations, situated as they are in confined spaces, where the interaction among employees and between supervisors and employees is likely to be more intense and constant, we might expect some social relations to be strong mediating influences upon the behavior and work of these employees.

Social relations may thus have a mediating influence on the development of the street-level bureaucrat. The passing on of office folklores, prevailing organizational understandings, and even the nuance of work techniques through the informal relations of workers are conceivably important. And while the paradoxes of the policy situation detailed by Muir, exemplified as it is by the omnipresence of violence and the reciprocal possibilities of violence, are not likely to exist in such dramatic proportions, other configurations of paradox are likely to be found in welfare work. Social relations may serve as a resource to the resolution of these dilemmas.
Lastly, but certainly of primary importance to this analysis, are the mediating influences of formal organizational factors and practices of managing the street-level organization. After all, the project of large formal organizations is exactly that: to mediate, if not to dominate, the relation between the worker and the work, whatever the superordinate authorities deem that work to be. We have heretofore examined the pressures on the street level bureaucrat from the standpoints of these various authors. The "next step" will be undertaken in the following chapters. That is the examination of the structure of the context wherein the tensions, pressures, dilemmas, paradoxes, and opportunities are generated and to which street-level bureaucrats accommodate. The questions which interest us are those concerning the sources, form and meaning of these pressures and opportunities. What is the role of formal organization per se in aggregating these pressures, intentionally or not, and what influences do agencies and influences beyond the organizational boundaries have for the work of the street-level bureaucrat in public assistance?
CHAPTER II--NOTES


9. Lipsky, Street-Level Bureaucracy, p. 15.

10. Ibid., Chapter 2.

11. Ibid., p. 111.


13. Ibid., pp. 28-29.


15. Ibid., p. 74.

16. Ibid., p. 74.
17. Ibid., p. 6.
20. Ibid., pp. 48-60.
21. Ibid., pp. 189-207.
22. Ibid., pp. 113-116.


25. Ibid., Chapter 4.


28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.


CHAPTER III

PROCESS OF INQUIRY AND INVESTIGATION

In the previous chapters we have discussed a general model of national administrative politics based upon the dynamics espoused in Lowi's theory of interest group liberalism. We have argued in favor of a particular concern for social policies whose dynamics are characterized by both the fragmentation and absence of stable consensus typical of the pattern of representation and policy making found in interest group liberalism. Social policy particularly concerns us as the beneficiaries or objects of policy are un-represented in the process. Hence, the regulation of the objects of policy is undertaken without the attention or commitment characteristic of other types of policies. At the same time, it was suggested that policy is extremely consequential to its poor recipients, owing to the generally fragile and vulnerable circumstances of poor persons.

A very strong consensus exists that street-level organizations' administration of policies is important in the determination of the treatment received by recipients and in the determination of substantive policy outcomes. The authors surveyed in the last chapter agree that important organizational and individual decision-making processes mediate between policy pronouncements and priorities and the actual "delivery" of policy. The lower level organizational context, then, contributes greatly to the determination of policy, as practiced, by virtue of this mediation.
Analyses of conduct within street-level organizations have been fragmentary. Each analyst placed emphasis exclusively upon a particular issue. Lipsky, for instance, emphasizes the "rationing" of services resulting from the economizing behavior of street-level bureaucrats. Goffman emphasizes the influence of efficiency upon organizational routines and informal relations within total institutions. Ethnomethodologists discuss the lengths and pathways of ad hoc coping strategies in organized settings. Muir emphasizes the moral and intellectual development of the law enforcement operative. I suggest that the policy implications, work situation, intellectual understanding, and organizational context of street-level work must all be accounted for and included in the theory of street-level implementation. Each is correct, in illuminating important constituents of conduct, thereby contributing necessary elements to the explanation of such conduct. Each is useful to the elucidation of particular aspects of conduct in such settings. However, insofar as the understanding of the policy process is concerned, these contributions are fragmentary. That is, they shed useful light upon dimensions of operatives' conduct but do not combine these into a richer holistic frame of social action.

All four schools agree upon a major point. The policy-implementing operatives somehow adjust to the particular circumstances in these institutional settings. Each analyst, however, is interested in dispositions of workers in relation to a particular theoretically relevant interest: Goffman in efficiency; Lipsky in policy distribution and equality, ethnomethodologists in ad hoc coping; and Muir in intellectual and moral transformations underlying commitments and dispositions to
act. This study attempts to meld these constituents of conduct by articulating an "action frame of reference" and giving accounts of the action of public welfare operatives.

After becoming acquainted in Chapter II, with these authors' works, it is difficult to imagine an organizational setting which does not impose some criterion for conduct (whether efficiency or another one), or engender ad hoc coping responses among subordinate officials. It is equally difficult to imagine that operatives would passively abstain from the intellectual and moral quandaries generated by the charged activity of "people-processing." Finally, given the magnitude of the pressures upon the operatives, it is unlikely that such accommodative responses, and intellectual searches would have no effect on service practices.

It was the premise at the outset of this study that individual conduct is at once activated by attempts to understand, judge, and conduct oneself within specific conditions and boundaries imposed by employment in large formal organizations and that such conduct has policy consequences. The individual, viewed as a creative, competent social actor, then, is a primary unit of analysis. It is at the individual level that pressures are creatively resolved and transformed through the initiation of coping strategies which dispose individual conduct toward the fulfillment of projects. This action frame of reference is compatible with the epistemological stance and research strategy of hermeneutical analysis.

An "action frame of analysis" suggests a stance on social science theory and investigation which is in marked contrast to a behavioral plan and method of theory-building. In this section, we will discuss the major
assertions and commitments of the hermeneutical approach to theory and contrast these, briefly, to the behavioral approach. An important, central assertion of hermeneutical analysis, as expounded by Giddens, lies in the concepts of action and social structure.

The Concept of Action

Action is defined by actors, as opposed to the organic value-systems asserted by Durkheim and Parsons. Actors are viewed as "inventors" of their conduct, as self-monitoring competent interveners in social life. Conduct is constituted partially by the reflexive ingenuity of the actor. In "action-based" analyses of human conduct, the actor generates conduct. Conduct is not "motivated" by internal-motivational or moral compulsions beyond the actor's control. In short, motivations and internalized values do not "cause" human conduct: human social actors "cause" human conduct. This does not mean that such creative accomplishments of human agency result in individual free expression and choice. Ethnomethodological examples show that creative accomplishments are manifest, particularly in formal organizations, as coping strategies and as second- and third-best accommodations. This is to say that the conduct of social actors is mediated by their interpretations of their circumstances. Another way of saying this is to say that the actor is a "meaning-creator," as opposed to a "creature" of meanings either internalized by or defined (externally) as "facts." "Reality" is a phenomenon created by actors through their active, inventive, interpretations. This is opposed to a definition of meaning (reality) which regards meaning as an "endowment," that is, a given, objective or transcendent fact of society. At the level of social
conduct, such conduct does not "mean" anything separable from the understandings possessed by actors themselves.

Hermeneutic epistemology has a debt to contemporary schools of phenomenology. However, hermeneutical analysis does not posit, as does phenomenology, that actors' own interpretations exhaust the credible meaning of human action. To be sure, the phenomenological criterion of meaning posits that actors' own consciousness exhausts meaning. It is seen to exhaust what can be legitimately discussed by analysts. "Lay interpretations" are reality to the phenomenologist. Phenomenology as a consequence is unsuited as an epistemology for a social or political science, for it is the analysis of human action (not merely the giving of lay accounts) which defines these disciplines. To accept the accounts of actors as exhaustive would be to delegitimate a social science which attempts to intellectually reflect upon the actions of social beings.

Giddens suggests a way out of the epistemological trap of phenomenology, while accepting its insights into the conduct of self-understanding, reflexive beings. Society in his view is not composed of self-understanding social isolates, but of interacting, meaning-sharing collaborators. Society is not possible without enduring, persistent understandings conveyed, cemented, and transformed through interaction. Another way of stating this is by suggesting that individuals' actions are "inventions," but that these inventions are circumscribed by their utility in interaction settings in which prevail conventions and the shared understandings of other actors. It is within these that actions are constituted by actors. The distribution of shared understandings among social beings not only occasions proficient conduct, but expresses the very condition of society. Language-systems are the media through
which shared understandings are created, taken-for-granted, and transformed. Language, a term we define as a shared stock of interpretation and meaning, performs a central role in the creation and the reproduction of social structures.

If individual action is a practical accomplishment, even more so is society an accomplishment. The definitive fact of social action is the collaboration of actors in the management of the discrete episode (à la Garfinkel) or the invention and maintenance of persistent structures of social action.

Structures of Social Interaction

Giddens' discussion of social structures directs us to the incorporation of human action within a social science. Action, he argues, is constituted by actors in their attempt to further their interests. Specific actions are organized by general "projects" of action. It is in the context of projects, oriented toward the fulfillment of actors' commitments, that conduct is understood. Far from being discrete and independent, individuals' actions possess a coherence within a wider program of individuals' interests and commitments. Giddens argues that human agency is rational, since conduct of actors is reflexively directed "from within," in their understanding of social contexts and their interactions with the social structures surrounding them.

The analyses of social structures and the reproduction of social structures through human action is the centerpiece of hermeneutical epistemology and of the research program Giddens suggests.

The notion of structuration is, according to Giddens, the true explanatory locus of structural analysis:
To study structuration is to attempt to determine the conditions which govern the continuity and dissolution of structures or types of structure. To put it another way: to enquire into the process of reproduction is to specify the connections between "structuration" and structure.\(^\text{11}\)

Positivist social science, as exemplified by behavioralism, subsumes conduct within "objective" social structures.\(^\text{12}\) This school likens social structure to a jungle gym, wherein conduct is subsumed under and separate from the structure itself. "Behavior" takes place within the structure. To hermeneutical analysis, conduct entails a cooperative invention among actors, such as in a dance. The hermeneutical counter-example of a dance does not exist without its creators/participants. Without the participants, there is no dance. Only the confluence of reflexive actions on the part of the dancers sustains the dance. As the dance progresses, and the dancers mastery matures, and dancers wish to attempt variations, the dance changes as these variations are assimilated by other dancers. While the dance metaphor may evoke an expressiveness and equality not exhibited by many social structures, the metaphor highlights a central point of structure from the hermeneutical standpoint: that social actions and structures are constituted by actors, not by objective independent "social facts." However, structures of social relations do affect action. Actions and structures have a reciprocal relations. Giddens refers to the actor-constituted" and "action-constituting" nature of structure as the "duality of structure."

Interaction is constituted by and in the conduct of subjects; **structuration**, as the reproduction of practices, refers abstractly to the dynamic process whereby structures come into being. By the **duality of structure**, I mean that social structures are both constituted by human agency, and yet at the same time are the very medium of this constitution.\(^\text{13}\)
Structures do not have their source in the agreement among subjects; they have their origins in some conditions or in influential modes of interpreting these conditions. It is possible, then, that even though subjects participate and (by virtue of their interaction) assist in reproducing a structure, the structure may be a structure of domination. Indeed, the terms and conditions of many social interactions are not freely chosen or even appreciated by any of their direct participants.

Such structures as those found in large formal organizations are not reproduced intentionally. The scope of the structure in which individual action is performed is far more large than the scope of individual action. The complementary of interaction extends and sustains the (often) unknowing contributions of the social actor to larger institutional structures. Indeed, the circumscription of individual action into lesser orbits within lesser horizons of experience and understanding is a primary accomplishment of social structures. The isolated but interdependent confluence of several structural action-constituents is a characteristic of relations and structural reproduction in social structure generally, and in formal organizations particularly.

Social obligations and norms are often passively accepted by social actors since they are internalized as "reality" and regarded as "natural" and taken for granted. For example, popular discourse which demeans or trivializes women's behavior has served to exclude the recognition of women (by women and men) as anything but trivial. The "natural," taken-for-granted, aspect of trivializing references to female accomplishments is then a constituent of a structure of
domination, even if no one feels repulsed or dominated. Ordinary language and understanding of common conduct reinforce asymmetries of power with far greater efficiency and with far greater ubiquity than the deployment of obvious physical coercion or intimidation. Power, conceptualized as the constituents of social action and of structures, is expressed in the realm of "ordinary," taken-for-granted knowledge and behavior, rather than obvious conflicts and repression.\(^{16}\)

Social action is not undertaken in a vacuum under conditions of actors' choosing. Actors enter social contexts whose relations and participant's interpretations are already structured. The actor must become competent in conducting himself in these areas, through acquiring, if haphazardly an understanding of the context and the means of functioning effectively within it. To seek membership and competence in a web of relations is to substantially collaborate in its structure. The "duality" of structure highlights on the one hand the constitution of structures to action and thereby provides a pre-existing framework of understanding and action among actors. On the other side of this "duality," the actors' mutual understanding and strategies constitute structures, and hence, structure depends on the collaboration of actors. Structures can change to the extent that the interpretations shared and strategies invoked among actors change.\(^ {17}\)

Social structures, in Giddens' formulation, are much more animated phenomena than those represented by behavioral analysis. While the former views conduct as reflexive and constituent of structure, the latter views conduct as impelled by variables beyond humans' control. People are thus regarded as passive by-standers to structures. From the hermeneutical perspective, social structures are as permeable as
the interpretations by actors and the strategies of actors. The maintenance of or, in Giddens' terminology, the "reproduction" of structures, is the product of a confluence of individuals' actions. Two aspects of structures then should be apparent: first is the aspect of individual action, the interpretation by the actor of the circumstances and the strategies undertaken to intervene in these circumstances. It is at this level where the meaning of and motivation for conduct truly resides. Secondly, are the circumstances themselves: they are social circumstances. Social "circumstances" include the knowledge taken for granted by other members, which evoke norms of conduct and mobilize sanctions and endorsements.

To recapitulate, social action is constituted by actors; action is also influenced by the knowledge and conduct of members of the social context the actor wishes to join. Social structure, by impressing the strategic possibilities for conduct upon the reflexive member, through the signification of norms and obligations, and through the mobilization of sanctions, constitutes the actor's interpretation of and conduct in the collectivity in question. It is the task of hermeneutical social science to investigate and analyze, the composition, derivations, and consequences of social structures of action.

The outcome or product of an interpretive "action-based" analysis of social and political conduct is vastly different from the product of a behavioral study. The goal of the latter is to discover invariant lawlike relations among events; the former attempts to analyze the generative elements, the constituents and the consequences of structures in relation to a concern voiced by the analyst. It does not seek the invariant relationship among events but the enduring constituents, social
dynamic and implications of human action. By viewing conduct as reflexively constituted action, a hermeneutical social science turns its gaze away from the behavioral preoccupation with precision and analyzes the interpretation and conduct which comprise action. Since the human being is regarded as a competent reflexive being, somewhat in control of his conduct, the study of conduct first attempts to monitor the actor's perspective and goals as well as the setting in which he is intervening. Interpretive theories are thus ideally expressed as discussions of social structures, as opposed to conclusions about strengths of statistical relationships among observational derivations of theoretical constructs.

The Hermeneutical Project and Plan of Research

While actors are seen to interpret their own situations and invent strategies of conduct, the actors' frames of reference do not entirely constitute the basis of hermeneutical social science. Lay interpretations of action may best be thought of as one "layer" of analysis. The analyst takes these interpretations of social action and reconstructs them within a theoretical frame of reference. Giddens refers to the method of research as a "double hermeneutic."

The conceptual schemes of the social science . . . express a double hermeneutic, relating both to entering and grasping the frames of meaning involved in the production of social life by key actors, and reconstituting these within the new frames of meaning involved in technical conceptual schemes.18

Two interconnecting "layers" of interpretation comprise the strategy of hermeneutical social science. The first is to interpret the action of actors; the second is to "make sense" or interpret this action from the analysts' own frame of reference and research problem.
The dynamic of the double hermeneutical enterprise is an *intermediation* of the analyst's and the actors' frames of reference. The hermeneutical product is a result of the analyst's explicit interpretation of action around theoretical issues concerning him. The explicitness of the method highlights the analyst as a political choice-maker. To an extent unacknowledged by the methods of natural science and behavioral social science, hermeneutic epistemology moves the perspective of the analyst into view.

What, then, does the "methodology" of the hermeneutical scientist look like? Ricoeur suggests that the method, as in literary interpretation, is one of guesswork and of logical construction based on those guesses combined with operations of validation (or invalidation) of these guesses and logical constructions. Rather than "following" the "data gathering" stage (as in behavioral science), the hermeneutical construction of interpretations "necessarily takes the form of a process."¹⁹ This process unites, on the one hand the interpretation of subjects' actions (either through observation or through their accounts) and on the other hand, the explanatory enterprise of the analyst. The analyst interposes himself between the *actions* he is interpreting and the theories he is attempting to relate to those actions. Theories can be "related" to the action through critiquing, revising, interrogating, and refining the former. The reconstruction of theories and the refinements of interpretive accounts occur simultaneously. It is a method whose implementation entails no small degree of discomfort to the analyst, who, if faithful to the method, will never attempt to separate theory from observation.
The credibility of hermeneutical analyses, as with any interpretive work, is expressed in terms of the "hermeneutic circle":

A successful interpretation is one which makes clear the meaning originally present in a confused, fragmentary, cloudy form. But how does he know that his interpretation is correct? Presumably because it makes sense of the original (object or context to be explained): what is strange, mystifying, puzzling, contradictory is no longer so, is accounted for. The interpretation appeals throughout to our understanding of the 'language' of expression, which understanding allows us to see that this expression is puzzling, that it is in contradiction to that other, etc., and these difficulties are cleared up when the meaning is expressed in a new way.

But this appeal to our understanding seems to be crucially inadequate. What if someone does not 'see' the adequacy of our interpretation, does not accept our reading? We try to show him how it makes sense of the original non-or partial sense. But for him to follow us he must read the original language as we do, he must recognize these expressions as puzzling in a certain way, and hence be looking for a solution to our problem. If he does not, what can we do? The answer, it would seem, can only be more of the same. We have to show him through the reading of other expressions why this expression must be read in the way we propose. But success here requires that he follow us in these other readings, and so on, it would seem, potentially forever. We cannot escape an ultimate appeal to a common understanding of the expressions, of the language involved. This is one way of trying to express what has been called the 'hermeneutic circle.' What we are trying to establish is a certain reading of text or expressions, and what we appeal to as our grounds for this can only be other readings. The circle can also be put in terms of part-whole relations: we are trying to establish a reading for the whole text and for this we appeal to readings of its partial expressions; and yet because we are dealing with meaning, with making sense, where expressions only make sense or not in relation to others, the readings of partial expressions depend on those of others, and ultimately of the whole. 20

The interpretation of incidents or social contexts, paralleling those of literary works, cannot be proven by strict reference to the single incident or context, but in relation to interpretations of other surrounding situations and contexts. The plausibility of an interpretation is demonstrated through reference among a set of
of interpretations of various social and political instances and processes and between interpretation of these parts and the whole process in which they cohere. Plausibility or credibility of interpretations is much involved in consistent interpretations of several lesser and greater social actions and contexts within a larger setting. It is not achieved through the scrutiny of individual facts or the precision of observation, since these are merely particles of a larger context whose structure and meaning surpass individual datum. Interpretation inheres in all "description" and analysis. However, the contestability of interpretation and the role of the analyst in forming interpretations has been "covered over" in the behavioral method. Guided by adherence to traditional empiricism, such research depends upon the epistemological assertion that data or facts exist independently of the analyst. Hence, interpretations conducted by behavioral scientists go unnoticed by their creators. Taylor argues that the manner in which "facts" are defined, especially if the "facts" are obvious ones is particularly problematic to social science. In the nexus of facts lay interpretation, for "facts" themselves are constituents of social structures.

It can be argued then, that mainstream social science is kept within certain limits by its categorical principles which are rooted in the traditional epistemology of empiricism; and secondly that these restrictions are a severe handicap and prevent us coming to grips with important problems of our day which should be the object of political science.

By adopting obvious, conventional interpretations of facts and data, behavioral empiricists curtail their investigation of political action by unwittingly accepting fundamental positions as to the meaning of action. For instance, the casual recruitment of rioters into the "obvious" categories of "hoodlums" and "malcontents" is to uncritically
and unwittingly accept an understanding of conduct, which might itself be called into question. "Facts," casually labelled as such do not merely achieve descriptions; they also ascribe values toward and select public policies toward the "facts." In describing, we social scientists also mobilize. Hermeneutical science admits this "up front."

As we stated at the end of the last chapter, this study seeks to analyze the social structure of social policy implementation, the conditions which generate that structure, and the consequences for the treatment of and attentiveness toward a vulnerable class of recipients. We seek to answer these broad questions in order of discussion below through hermeneutical analysis:

1) What are the conditions which are imposed upon the conduct of welfare functionaries?
2) How are such conditions interpreted or understood by those functionaries? How is conduct "rationalized" into reflexive projects of action?
3) How do these projects dispose actors' conduct in relation to recipients?
4) What are the organizational and policy processes and conditions which generate a structure of functionary behavior?

Our analysis is derived from the study of the Public Welfare division of Hawaii's Department of Social Services and Housing. The interpretation of the structure of action is based primarily upon interviews of Division employees and members of a welfare rights group in Honolulu. Some direct observations of workers' conduct was afforded by my waiting for interviewees to free themselves for my appointments though extensive observation was not permitted.
Division permission to conduct this study was cautious and tentative, though the only condition placed upon the investigation was to provide the Division Administrator with a copy of this study. Forty-five persons in the Division and its parent Department were interviewed. Several persons, among them Unit Supervisors, Section officials, Division personnel and Departmental-level staff, were interviewed more than once. Some of these persons were interviewed several times. Eighty-five interviews were conducted.

Unit personnel were promised anonymity. This was not a condition imposed by these people as much as the general circumstances of the workplace. The cautious, conflictful scheme of administrative relations became apparent at the onset. Anonymity was not promised to other informants. In the context of our discussion of agency structure and relationships, the identities of these higher officials would be discerned by any knowledgeable reader. Still, save for persons such as Mr. Andrew Chang, Director of DSSH, and Mr. Shige Nakamura, Public Welfare Administrator, who kindly granted permission to conduct interviews and to read documents, no personal names are employed in identifying persons.

Informants occupying positions administratively superior to the welfare unit levels were chosen for their involvement in the administration of programs, the contributions to authoritative analyses of programs, and their involvement in the budgeting, staffing, policy-making, and evaluation functions relevant to the administration of public assistance. The selection of administrators was based on their involvement relative to any facet of program administration. Surprisingly, this includes persons with no "line" responsibility, who would be regarded by convention
as "support" staff. The conduct and understandings of these staff persons contribute greatly to the conduct of the Division and the Department as a whole. These include officials of the "budget," "program development," "research," "personnel," and "program evaluation" staff. Access to some members of these staffs was restricted, in effect, due to these persons' lack of time. The staff directors were also unenthusiastic about the prospect of my interviewing their subordinates. Each of the staff directors interviewed directed small staffs, an average of five, excluding the larger program evaluation staff. These directors were in close enough proximity to their staffs to be extremely detailed in their accounts of staff activities and no threat to the accuracy and competence of their accounts was ascertained.

Unit supervisors gave permission to interview their charges at the line level. I requested permission from four unit supervisors; each granted it. The units were chosen with two criteria: first, that the unit be in the urban Honolulu corridor and secondly, that the unit be in the same administrative section. It was felt that researching units in the same section would permit a more detailed intensive analysis of the structure of relations within a single network of organizational interactions. Another reason that one of the two Sections was selected for intensive scrutiny was the fact that the other Section's administrator had only recently been moved into that position. For reasons of establishing validity, for my interpretation of organizational interaction, I interviewed a Unit Supervisor in the other Section, whose accounts were compatible with the other Supervisors in the Section more intensively studied.
The selection of unit workers for interviews was done with far less control than the other administrators interviewed. Unit Supervisors asked their workers if they would consent to be interviewed. Letters of introduction were distributed by the Supervisors. In one unit, I interviewed four of eight total workers; another three of nine; another four of nine. In the fourth unit, the Supervisor asked each of her ten workers to be interviewed. Eight of these were interviewed. By interviewing such a high percentage of workers in the latter unit, I was fortunate to eliminate my doubts about the unrepresentativeness of the "self-selected" interviewees in the other three units. I was primarily concerned with capturing all the variety of workers. I thereby avoided the prospect of interviewing only the most satisfied or (alternately) the least satisfied workers.

The analysis does not seek to provide a statistically justified sample of respondents. Rather, the "sampling" sought to include the variety of workers coincident with the variety of types of workers. Since the study seeks to analyze a structure of interaction and its implications of workers' conduct and dispositions, the absence of a stratified or representative sample does not issue a threat to the credibility of the interpretations of structure.

As long as the claim to have captured the range of action-types is credible and the action-types can be logically linked to the structural composition of agency interaction and the work context, then the interpretation is credible.

The potential threats to the credibility of the interpretations given below primarily lay in the possibility of relying upon anomalous or
highly personalized relations among administrative levels. I was fastidious in critiquing accounts for anomalies which would threaten the validity of these structural interpretations of interaction.

The following chapters analyze the situation and task structure in which the work of income maintenance workers is performed. Chapter VI gives interpretations of three forms of action-dispositions undertaken by workers in response to their circumstance of work. Chapter VII analyzes the larger structure of policy and organizational interactions from which these conditions and dispositions are generated. In the next chapter, the administrative organization and the structure of the public manual are analyzed.
CHAPTER III--NOTES


2. Ibid., pp. 93-98.

3. Ibid., pp. 81-86.

4. Ibid., p. 84.

5. Ibid., pp. 93-98.

6. See Giddens' critique of phenomenological sociologies in Chapter I of Giddens, ibid.


11. Ibid., pp. 120; 93-98.

12. Ibid., p. 121.

13. Ibid., p. 121.


15. Ibid., pp. 102; 110-113.


18. Ibid., p. 79.


CHAPTER IV
REGULATIONS AND THE WORK PROCESS

One effect of welfare program regulations and administrative directives is to severely limit the authority of income maintenance workers to make judgments. The illegitimacy of worker judgment and interpretation exist in tandem with the operational necessity to translate regulations into practices and to derive interpretations of the regulations. These interpretations occur in the absence of rationales conveyed by the public welfare manual.

The hierarchical and mechanical perspectives which so color the analysis of implementation and the literature of organization theory are deficient in accounting for the process of case decision making. The trend in public assistance policies has been to effect a limitation of case worker judgment and discretionary decision making. In order for the role and uses of regulations to become clear, a general orientational discussion of the Department of Social Services and Housing and of the income maintenance workers is in order.

Administrative Organization

The Public Welfare Division within the Department is responsible for implementing the money payments and social services programs of the federal government. The Division, headed by an accredited social worker, according to the State's personnel regulations, is divided into four branches whose jurisdictions are contiguous with the four counties of the state: Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii. The Oahu Branch employed
approximately 560 persons in 1980, which, if not located in the administrative offices downtown, were in one of four sections, two of which are devoted exclusively to social services and two of which are Income Maintenance Sections. Section One presides over the urban Honolulu sections of Oahu while Section Two covers the eastern and northern coasts of the island. My study is limited to the urban, Section I, areas of the island. This Section is further partitioned into three Medical Assistance Units, and Six Money Payments Units. (See Table III below.)

Responsibility for the case decisions pertaining to several programs fall on the Income Maintenance workers. These include the federal Child Welfare (AFDC), Medicaid, and the Food Stamps programs as well as the State General Assistance Program which provides income support to single persons who are disabled, or unemployed beyond the age of 55 and who are unemployed "for good reasons."

**Income Maintenance Workers: Backgrounds, Expectations and Responsibilities**

The workers in the income maintenance units of the Department of Social Services and Housing belong to a clerical personnel category called "income maintenance workers series." Until July, 1980 when the state's Department of Personnel Services acted to implement the series, the workers had been members of the "Social Service Assistant" series, an inheritance of a former period, ending in 1972. Until then, these workers were actually assistants to social workers and whose duties were purely clerical and administrative. Though applications for the new classification series had been made some 9-10 years prior to July
Table III. Structural Organization Chart

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STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION CHART

Community Social Planning Services Office
Program Development Social Services Office
Volunteer Services Office

Purchase of Services Administration Staff

Adult Services Staff
Family and Children Services Staff

Oahu Branch

SOCIAL SERVICES SECTION I
Social Service Intake Unit
Child Protective Services Unit I
Child Protective Services Unit II
Child Protective Services Unit III
North Foster Care Unit
South Foster Care Unit
Foster Homefinding Unit
Student Training Unit Paulei II
Veterans Services Unit

SOCIAL SERVICES SECTION II
North Family Services Unit
South Family Services Unit
North Adult Services Unit
South Adult Services Unit
Work Incentive Program Unit
Homemaker Services Unit
Day Care Licensing Unit
Student Training Unit Paulei III
Veterans Services Unit

INCOME MAINTENANCE SECTION I
Applications Unit I
Kalani Unit
Kapiolani Unit
Foven Unit
Punana Unit

INCOME MAINTENANCE SECTION II
Applications Unit
Kalani Unit
Kapiolani Unit
Foven Unit
Punana Unit

Staff Services Office
Temporary Labor Force Staff
Central Fl

North Central Unit
Waipahu Unit
Winward Unit
Food Stamp Applications Unit

Food Stamp Unit
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1980, the expanded responsibility of the income maintenance workers in practice had occurred since the "separation" of services from income support in 1972. Under the new classification, the Income Maintenance Series prescribed the following duties of the lower range of the series:

... assists client in identifying/articulating problems, and refers clients to appropriate agencies for assistance; receives training in and applies principles of work planning and caseload management; reviews and learns to evaluate declaration forms and other documents for completeness, omission, need for verification/clarification, need for special services, etc.; interviews applicants/ recipients to secure pertinent information and to provide information regarding agency policies and procedures, clients' rights and responsibilities, etc.; obtains/verifies information from collateral sources; identifies and discusses eligibility requirements with client, documents necessary information, reviews facts, applies pertinent policies, and recommends or determines eligibility or denial of assistance on assigned cases; makes computations of income, expenditures, level of assistance benefits, etc.; recommends or authorizes payments, food stamps, etc.; recommends or determines duration of eligibility, as necessary, depending on clients' personal circumstances and in accordance with department guidelines; completes various forms and prepares necessary correspondence and notifications; discusses with clients, client dissatisfaction, circumstance or suspected fraud, etc., gathers and evaluates facts, provides advice or assistance to clients, and prepares appropriate reports for supervisor's review; testifies in fraud or Fair Hearings; establishes positive relationships with clients and keeps abreast of policy clarifications and changes in order to interpret and apply policy correctly.¹

In short, the income maintenance worker is responsible for the conduct of interviews, the necessary paperwork and accounting procedures, the authorization of grants, education of the clients in the regulations concerning eligibility and fraud, and the incorporation of program rationale and reason into her case decisions. The worker is asked to assume independently the responsibility for managing the cases falling within the caseload assigned to her.
Income Maintenance Workers in all units are encompassed by the same personnel series, though the work in the "Income Maintenance" (IM) Units is generally recognized to be much more demanding and more complex than the Food Stamp and Medicaid units. It is generally acknowledged by these employees and their supervisors that the IM units require the most mature and complex judgments and work habits. The department's rationale for separating the work of welfare into three administrative gradients is that Income Support, Medicaid and Food Stamps each constitute a different order of difficulty to administer. They designate different levels of difficulty in terms of eligibility as well. The recipient who receives AFDC will most likely be eligible for Medicaid and Food Stamps. The relative attractiveness of the Income Support Units for the worker is not the greater challenge; the opportunities for advancement are better, as there are a greater number of higher steps within the series for the worker in Income Maintenance Units.

Over the past 10-11 years the profile of income maintenance workers has shifted dramatically. In the late sixties, when the workers were still under the guidance of social workers and their jobs were confined to being "assistants," the workers were typically high school graduates, frequently with prior clerical or social service experience in one of the private welfare agencies in the state. The vast majority of IM workers are women; in the four units of Section I that I interviewed, there were three men out of 35 non-supervisory positions in those units.

The typical worker is now in her middle-to-late 20's, though a substantial minority of approximately 20 percent to 30 percent were in
their middle thirties. Presently, according to a Department personnel officer, 90 percent of the workers have college degrees including majors in home economics, sociology, political science and English literature. The majority of the current employees has majored in either human development, home economics, or sociology at the University of Hawaii.

The college major selected by the majority seemed to reflect the selection of the woman student who typically was not ambitious enough or financially able to prepare for a career in a professional or technical field, who nonetheless selected her major with a definite occupation in mind. This career image was generally one which allowed her to "work with people" and her college major provided coursework "about people": families, counseling, home life, marriage, home management, and social deviance. All but a few had expressed to me that the reason they had entered into a major such as those was that they were "interested in people"; several said they had particularly been attracted by the idea of being a member of a "helping profession."

Prior to being in the job market, most of the workers had not pictured themselves doing the particular type of work they do in the Public Welfare Division. Many stated that they entered the job thinking that there would be opportunities to help people who were in trouble, to see people transform into "a better way of life" as a result of their intervention, support, or guidance. Though these women were college graduates, and not "credentialed" social workers, they had expected their jobs to be enriching and rewarding, so that their work could make differences in the lives of those they encountered.
Several supervisors mentioned that they could not "keep" men employees; they enter the IM units at a lesser rate and tend to leave sooner than their female counterparts. According to their supervisors, the primary reasons for the men's leaving were the greater opportunities for advancement in private and other public (both City and State) employment.

Though many considered themselves to be secondary wage earners, that is not to say that these women were content with the salaries they received. Many saw themselves as underpaid for their work. A very prominent issue among these employees at the time of the field work concerned a reclassification and repricing petition that the Department had made to the State Department of Personnel Services. The result of the petition was a mild reclassification but a failure to change enough so that the IM series would provide a ladder to administrative and other service career paths throughout the civil service and above the level of Unit Supervisor. The dead-end feature of careers within the series was a strong concern among the workers who had been in the agency for over four years.

**Departmental Expenditures in Income Maintenance**

Indicating the extent of the magnitude of the expenditures for the Public Welfare division's income support programs are some fiscal data below which support the conclusion that the income maintenance activities constitute the dominant single portion of departmental expenditure, most of which is represented by Honolulu operations. (See Table IV below.) Oahu Branch income maintenance workers employed in the Money Payments Units authorized some 70 percent of the state's payments for the federal
Table IV

FY 1980—Magnitudes of Expenditure in Various Divisions and Functions of DSSH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% DSSH</th>
<th>% PWD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Departmental Total</td>
<td>$313.7 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hawaii Housing Authority</td>
<td>17.9 million</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Corrections</td>
<td>13.5 million</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Public Welfare Division</td>
<td>275.5 million</td>
<td>87.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Total State Money Payments</td>
<td>124 million</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Oahu Branch Money Payment*</td>
<td>86.8 million</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Total State Payments to Vendors for Medical Costs</td>
<td>115.0 million</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Total State Service Payments including Purchase of Service (under Title XX)</td>
<td>12.3 million</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimate based on the estimation of several officials including the Oahu Branch Administrator, that the Oahu Branch accounted for over 70 percent of the caseload and the costs for the Agency's money payment and medical programs.

Source of Data: Department of Social Services and Housing Financial Summary, July 1979 to June 1980 Estimate, pp. 1 and 2.
and state income support programs. This share amounted to $86.8 million, comprising 31 percent of the total Public Welfare Division expenditure for FY 1980 and approximately 28 percent of the total Department of Social Services and Housing budget for the same fiscal year. Stated another way, 148 Oahu Branch Money Payments workers, comprising 7 percent of the DSSH employees, committed approximately 28 percent of the entire department's budget. If the Medicaid monies committed by those same workers were included, the figure of total committed dollars would increase by at least another 70 percent.

Income Maintenance workers are responsible for committing monies through individual case decisions which account for a substantial, if not the major portion of departmental and divisional expenditures. Money payments are the largest budgetary category for both. Since early 1979, the Division of Public Welfare has carried a monthly caseload average of over 18,000 cases in the AFDC program alone. At an average 3.24 persons per AFDC case, this means that at least 61,212 have been subject to case decisions made by the IM workers. The total number of persons served by all money payments programs during FY 1980 (including AFDC and GA) was 82,929.

The Public Welfare Manual

In spite of the great burden of responsibility placed upon the income maintenance workers, the instructions and regulations contained within the worker's policy manual give ill-defined directions for the
processing of cases and the making of decisions. The Public Welfare Manual is the definitive document of welfare law. Enclosed in a five inch loose-leaf binder, it provides the authoritative legal prescriptions used by income maintenance workers. It is a catalogue of instructions which must be assembled into case-specific repertoires of criteria, decision-rules, and record-keeping. The regulations have grown from a thickness of two inches to approximately four inches in the past ten years. IM workers assemble its disparate sections into repertoires which can be performed without hesitation or judgment. In its worst, less-clear sections, the mobilization of regulations into easily-recalled repertoires is frustrated.

The public welfare manual contains regulations for both state and federal programs. These are contained for operational purposes in three major sections of the manual. These are the "Categorical Eligibility Requirements," which delineate eligibility criteria for each of the programs; "Financial Eligibility Requirements" specify permissible limits of resources and income and provide guidelines as to how to "budget" clients' income and expenses; and "Program Requirements" which specify the obligations of recipients relative to the Work Incentive (WIN) Program and Child Support Enforcement Program, among others. The manual is organized much as a catalogue of regulations. Each section of the manual described above is further broken into smaller categories which are specific to each of the major income maintenance programs (such as AFDC, General Assistance, etc.). It is further broken down into specific regulations which specify eligibility conditions, compliance and eligibility for the collateral programs attached to AFDC (WIN, the Child Support Enforcement Program).
Each page of the manual is divided in half: A "policy" section on the left half and a "procedure" section on the right. Though there is a tendency to expect that a procedure would represent an instruction about how to apply a policy, this is not the case. Indeed, the distinction between "policy" and "procedure" in the manual is not a logical distinction at all. Both the policy and procedures are given in the form of instructions. "Policies" in some sections of the manual will be designed as a statement of what should generally be done, with procedures explicating the actual operations and calculations to be performed, for example, calculating the rent and other shelter costs of the recipient.

A casual glance through the manual will impress the observer with the fact that on nearly half of the manual pages, the "procedure" half is blank; no procedures are given. Many which are blank contain a reference to another manual section ("Refer to Section ____.") which directs the user to a more precise category of regulations specific to a particular type of case. For example, the eligibility criteria for AFDC is broken into more specialized statutorily mandated categories such as AFDC-Foster Child and AFDC-Unemployed Father, both eligibility provisions differ from the "regular" AFDC eligibility.

Ambiguities I: The Contradiction between the Logic of Rule-Making and the Logic of Practice; The Absence of Rationale

Manual sections are marked by an absence of rationale. What is meant by policy, furthermore, is a much different variety of instruction than political scientists have come to expect when they employ the term.
Far from representing a goal of public action and the means with which to implement those goals, "policies" in the public welfare manual represent an "instruction." This instruction is sometimes, but generally not, followed by a specification of how to carry out the instruction: a "procedure." When specified, procedures do not specify the action or process to be undertaken, only the "bases" which have to be touched; the forms to be used, the verifications made. The manual does not specify "what to do and how to do it" for a case action.

All regulations are ambiguous when viewed from the standpoint of how to employ them in practice. What is distinctive about the prevailing pattern of policy making in the income maintenance area is the de facto delegitimation of judgment at the unit level and the truncation of upward communication from the policy operatives themselves. Regulations do not fit the "logic of practice"; they fit the logic of "rule-giving." In many cases of governmental regulation, authority is granted to the operatives to change the rules into patterns of practice. The welfare manual is an unfortunate instance in which not even the outlines of its practical uses are suggested. Neither are the rationales for the policies given to the operative. The manual merely provides a catalogue of regulations which are recognizable as "pieces" of patterns only after the operatives have acquired considerable experience.

The "catalogue" nature of the manual seems to stem from the nature of welfare law-making at the federal level by both Congress and the federal agencies which administer them. Income maintenance regulations come to the states directly from the federal Office of Family Assistance, now housed in the Social Security Administration of the Department of
Health and Human Services (DHHS). The manner in which regulations are devised, and the occasions precipitating initiation at the federal level are unclear and this process would itself be the appropriate subject of a larger study. However, discussions with administrative and staff officials suggest that three major strands of federal policy-making characterize the new "logic of rule-giving" at the federal policy well-head.

One pattern is characterized by a very specialized interest, such as characterizes the interest group policy-making process in general. It is exemplified by a recent change in food stamp budgeting. Budgeting of income was changed to exempt purchases of medicine for elderly recipients only. These types of changes are consistent with the pattern of specialized, group-specific lobbying effects mentioned by Lynn which result in the group-specific policy benefits.

The second strand of policy-making is that in which participants are oriented toward greater specification and simplification of regulations. This "administrative" type of reform has persisted in the absence of other major reform initiatives since the Congressional battles over various forms of the Family Assistance Plan and the abandonment of "substantive" welfare reform since 1973.

The third strand of federal policy-making which elicits changes within the manual is the attempt to regulate the behavior of recipients. The regulatory strategies have been initiated by Congress and are focused primarily upon two areas of recipient behavior: (1) the work habits and behavior, which is the object of the Work Incentive (WIN) Program; and (2) the cooperation of the absent parent in providing support for the
abandoned children. Federal initiatives in this regard have been oriented toward streamlining and tightening states' administration. The "fine tuning" of these programs, generally through increasing the specification of Manual regulations makes itself felt in the additions to the Manual.4

Since the separation of social services from income maintenance functions and increasing since then, unit workers and supervisors have become "receivers" of policies they have no role in shaping.

Discretionary authority has in part been reduced by the increased specificity of the regulations. The Quality Control Program has had the effect of further delegitimating the role of the income maintenance worker as a contributor to the policies. The specificity of the regulations and the Quality Control program have accounted for the truncation and decline of upward communication in the Division. Since the undertaking of the regulatory emphasis in federal policies, more and more program elements have simply become "non-negotiable" for the income maintenance workers.

"Systems"

Unless the worker invents a means of organizing the manual sections, she would not be able to act. Quite a bit of energy is used by the worker during her initiation in order to invent and master such techniques, which the workers and supervisors call "systems." Simply put, "systems" are clusters of criteria, forms, questions, and calculation formulas which are arranged in operational sequence. "Systems" are derived from the manual and the forms and decision points specified in
each section of the manual appropriate to particular case actions. Workers come to have at their command a number of systems which permit them to expedite numerous types of case actions in an unhesitating manner. Thus workers have "systems" for the determination of basic eligibility, the inclusion of a newborn child into a household unit, the change of the recipient's address, the medical review of a General Assistance recipient, and the registration of a recipient for the Work Incentive Program, among many others.

While not prescribed by the agency, since these are largely the inventions of the workers and their supervisor, they do become "technical" elements of the work performed in the welfare unit. However, confounding forces complicate even this "technical" element used in processing a case.

Ambiguities II: Contradictions, Gaps and Omissions

The regulations, even if not technically definitive of the work of the functionary may be quite satisfactory if uncomplicated by other factors. The first of these factors concerns the ambiguity of regulations and frequently, the plain contradictions among them. In short, the regulations are not only structurally different from the process of work, they usually do not even inform such processes.

In the spring of 1980, considerable debate had transpired between several Unit Supervisors and their Section Heads, on the one hand, and the Program Evaluation Office on the other. In fact, by May, memoranda had made the journey up and down the hierarchy four times concerning the eligibility of recipients whose infant children had not acquired social security numbers. One manual section declared that the child must apply for the number as a condition of eligibility. The question was over a
matter of informal procedure. Was the worker to verify that a number had been obtained merely subsequent to the first or merely prior to the next eligibility review months later? The former would require a visit by the client thereby creating more work for the worker, while neither option had a policy or procedural basis in the Public Welfare Manual.

A less frequent, but nonetheless important, concern was the AFDC eligibility of children living with a "caretaker relative" or an "essential person" unrelated by blood to the children in question. The issue was whether a child could be supported when absent from living parents. In the cases of relatives taking care of children, or the informal, long practiced, hanai tradition of caring for unwanted or neglected children, the regulations were simply not clear. They did not specify whether the child could be eligible by himself or whether the new caretaker person could be eligible as well. Manual section 3253.5 specified that the child could be eligible, while section 3222 declares that the child is ineligible in such a case.

Another major bone of contention among long-time employees who had encountered several applicable situations had to do with the definition of "able-bodied" in the State's General Assistance Program, whose primary clientele are not families but single persons who are somehow disabled or over 55 years old and without work. "Able-bodied" persons under the age of 55 are not eligible for the program. Manual procedures define able-bodied as the ability to work 30 or more hours per week. Occasional "Catch 22" situations arise. For example, a sick, untreated diabetic person is officially "disabled" and can qualify for the GA-Disabled category and is routinely and swiftly authorized money after
the doctor's signature attests to her disability. However, in a few months she arrives at her doctor's office prior to an eligibility review with a form asking for an authorized medical determination of disability. Can she work 30 or more hours a week? Certainly, after treatment. But an affirmative response to the inquiry results in the recipient losing eligibility, and medical assistance. She then tries to work, but doesn't make enough to purchase insulin and becomes ill once again. The process repeats itself.

In the main, however, the basic eligibility criteria are well established except in the atypical cases of which the caretaker relatives and the disability issue are examples. Almost all experienced workers agreed that eligibility standards were better articulated than others. The "budgeting" of income and resources proved to be a far more treacherous zone of the manual from the standpoint of clarity and instruction. Part but not all of the latter problems of intelligently making one's way through the income and resources sections had to do with the fact that each of the federal programs and the state program used different ways of accounting for the same resources. For instance in the Food Stamp Program, the value of an automobile was established with one criterion, while the AFDC program used another. For this reason, the regulations often affected different kinds of clients differently. In the summer of 1980, the budgeting procedures for the Food Stamp Program changed to disregard the portion of the income of elderly recipients used for medicine; this is not applied to the same expenses of other persons.
These questions are important procedural issues of great importance for the recipients of public welfare. From a practical standpoint however, they arise infrequently, but they do intrude dramatically on the time of the workers. Decisions required in the absence of clear standards and without criteria or rationale to guide them, are a considerable burden to the conscience of the worker, who must still, somehow, make a judgment.

The more typical problem, which consumes both time and energy, is the question of how to calculate the "earnings" of the employed AFDC recipient over the three months subsequent to the recipient's next earnings review. Every unit employee interviewed mentioned this. The Department has a formula which prescribes how much of one's income can be retained by the working poor receiving AFDC. The amount paid to the clients by the agency depends on the amount of income earned. The worker must project the income over the subsequent months. The regulations as well as internal ICF's (Internal Communications Form) are vague as to how this should be done. In practice, variations occur between units, some using the average of the prior three months' income as a projection; others use other formulas.

The extent of the frustration caused by the ambiguities of the manual regulations depends primarily on the types of clientele one has on one's caseload. If one has many "AFDC-earnings" cases, then one must contend more frequently with the problems of the manual's ambiguity. Or, if one has many persons who are partially disabled, the same interruption of the routine-like execution of systems occurs. In fact the most routine and unproblematic of cases from the standpoint of manual clarity
are those in the AFDC program who earn no money and possess no special qualities which would interrupt the execution of routines. However, every worker interviewed was adamant that the manual was both unclear in many sections and generally unspecific in procedures. Other regulations or, whether specific or not, left procedural gaps which require the worker to "invent" a procedure entirely. Furthermore, regulations might be expressly contradictory, in the case of the "caretaker relative" sections.

Most workers write notes in their manuals to remind themselves of finer distinctions of policy than those defined by the manual. Often these notes referred to informal policies invented by the unit supervisor or the worker herself, they also may be guided by the "pseudo-policy" of the agency as communicated by internal memos. The latter do not have the status of law, since they have not gone through the state's administrative procedure for implementing regulations. However, as we shall see, this "informal" policy-making is a very significant process in the Division.

A substantial problem expressed by several unit supervisors and experienced workers concerned the changes in and turnover of regulations. Since the agency implements several federal programs, several times a year new regulations come into effect and are transmitted to the states via "action transmittals," generally leaving the language and the exact procedures of the policy for the states to write. In recent years the rate at which action transmittals have arrived has increased and the frequency of regulations' displacement by superseding and new regulations has increased as a result.
Discussion

The fragmented nature of the manual regulations requires IM workers to invent techniques at the unit level, so as to permit the processing of cases. The welfare manual exists more as a catalogue than as a guide to decision making. It provides neither technical guides nor rationales. The worker must assimilate regulations into routines appropriate to specific types of case actions. However, there are several instances in which the routine use of such "systems" are frustrated, particularly in those areas of the manual which deal with cases involving earned income, and in the several parts of the manual which deal with "exceptional" cases (of which there are many).

The fragmentation of the policies, the sole policy declarations the worker receives from the agency, into the catalogue format, presents a similar set of circumstances faced by the functionaries studied by Kaufman in his study of the Forestry Service. Kaufman noted that in that agency regulations were often general and inconsistent. This ambiguity and inconsistency was due partly to the inability of the Service to specify the details of operations to rangers in varied geographic areas. It was also due to the varied sources of regulation within the Service—five separate operational divisions all of which separately directed the single forest ranger in the field. The varied criteria imposed by each of these divisions often lead to uncertainties as to the correct field action.

... from the level of the District Ranger, (the Forest Service) looks like a vast funnel with the Ranger at the throat of it; all the varied elements and specialities above him pour out materials which, mixed and blended by the Ranger, emerge in a stream of action in the field.
This critical position in a funnel of directives and regulations necessitated the functionaries' resolution of conflicts among regulations and among criterion through drawing upon their professional forestry training and specialized perspectives which evoke operational priorities.

The case of the DSSH is strikingly similar. It is up to the income maintenance worker to incorporate the regulations in the manual. However, the worker operates without access to policy rationales. Furthermore, she has no authority to contribute to the policies in any way: Interpretation and judgment are no longer legitimate elements of the operations of income maintenance policy. The pattern of federal policy in recent years has rejected the discretionary pattern of social work decision making which existed prior to the separation of services. Federal attempts to invoke simplified, routinized, and non-discretionary decision-making have occurred through the increased specificity of regulations and the enforcement of regulations.

Contrary to the expectation of the image of routine work, particularly as exemplified in March and Simon, organization is not necessarily typified by descending orders of complexity and judgments as one approaches the bottom levels of organization.

The judgmental aspect of work is not lacking at the lower, operative rungs of the Department of Social Services and Housing. The income maintenance worker, as does the Forest Ranger, must draw upon other skills in order to render decisions. While the Ranger can draw upon a forester's lore and an ideology stemming from a professional mission which is granted authority within the Service, the welfare worker draws on none of the same type of authority to make decisions.
CHAPTER IV—NOTES


6. Ibid., see especially Chapter 2.

7. Ibid., p. 68.

8. Ibid., p. 69.
CHAPTER V
THE STRUCTURE OF TASKS IN PUBLIC WELFARE ADMINISTRATION

Manual regulations do not serve as instruments for the implementation of work tasks. They do not define the work of the welfare worker, since the regulations are ambiguous in many cases, and when they are clear, they must be organized by the worker into "systems" specific to particular types of case actions. If the regulations do not structure or define the work, the question becomes, "What does?" In this regard, the concept of "task structure" elaborated by James Wilson, has particular utility.

In his comparative study of the operations and management of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Wilson suggested that contrary to regulations and directives from superiors, the "imperatives of the situation" govern the operational tasks and perspectives of the operatives in these organizations. Wilson argues that organization theorists and policy analysts have neglected the particular ways in which the ordinary tasks and imperatives of the operators define "what organizations actually do." The particular ways in which income maintenance operatives adapt to the imperatives of their work situation are the focus of this chapter.

In distinguishing the work of DEA and FBI operatives, Wilson concludes that much of the difference in the success and prestige between the two agencies rests in the nature of their operational tasks. The manner in which the workload is received by operatives and the nature of the crimes investigated dictate to the agents of each just how one goes about processing or developing a case.
The FBI receives cases through complaints from other police agencies, which in return respond to complaints precipitated by victims of crimes. By contrast, the DEA must investigate crimes whose commission generates no complaints or victims. The DEA must find crimes while the FBI responds to complaints following the commission of crimes. The "critical" skills of the operatives in each agency are thus dictated by the practical requirements of developing a case. These well-adapted practices and skills become the controlling factors of a worker's conduct. The regulations influence the work in direct and indirect ways, primarily through record-keeping requirements and justifications for informant and "buy" money, but do not themselves define the operatives' practices.4

Operatives develop a system of techniques for developing cases which are not recommended by the agencies.5 This is not to say that the agents disobey orders; rather what skills they possess are neither recommended, prescribed, nor even known to executives. Agency policies in fact unknowingly become more "constraint-oriented" than "means-oriented."6 Executive's goals of establishing new working priorities, for example, in the investigation of organized crime rings and large drug rings, have significantly been ignored and hence been impaired by the strongly entrenched practices of the operatives. These practices are well adapted to the particular situations of criminal investigation and are tremendously resilient. Wilson observed a strong "ethos" among operatives in each department which reinforced the inertia of these "task structures."7

"Task structures" are operatives' practical adaptations to the imperatives of the situation. They are patterns of work, techniques and strategies for the initiation and development and completion of a specific task.
The structure of the situational imperatives which comprise work, Wilson concludes, evokes a general structure of practices and a general ethos or sense of mission among operators. For FBI work, the general structure of the task is "investigative," where the critical skill is the eliciting of information through interviewing. The DEA agent's demeanor is "instigative" (he must instigate the commission of a criminal act among unknowing consenting partners to an act) and must possess skills of coercion and guile so as to bully and mislead his contacts to introduce him to settings wherein such crimes are committed.

While welfare work perhaps possesses little of the "crime-stoppers" drama as federal law enforcement, some of the same analysis of task structures can be usefully applied to welfare work. We have concluded already that rules and regulations define little of the work and the patterns of practice which end up as "agency policy outputs." In this chapter we will apply Wilson's framework of task structure to both work in the applications units and the "on-going" units in the DSSH.

Applications Units

In applications units, cases are assigned to each worker by a clerk fifteen minutes prior to an application interview. Applicants encounter the agency first as a cohort, receiving a short talk by a case worker on the types of assistance available, the rights of the recipients, check-mailing dates and procedures, fraud penalties, and the application interview itself. This short talk was replaced in July 1980 with a video tape narrated by a familiar voice from local television commercials. At the finish of the "group session," each applicant is summoned serially by his or her worker, as in a doctor's office. One of the sessions I
attended was in the company of a young Samoan woman with her parents, a young Filipino family which contained no English speakers, three Haole women and their shyly playing children and a moaning man in his mid-twenties wrapped in a local hospital's blanket.

The applications workers are reputed among administrators as the most skillful. The workers in these Units are much more experienced than the workers in other units. The average length of service for the applications worker is approximately five or six years. A self-confidence exists among these workers which is unique among units. Like other units, the atmosphere has been strongly influenced by the Unit Supervisor. Several factors combine in these units to make them different. First, workers here do not have a caseload. They are responsible for determining eligibility, the initial budget, and an authorization for assistance. Each client represents an "episode" rather than a continuous responsibility, as in the "on-going" units. After the paperwork for each application is completed, the case is transferred to the appropriate "on-going unit" and assigned to a worker's caseload. Since each case stays in the applications unit for only a limited time, the applications worker will not get to know the clients.

During early and middle 1980, workers in this unit were processing between 45 and 65 applicants per month, or between two and three per each working day. Workers' preoccupation with each application was limited to one interview and to subsequent paperwork which usually was completed within a day of the initial interview. Interviews last from 45 minutes to an hour. Occasionally, clients would later return to supply information or documents missing at the time of the interview. These "follow-up"
events, however, generally transpire through the mail, over the telephone, or during very brief personal visits. They are the exception rather than the rule, since the applicants are informed in detail by an application packet and by a clerk precisely what documents to bring. The applicants receive the packet at the time they schedule an appointment, which is generally two to three weeks prior to the interview, unless it is an emergency situation.

The application worker encounters each client almost anonymously after only a short perusal of the file. In this fifteen-minute perusal, the worker tries to anticipate the relevant features of the application and the applicant, as well as anticipate any particular features of both which may require special attention and difficulty in processing the application.

Applications workers expressed the need to be precise and in accordance with accepted standards in performing case actions. Technical mastery of the manual is emphasized to a greater extent than in other units. There are several reasons for this. One is that the mission of the unit and the tasks confronting each worker is very circumscribed in comparison with the other units. They regulate the admission of applicants into the programs, responding to each client only once.

Since none of them has a "caseload," a different sort of criterion is applied to the self-evaluations of these workers. The transfer of each case to an on-going unit serves to make the work of the transferring worker and of the unit more visible to the other workers in the Section than any other unit or worker. Cases transferred to other units must be "clean." That is, they must be clear and understandable to the workers
of the receiving units. A considerable amount of tension had existed in previous years over what constituted a "clean" case record. Quarrels among workers in different units erupted over the interpretation of policies as well as the issue of the record's completeness at the time of transfer. Workers' abrupt return of case files to the "offending" applications workers expressed dissatisfaction with the applications unit. Most of this conflict was resolved by several supervisors who together worked out consistent interpretations of the offending vague manual sections and agreed to insure that cases be completed and clean prior to their transfer.

One applications worker, speaking on the subject of the difference between working in her previous (on-going) assignment and her present applications job, stated:

You can't be sloppy here and you can't hide your mistakes. Everybody sees it, I know from experience in the on-going units . . . you can get away with a lot. There's no way here to do that kind of thing.

A fellow worker in the same unit:

When a file leaves my hands, there is never any accident or oversight. I don't want the people in other units to get my case and say, "My God, what is that woman doing?"

Considerable efforts by the applications supervisor and among the workers themselves go into obtaining consistent interpretations and procedures. Unit staff meetings often cover significant changes in manual sections or changes which intrude upon the "systems" employed by the workers. These are marked by attempts to arrive at consensus interpretations and "systems" which expedite them. Ambiguities and procedural omissions contained within the manual and within updated manual sections
are troublesome to these workers but far less so to on-going units' workers. This is due to a combination of their greater experience and comfort in dealing with ambiguous regulations and their mutual assurances that such inventive responses to the regulations are appropriate. But primarily, it is due to the fact that they process applications only, and in doing so, use manual sections which are widely acknowledged to possess greater clarity.

Applications workers, more than others within the agency, are more akin to the stereotypical jobholder that welfare studies assume. The demeanor of the worker is passive toward the client. The client comes to her. She does not have to summon the client. She is not responsible for the client. The cooperation of the client is not a problem for the worker; cooperation is up to the client. While her job is not a clerical one, it appears to be less complicated than the on-going worker's. She must derive meaning and guidance from the manual, but she is generally more experienced and is surrounded by more experienced colleagues than those in the on-going units. Her task is more technical, since she can do her job in a relatively straightforward manner, free from interruptions, between each of the two or three daily interviews. The interviews tend to be "tense" only in the initial stages, though after that they are hardly ever relaxed. Application interviews are merely official. They are not friendly, but are cooperative enough to expedite the applications process. The detachment, independence, and technical proficiency of the applications workers is sharply contrasted with the circumstances and demeanor of the on-going workers. The occasion for applications workers' interactions with clients is circumscribed by
the singular attempt of the applicant to qualify and by the singular attempt of the worker to determine eligibility. The short episodic relations which workers have with applicants permit them to experience a regular pace in their workday. The episodic and circumscribed nature of the application encounters permit workers to acquire more impersonal demeanors toward recipients. Some workers expressed relief that they no longer worked in on-going units where contacts were much less specialized, where responsibilities for recipients were much more deeply felt:

I was going nuts you know. When I got home, even on the weekend, I kept thinking "What if . . . this and that?" One Sunday, coming back from the beach? All of a sudden, I'm thinking "Oh, No! I forgot to take care of this lady's check!?" I'm glad I'm working here now. Wow!

On reflection, when asked what differences there were between applications and on-going units, these workers without exception conveyed the "freeing" effect of being in applications after years in the on-going units. "You work hard here (applications)," one worker stated, "but you can go home and not have it on your mind and [you can simply] be with your family." Such episodic responsibilities for the recipients are complemented in applications work by the generally passive demeanor of the worker toward clients. Almost as a classical bureau which granted simple trade licenses upon payment of tax, the application worker "waits for" her work. She need not undertake an active search or initiation of actions for case processing. Applications workers here perform a proscribed type of operation, occasioned by a predictable daily number of application-initiated interviews which are sharply delimited by the singularity of the applicant's goal. Because of the detachment from
clients, the independence of the work, the passive demeanor afforded by the circumstances, and the relatively proscribed technical operations required to process applications, applications workers more closely than any other employees within the Division approximate that Weberian dictum "Sine ira et studio," "Without hatred or passion." Occasions for passion are largely lacking in the basic circumstance of applications work.

On-Going Units

Caseload

The distinguishing features of work in the on-going units are derived from the implications of one primary fact: caseload. The fact of having a caseload, of possessing singular responsibility for administering to a group of welfare recipients over a long period of time itself elicits a number of circumstantial imperatives unique to these workers' jobs. Each of the on-going income maintenance units studied carried unit totals of approximately 2000 cases; the range varied from 1800 to 2200. The average caseload per worker is approximately 200, though the actual caseloads range, for a number of reasons, between 0 and 450. "Caseload" is a collection of cases assigned formally to one particular worker on a permanent basis. The permanence of a case in a worker's caseload depends on whether the recipient stays eligible for the program. Cases from the caseloads of workers who have quit, gone on vacation, or taken other leaves are assigned temporarily (and unofficially) to each of the remaining workers by the unit supervisors. These temporary assignments are called "block assignments." A "block" or segment of a caseload is assigned to others in the unit.
Ordinarily, workers are assigned cases by simple rotation, though generous exceptions to this practice exist in units where there are new inexperienced workers and where some workers carry caseloads specialized according to program category (such as GA, AFDC-earnings, etc.). Most of the training of new workers takes place on the job. The haste with which a supervisor assigns any more than a "practice" set of cases to a new worker varies with the number of vacancies on the unit's staff (and hence the consequent burden shouldered by other workers while the new worker orients herself to the job). It also varies considerably with the teaching philosophy of the supervisor and the adeptness of the novice worker. Some supervisors organized their units around specialized caseloads. There are varieties of ways to specialize caseloads. Very few workers have only one type of case of program. More often there is merely a greater proportion of some types of the cases within some workers' caseloads.

The Variety of Recipients

Because the workers in the on-going units have several encounters with recipients in their caseloads they generally tend to have a greater familiarity with individual recipients than their applications counterparts. The circumscribed nature of the applications process screens out the personal dimensions of recipients. The tenor of interviews and the occasions for interviews in the on-going units tends to be more varied and the variety of recipients is more apparent to the on-going worker. The personal nature of the contacts with clients impresses a different type of seriousness on the on-going units than on applications units. The mere variety of clients themselves is more remarkable to the on-going
workers, since the repetitious contacts permit attention to the particular circumstances of individual recipients.

A wide range of clients confronts these workers. The Honolulu units cover the entire Honolulu corridor from the eastern tip of Oahu to the Pearl City area. This encompasses men's residential hotels from which a large portion of the state's General Assistance cases come. It includes housing projects, the populations of which are dense with welfare recipients. It encompasses suburban homes and pleasant forested hill-sides, also sources of welfare recipients. The caseloads include stable long-time resident families and the transient and permanent refugees from Asia and North America. A multi-ethnic society, Honolulu contains a variety of cultures (Hawaiian, Pacific, Oriental, and North American) which distinguish themselves sharply in manners of family life, sexual customs, kin obligations, norms governing the circulation of available resources among extended kin and friends, and attitudes toward authority in general and the state in particular. The social history of the ethnicities which comprise Hawaii and Honolulu has generated substantial racial and cultural images among all groups. The norms evoked by these images are systematically observed; they uphold social distances. For many people these images provide a foundation for organizing the casual experience of everyday life in an increasingly tense multi-racial, multi-ethnic society. Among these vast ranges of persons are welfare recipients in which each group and ethnicity is represented.

Recipients vary widely in their satisfactions, fears, and resentments concerning their being "recipients." Some are trying to become "solid independent citizens," by working and, if possible, occasionally
taking leave of the painful leisure of poverty often by taking Honolulu’s most low-paying and futureless employment. There are others who have given up trying. Some are married, others separated. Others, a miniscule minority, serve the ideological purposes of the more punitive welfare reformers. Some are registered for job placement and training in the work incentive and other programs, though most of the former are not called or referred. Some are "deinstitutionalized" mental patients who find themselves without shelter, down-and-out in Honolulu.

The variety of clients can also be captured by a look at the "attitudes" of recipients noticed by workers. Several workers and supervisors remarked upon the variety of attitudes among recipients. Some are described as listless; others are viewed as trying to become independent. Some were remarked upon as being a "new type of client" not present in the early 1970's decade. These new kind of clients were distinguished by the aggressiveness and open resentfulness expressed toward workers.

The Variety of Occasions for Interviews

Workers in the on-going welfare units deal with clients on two distinct kinds of occasions. One is initiated by the client and the other is initiated by the workers. Each of these two types of occasions gives rise to case actions which differ from the actions pursued by applications workers. The client-initiated encounters are those which follow some change in the income, the family composition, and address of the recipient. These tend, on the average, not to be urgent, though occasionally they demand close attention over several days. The other type of encounter is the "review"; the federal AFDC program mandates
that periodic "eligibility reviews" be undertaken at least every six months for recipients who do not earn any income and demands more frequent 'earnings reviews' for clients who are employed. The frequency of earnings reviews of a particular case depends on whether and how much the income fluctuates. If it fluctuates widely, the client will undergo an earnings review every three months. The non-earning recipient will have to make at least two visits per year to the unit and the earning recipient will visit at least four times per year.

General Assistance recipients must also return to the units for interviews, but far more frequently than other recipients. For the non-disabled GA recipient, proof of three attempts to find a job must be given to the worker every week. Many of these result in recipient visits to the unit, but in most instances the recipient mails the completed forms to the worker.

In addition, the state's General Assistance program mandates that the worker periodically perform a medical review of disability cases receiving General Assistance. In this case, the client must take a medical form to a doctor and have the doctor certify disability. The procedures for medical reviews are clear, although the mentally disabled and the alcohol/drug abuse patients who constitute a large portion of the GA recipient population make these reviews somewhat difficult to process. More than other clients, they are likely to lose the forms mailed to them by the worker, more likely to get confused, more likely to bring them back to the worker asking for instructions, etc.

AFDC Eligibility Reviews have been a greater concern to the agency over the past four years and the administration's exhortations to workers
to complete all their reviews has increased. Several Quality Control reports concluded that the plethora of errors of overpayment could be ended if workers completed their assigned reviews on time. Each worker receives a list each month of the recipients whose reviews must be completed by the end of the month and the workers must arrange to schedule the recipients' visit to the unit. Many workers call eligibility reviews "re-applications" since the client is required to bring the same information and documentation as during an application. Generally if the client's circumstances relevant to the program have not changed, the process is fairly simple and straightforward. The worker fills out the appropriate forms, makes notations in the file and submits a computer-read form to a clerk who records the review and directs the machine to make no changes in the check sent to the recipient. If some feature of the client's circumstances have changed then the process may become more complicated. An example of the latter is a change in a household's composition, since the household is an important feature of the public assistance laws. A change in rent may occasion a larger grant, though even if the housing allowance portion of the grant is at its statutory maximum and cannot be increased, forms must still be included in the file to indicate the increase in rent. Any additional resources such as an inheritance or a burial fund or a gift (such as a used car) must be recorded. These will occasion a longer time spent processing the case including the interview and the subsequent paperwork. The worker will also have to refer to the particular detailed portions of the manual. The amount of work triggered by these eligibility, earnings, and medical reviews can vary considerably.
Direct mention of "earnings reviews" makes some workers cringe. The policies and procedures concerning the 'budgeting' of earnings have been in administrative limbo for over three years. At the time of the field work, procedures for earnings budgeting were taken from an internal communications memo, clarifying the manual section governing the budgeting of earnings. The department has since reverted to the original manual section, since the ICF memo had not been officially included in the manual (and had not undergone the APA procedure), but had been used as an informal de facto policy. The issue concerning the budgeting and calculation of earnings has to do with how the worker predicts the earnings of the recipient between one review and the next. The income must be predicted in order to calculate a budget and determine how much the recipient will receive in her monthly checks. The manual is not clear on how to do this. For the worker, earnings reviews are, as a consequence, now the lengthiest, most confusing, and most time consuming of the various reviews.

The use of standard formulas to calculate earnings in the subsequent period confounds many workers. Some suggest that the client knows fairly accurately how much she will earn during the next period, but the use of a standard formula can force the worker to "err" by budgeting for an income which will later be proved to be incorrect. The erring of estimates is particularly trying, since these require later adjustments in the budget and the grant. Sometimes the clients will make more money than anticipated and the worker will have to recoup the monies owed to the state over several months. If the estimate has erred in the other direction the worker will have to rebudget the case and increase the client's grant.
The worker confronts the clients over time rather than in a single episode as is the case in the applications unit. The types of changes which clients have in their cases require the use of manual sections governing household composition, parental responsibility, and earnings features which are less clear than the mere determination of eligibility. The type of changes undergone by clients is typical of family life and economic fluctuations in the society of poverty.

While the numerousness of encounters, which are occasioned by reviews are more likely to engender workers' perception of the client as being embedded in a social web, the client-initiated encounter points even more dramatically to the social features of the clients. The client-initiated interviews are of a different type than in the applications unit. She has, if assigned to an on-going unit, already been declared eligible. Thereafter, she comes to her worker in the event of a change in her circumstances or if in need of assistance to meet a pressing problem. Changes in clients' situations call for immediate interviews. These figure prominently in the work of the case worker, even if not a "majority" type of case. Since the worker organizes the work day into parcels of time for occasions she can predict, the unpredictable client requests for immediate attention necessitate the restructuring of time during the working day.

Verification

The receipt and notation of documents verifying the status of the client, the composition of the household, and the resources of the household are required for processing any case action. Documentation must be
produced by both the applicant who visits the applications unit and the recipient who visits the on-going unit. The complete notation of documents in the case record is a requirement which can only rarely be compromised. Even when possible, workers avoid "fudging" the record since they too are on guard to prevent clients from deceiving them. Welfare work is nothing if not a process of constant verification. When an earnings review is made by the on-going unit worker, for example, the recipient must bring all paycheck stubs to the interview, and if she requests payment for work-related expenses, she must provide records of and receipts for such expenses. In the case of a recipient bearing a new child, the parentage of the child must be established and verified through supporting documents. If the AFDC recipient buys a new car, the value of the car must be established lest the client have too great a "resource" to remain eligible for assistance. No case action may be undertaken which does not involve some kind of verification. The absence of verifying documents, receipts or pay stubs, results in the case file remaining on the worker's desk.

The promptness with which a case action is finished depends on the degree to which recipients' verifying documents are current and complete. These are used by the worker to complete a budget, to determine eligibility, and to expedite the recording of any change in the case. Each verifying document's existence and origin must be recorded in the case file on one of several forms, each of which is specific to particular case actions. The pace with which the case action is completed depends also on the extent to which the recipient has been able to anticipate the interview far enough in advance to obtain the appropriate documentation.
Lastly, it depends upon whether the recipient knows which types are required, can recall without confusion, and has been given the proper instructions by her case worker. As mentioned above in this chapter, the applicant who arrives for the application interview has already been "coached" on the appropriate forms and documentation to bring. The absence of these verifying documents, they are told, will prevent their application from being processed. While the presence of the verifying documents is typical of applications units, the worker in the on-going units must seek and summon verification. These constitute the defining elements of the task.

Operational Dependence Upon Recipients

Because of the constant need for verifying documents, work in the on-going units is characterized by an operational dependence upon the recipients themselves. While also necessary in the applications unit, the coaching and preparation of the applicant for the interview, removes the applications worker from such dependence. The burden of providing the appropriate documents rests squarely on the applicant. The applications worker is under no time deadlines to complete such cases with incomplete documentation. The workers in on-going units confront the recipients as persons who have already been declared eligible and who, in all likelihood, are still eligible.

In addition, the applications worker's tasks are fairly circumscribed by the case actions which they perform. Because the basic eligibility regulations are among the most clear and definitive in terms of what types of verification are required for applications, those workers face no problems in verifying eligibility. By contrast, the
types of case actions in which the on-going units' workers engage frequently involve the use of regulations which are less clear in the specification of what types of documentation should be provided by the recipient. One on-going Unit Supervisor referred to this problem as the "development of verification." For instance, the AFDC recipient who is self-employed (for example a repairman) has a difficult time providing documents to verify income. The worker can rely only upon the recipient's declaration of earnings, not a check stub from a larger record-keeping employer. The question of what type of verification to use confounds the worker as she attempts to process the case in accordance with the general necessity to "prove" the client's claims, while also knowing that it is frequently impossible to do so with certainty.

The variety of case actions undertaken by the on-going worker and the greater ambiguity as to the appropriate way to develop verification occasioned by some types of case actions renders these workers much more dependent upon the clients than their counterparts in applications units. Muir's study of police in Oakland concluded that the critical skill for the police to master was "extortion," the proportioned strategic deployment of threats and violence in transactions with citizens. Involvement in such "extortionate transactions" marked the daily experience of police. The critical skill of the on-going unit worker is the mastery of relationships involving an "implorative transaction." A constant necessity in the daily work of the income maintenance operative is to elicit the cooperation and to create or engender the competence of the recipient such that the appropriate documents can be acquired by the worker. Far from being a passive functionary as is more typically the
case among the workers of the applications units, the on-going worker must summon both the client and the correct documentation for the interview.

The implorative dependence upon the client introduces a large element of unpredictability in the processing of cases. The time taken to complete individual case actions varies with the worker's ability to implore the client to provide the proper verification documents. This ability is even more important in the processing of client-initiated cases, because the urgency of processing the case action is greater than in the performance of a worker-initiated one (such as an eligibility review or an earnings review which is anticipated farther in advance). The client-initiated case also comes as the result of a surprise or an unanticipated event for the recipient and she will have a greater tendency to be in a more agitated state than she might be otherwise. It is also a surprise to the worker and she may improperly instruct the recipient. For example, a recipient's decision to initiate a change of address will likely come as the result of an eviction stemming from the termination of a lease, the raising of rent or the landlord's sale of the property. The change of address action is a very complicated one necessitating a rather precise orchestration of transactions among the old landlord, new landlord, the recipient and the worker, and often the friends and relatives of the recipient who assist in the move.

As a result of the nature of the client-initiated interview--the "rushed" preparation for the unanticipated, "surprise" interview by both the worker and the recipient--the worker's ability to orchestrate the case action is often frustrated by the absence of proper documentation.
Workers are more likely to experience frustration and delay in handling these sorts of case actions. They are "more responsible" for the client's welfare due to the greater urgency of the immediate problem.

Workers in the on-going units depend, then, upon the recipients for their cooperation and upon their proficiencies in "being clients." Being a client requires the recipient's complicity in the performance of case actions. Being a client also entails the willingness of the recipient to juggle other social commitments so as to accommodate the scheduling of interviews and the timely seeking of proper documents.

**Dependence Upon Other Agencies and Organizations**

Aside from depending upon clients for the completion of case actions, welfare workers must occasionally contend with other institutions upon which clients also depend. The introduction of new policies and even the "ordinary" operational changes in collateral organizations can affect the worker considerably.

The case of determining the "able-bodiness" of the General Assistance recipient reflects an instance of the worker's dependence upon collateral actors in the execution of case actions. In this case, it is the doctor who must sign the official disability form. For many workers in many instances, the reliance upon the doctors has caused operational problems. Apparently many doctors are unwilling to be responsible for making such determinations. Several cases were noted by workers who dealt with General Assistance recipients, and the problem was confirmed as well by members of the Welfare Rights Advisory Council. Though the demeanor presented by Honolulu doctors to welfare recipients has not been widely surveyed, the workers' reliance upon the doctors'
understanding and cooperation has produced many frustrating attempts by workers and clients to expedite disability case actions.

Since it shoulders responsibility for the means by which the client meets several basic needs, the agency has many points of contact with the parts of the social world on which the clients themselves depend. One of these is the drug abuse and alcohol abuse treatment "homes" in which many GA-disabled recipients reside. The regulations specify that the eligibility of these persons will continue as long as the recipient resides in an approved residential treatment center. It is, however, the Hawaii State Department of Health (DoH) which licenses such facilities. The criteria for licensing can and do occasionally change. Eligibility for several programs may be affected by the approval criteria of separate agencies: The DoH, the state's Medicaid Program administration, and the Food Stamp Program.

Other agencies and private organizations unrelated to these categorical grant programs frequently change policies. Examples of these are the change in public housing requirements, and wholesale changes in the rents of private residential hotels. Both of these frequently occur and often necessitate several recipients' moving, and the re-budgeting of their expenses and allowances for housing. Policy changes of these collateral institutions occur often for reasons quite independent of considerations of the implications for recipients.

Dependence upon non-institutional changes not specific to welfare also concern the workers. Changes in the minimum wage can render some clients ineligible, for example, by making their income too high for eligibility. Taxation policies are also factors that the workers must
contend with in their work, and the agency routinely publishes annual
guides so that the workers can explain appropriate changes in federal
and state tax law to their affected clients.

Persistent changes in the society, which do not originate in
the workings of public organizations, also have an effect. For
instance, the changes in land patterns and rentals in entire neighbor-
hoods can and do cause migrations of welfare clients out of their
neighborhoods to far-reaching sections of the city. Such a migration
of clients in the Honolulu corridor to central Oahu has been underway
for several years. Similarly, moves of shorter distance, so that the
client stays well within the Unit's district, seem to be more frequent
in some units. A Unit's population of "GA-elderly" persons, for
instance, depends not so much on the clients themselves, but upon
the locations of cheap residential hotels affordable to recipients.
Likewise, whether the unit has "GA-disabled" recipients depends
largely upon the location of residential treatment centers and drug
abuse clinics.

The Structures and Impositions of Time

Workers typically make all their appointments for specific
periods of the day. It is most common to schedule these every morning
of the week or to "bunch them up" early in the week. Workers are
thus able, they explain, to "control" their time, to the extent that
their scheduling anticipates the approximate length of the interview
and the difficulty of interpreting manual sections, allowing between
each one enough time to make accurate and readable notes for later
reference. It is extremely rare that a worker will process the necessary paperwork and complete a case action during or even immediately after an interview. Completion occurs long afterward, during a block of "free time" during which no interviews are scheduled. Most case workers do not accept calls from recipients or researchers during this afternoon "free" time. The pace of the work is likely to be forced at some times and less forced at other times.

It is against the background of the disciplined use of time that unexpected or unscheduled interviews and requests must be viewed. Typically, the unexpected event will arrive over the telephone with a request for an immediate interview, during which the worker will make a note, try to find a spot during the next day to schedule a visit, and instruct the client as to what documents, receipts, and stubs to bring. Other unscheduled visits occur as "walk-ins": the client will arrive unannounced at the worker's office. This is discouraged by the workers. Recipients observe the expected patterns if they understood the mailing schedules, remember the reasons for changes in the check amounts, and pay attention. Again, the GA recipients, more likely to suffer from mental incapacities, are more likely to ignore these conditions. Workers with GA-medical incapacity cases have their composes tested continually, because such clients visit the worker on such occasions such as a late arriving check, when the client is simply confused, or when the client seeks the worker's solace from another problem.

It is the non-routine event in the lives of those embedded in the society of poverty which occasions most of the non-GA encounters
of this unpredictable sort. The welfare clients typically live in the most inexpensive parts of town in the most inexpensive types of housing, possess some of the least stable types of employments, and live in some of the least stable families. The agency, by contrast, is interested in accounting for the composition, membership, identities, income, resources, ages, parenthood, and addresses of the families receiving assistance. As a consequence, each of the movements which the non-recipient makes through the society, relating either to employment, partnerships, sexual relations, and address in a very graceful and fluid manner, become institutional acts to the public assistance organization. Recipients do not move, take a job, or take care of a sister's child temporarily without having to check with the agency and operate in tandem with the agency to execute these life-patterns of a social being.

An illustration of this dependence on the agency for tandem action is the process of moving to a new address. The client who changes addresses must only have the "change of address" officially recognized, so that, for one thing, the checks will be sent to the correct address. Client movement has become somewhat common in recent years with the rise in land values and the decrease in rental vacancies in Honolulu. By contrast the housing portion of the grants have not been changed since 1977. The "simple" change of address is not really simple at all. If the client has a rent deposit at the original address, which the agency has granted (the agency will provide one rental deposit), the worker must try to have it returned, to have the subsequent rental agreement signed before the new landlord gives the
apartment to someone else, and have the address formally changed for the mailing of checks. The process of moving will encompass several days and will preoccupy the worker intermittently while all the pieces of the move (the signings, returns of deposits, and givings of deposits) are orchestrated in their proper sequence. If all goes smoothly, the case will have taken the worker more than twice as much more time to see the process through from beginning to end than for any other complex case action, including time on the phone talking to the recipient (several times) and the new landlord (sometimes) and orchestrating such interdependent social acts which most persons do with the same ease as drawing their checkbooks. If the events do not go smoothly, and the synchrony of these operations is rarely smooth, then the worker must spend more time on the case and more time trying to figure out how to expedite others’ simple, but interdependent transfers and legal undertakings of responsibility. This is only one in any number of cases setting on her desk, waiting for formal action, waiting for scheduling.

Many case actions drag out over several days, some cases for a week. All case actions taken in the on-going units take more than one day. The time taken to process a case does not necessarily take so long. Practically all cases could be completed right away and quickly filed with the proper authorizations sent to the fiscal office, if they were individually the only pending cases. But they are not. As mentioned above, cases do not exist in a vacuum and workers often have more than a dozen "pending" cases on their desks. Many other cases are frequently tucked out of sight, awaiting the much sought-after "free block of time."
Independent Time Cycles

The successful use of time is structured to accommodate (1) pressing demands for case actions in response to recipient-initiated occasions; (2) AFDC earnings reviews and (3) other reviews (such as AFDC eligibility reviews, and GA-medical reviews), generally in order of priority. The time of the welfare worker is punctuated as well by more rigid structures. Since the department acquired an automatic data processing capacity, welfare checks have been printed and mailed from a central state computer. Each case action is signalled to the computer by way of a TAF ("Turnaround Form") filled out by the worker, given to a machine operator, and its message is entered into the central computer from the unit's terminal. In order for a change in the amount of assistance, for example, to be registered in the following month's check, the TAF must be entered by the 19th of the current month. This, of course, dictates that the worker must complete reviews prior to the 19th, particularly for those cases most likely to change ("earnings" cases, "unemployed father" cases or those with a history of changing households).

Three different structures of time impose themselves on the worker. One is "worker's time": the manner of punctuating daily work, by setting aside times of the day and week to accommodate the "expected" workload. Second, is "client time" which can impose itself through unexpected calls and visits which must be acted on quickly. Client time is independent of worker time but can be accommodated through the allowing of "slack" time (not "free" for paperwork, but simply, unburdened time) or
through working late. Client time is unpredictable and is bound to circumstances outside the worker's control.

The intervals over which clients can acquire verification are also independent of the clients. The getting of a car title from its previous owner, for example, can take several days, depending on the availability of the former owner as much as the client. A verification of the amount of money in a savings account recently added to by the sale of a car, can take time for the bank to produce. Client time is best defined as the pressing obligations of the client's time; such structures are the consequences of the client's embeddedness in a social fabric which generates predictable and sometimes enduring commitments to relatives and friends, but also to employers. This social element in client time is often experienced by the worker as the unwillingness of the client to comply with a worker's request for an interview for a review. The worker's admonition to the recipient to "drop everything" sometimes cannot be obeyed without jeopardizing other relationships.

Last is "agency time," which is best exemplified by the computer deadline (the 19th of each month). Other cycles of agency time occur in lesser frequencies: when the federal government changes the benefit levels for the Food Stamp Program, entire units will spend approximately one week of what is called "mass change." On these occasions, all other but "emergency" (client-initiated) work will halt, while each case is changed so as to reflect a higher level of benefits. Since they are set by the states AFDC benefits do not undergo "mass change."

At other times dictated by the Unit Supervisor, some units will devote a few days to exchanging case files so as to check each other's
recording practices. This operation is particularly typical of units which have recently overcome a personnel shortage during which many cases have been neglected.

Summary and Conclusion

In the previous chapter it was concluded that the work of the welfare functionary was not dictated by regulations. It was suggested that the regulations do not exist in a form which lend them to use as guides to practice. The performance of case actions requires the worker to assemble regulations, forms, and sequences of questions for recipients into clusters of activities specific to a particular case action. "Systems," the workers' term for these clusters, are only partially informed and dictated by the regulations. This is true in instances even involving case actions where regulations are precise and clear. In those events, more common to the work of the on-going unit worker, which require reference to the more ambiguous sections of the manual, the use of systems is frustrated by the necessity of interpreting the manual's regulations to process a case. The absence of these systems in frequent numbers of case actions makes the task of the worker far more ambiguous than a superficial observation of the manual would suggest. The "logic in practice" varies substantially from the "logic of rules" which is represented by the manual. The frustration of the workers was expressed strongly in interviews with the workers, expressions unprovoked by the interviewer's direct questioning about the manual.

In the foregoing chapter we have responded to the question, "If the manual does not specify the behavior of workers, what does?" We
have suggested an interpretation of the work process as the response or adjustment of behavior to the practical exigencies and difficulties of processing case actions. Responding to the "imperatives of the situation," these income maintenance workers have oriented their work habits and practices around several strongly felt imperatives which inhere in the nature of the tasks they must perform and the official requirements for performing them. The table below summarizes the differences between Applications and On-going Units in the work situation. They differ considerably in the elements used, so much so that each type of worker engages in characteristically different operations, and experiences characteristically different "imperatives" which stem from the peculiar structure of circumstances in each. (See Table V.)

It is in the on-going units where most of the work, measured in the number of case actions taken per unit time, takes place. The vast majority of case actions take place in the on-going units and the vast majority of welfare recipients in the State of Hawaii (and in other states which share its administrative organization) are handled by on-going district income maintenance units. We have already characterized the work in applications units as "passive," and as circumscribed by the fairly discrete and clear regulations governing basic eligibility, and as existing as a stream of separate case actions, uncluttered by interruptions. We then turn here to the analysis of the work in on-going units. In the processing of case actions in the on-going units, two major imperatives are felt by the workers. First is the dependence of workers upon recipients, which is necessary for the completion of a case action. This was specifically occasioned by the necessity of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of the Work Situation</th>
<th>Applications Unit</th>
<th>On-Going Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Encounters with each Recipient</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Several in series of episodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Experience of Worker</td>
<td>Greater: Over 5 years</td>
<td>Less: most under 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Initiator of Interview</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td>Recipient, for changes, and problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Manual Sections Employed</td>
<td>&quot;Most Clear&quot;: basic eligibility</td>
<td>Many, including the more ambiguous sections; greater interpretive burden on workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Client preparation for interview; knowledge of proper verification to bring</td>
<td>Thorough: brochure and pre-interview screen</td>
<td>Worker-Initiated: Thorough, Recipient-Initiated: Less prepared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6. Time Deadlines for Case Actions | None               | Several—
- for Reviews: 19th of month
- for Recipient-initiated: the time constraint imposed by the urgency of the situation |
| 7. Temporal Organization of Case Actions | Stream of Discrete Case Actions | Plurify of Simultaneous Worker- and Recipient-Initiated action |
| 8. Impact of Absence of Verification Documents on Worker | None: Worker merely waits for complete documents. Burden on applicant | Considerable: Worker knows the recipient will generally remain eligible; she must reschedule interview, implore recipient to provide documents in timely manner. |
| 9. Overall Demeanor of Worker | Passive toward applicant, Burden on Applicant, Active in interpreting using clear sections of manual | Active; implicative toward clients; seeks cooperation in order to expedite case and other cases in time. Active in interpreting, "making do" with unclear regulations |

Table V
Comparison of the Elements of the Work Situations Between the Applications and On-Going Units
verification of recipient households, resources, income, and every other fact which regulations call for. The impact of this dependence varies between the applications unit and the on-going units. In the former, the clients are prepared for the interviews and case actions far in advance of their interview. However, in the latter, on-going unit, several factors confound the ability of the clients to present the verifying documents and to frustrate the ability of the worker to summon these documents which are so necessary to the successful processing of a case action.

The second, imperative fact of the work of income maintenance workers is the structure of **time** imposed upon the worker. The worker deals not with individual cases but with several cases simultaneously. Rarely do workers complete case action paperwork at times proximate to the interviews which elicit facts and documents necessary to complete the paperwork. Two major independent universes of time compete and together they structure the worker's use of time: "client time" and "agency time." "Worker time" is the complex means of accommodating these, while burdened with the necessity of completing both the 'client-initiated' case actions and the reviews required by the agency.

The two imperatives have two implications for the theories of organizational work of March and Simon and of James Thompson. It will be recalled that the imagery of work abided by these authors elicited the elements of (1) prescription, (2) discreteness, and (3) passivity. We have dealt with the first (prescription) of these elements in the previous chapter and in this summary above. The element of passivity
is clearly lacking in the case of income maintenance work in the on-going units. The worker does not merely "receive" the recipient; she must implore the recipient to bring the appropriate documents which are so necessary for the worker to "get the work done." It is the client, then, who possesses one of the key operationally-necessary elements in the worker's work. In order to expedite the work, the worker must summon the documents and receipts.

Thus, the worker has no immediate control over a key requisite to the performance of her case actions. The facility of the worker in obtaining this control, by successfully imporing her clients to cooperate and by instructing them to bring the proper documents, becomes a critical part in income maintenance work in the on-going units, which is not true of the applications units.

The element of "discreteness" is also a questionable assumption in defining the work of the welfare worker. Rather than seen as arrayed in a "stream" of individual performances as in applications units, they are better described as a "flurry" of case actions which occur simultaneously and which demand simultaneous attention and action by the worker. The processing of cases does not occur as a set of serially interdependent steps undertaken on a succession of discrete occasions, but as the "juggling" of a number of objects (case actions) simultaneously. Judgments and actions simply do not occur in serial order.

In combination with the ambiguity of the manual in many sections, we find cases in which not only are actions performed in near simultaneity but such case actions are also procedurally ambiguous. No one case, or part of a case, concerns the worker at one moment. The
procedures employed to effect these case actions are often unclear. The combination of interpretational necessities and the practical contingencies of juggling a number of pending case actions both mitigate against the work being experienced as a series of steps. The worker has to bring her interpretations and organization of interpretations to the work, and she must also bring these inventions to many cases simultaneously.

One of the requests made of the first two respondents was to describe a typical day of work. This turned out to be a ridiculous question. Polite, tolerant answers were given. No regular patterns of work were articulated. After I adjusted the type of question and the approach to the subject of processing cases, it became more evident that the work was viewed in terms of contingencies. The work is made up of contingencies, only some of which are controlled by the workers themselves. The manual is frequently "beyond control": it does not define the procedures for processing cases and it often does not provide a sketch of how one might process a case. The verification documents are "beyond control": they must be summoned from the recipients. The structure of time is "beyond control": the time of workers is constrained by the agency's cycles of accounting and machine printing, as well as occasionally by recipient's commitments to other social relations. Time is structured by the necessity to process several cases in overlapping times such that no one case occupies one's attention. It is far more typical that fifteen and more cases are pending at one time. Time is further punctuated and structured by the unpredictable, client-initiated interview which often requires nearly immediate attention, necessitating the worker to "drop" her other work for the moment.
Without control over the immediate technical elements of the work (procedures and verification) and lacking control over the use of time, workers are somewhat deficient in giving accounts of the "typical day." None exists. A variety of contingencies will impose themselves upon the worker's day. Conditions of work are not predictable, but neither are they random. To the novice worker, they can appear to be "out-of-control." It is the skill of workers at disciplining themselves which permits them to perform case actions and interviews throughout the working day. The facility of workers to overcome the (hopefully by now obvious) lack of control of their work, depends upon the self-disciplining capacity of the worker. It is to a discussion of this discipline that we turn in the following chapter.
CHAPTER V—NOTES


2. Ibid., pp. 10-12.

3. Ibid., Chapter 2.

4. Ibid., Chapters 2, 3.

5. Ibid., Chapters 2, 5.

6. Ibid., p. 204.


8. Ibid., pp. 23-29.

9. Ibid., pp. 47; 39-56.
Preceding chapters have surveyed and discussed the objective conditions and parameters of income maintenance work. In this chapter, analysis will focus on the ways in which workers experience these conditions. The experience of these conditions is mediated by three logically separate factors. These are the "commitments" of the worker; the self-discipline of the worker; and the actions of the worker. Three different types of overall approaches to and patterns of work, encompassing modes of understanding the clients and commitments to different aspects of the work lead to different patterns of conduct. I refer to these different patterns as "dispositions."

It is at this point that our analysis of the circumstances of work, the requirements of case processing, the manual, and the other circumstances must be expanded. Wilson's framework, for example, posits the importance of the imperatives of the working situation, but stops short of incorporating the ways in which operatives cognitively organize their environments and their own conduct. It is argued below that more than just the task (the objective "carrying out" of the work), possesses an enduring structure. The "disposition of the operative also retains structure, that is, a coherent, consistent manner of perceiving and acting. This "disposition" to act is based upon elements quite
independent from the circumstances of the work, though these are
intimately bound up in the experience of work and the commitments brought
to the job by the worker. Work conduct is thus not the assimilation of
objectively obvious routines in response to objectively imperative circum-
stances but is, rather, a subjective response to circumstances, events
and experiences whose meaning and organization are constituted by the
worker.

The worker is left to her own devices to arrange her schedule, to
conduct her case actions and, more importantly, to understand the job
in its entirety. It should be stressed that the worker is nowhere
implored to understand the job or to understand the recipients. She
is generally asked to avoid a "judgmental" or moralistic attitude toward
recipients. The understanding of the job and the infusion of meaning
into it is a project which emerges independently. It owes its genesis
to the enduring "sense-seeking" and "sense-making" qualities of the human
mind. Sense is made of the job by the workers' selection of a goal which
she respects and deems worthy of her efforts. By directing her energies
to the creation of these accomplishments, she will expand the number of
occasions in which valued ends can be fulfilled. Such infusions of
meaning by way of workers' selection of valued and worthy missions and
attempts to achieve valued accomplishments both function to order
her work, little of which order exists in the objective context of work.

Another way to state this is that the worker tries to define goals
and seek particular activities she comes to value. The worker commits
herself to a consistent, directed project of work. She disposes herself
to act in such a manner as to seek those respectable, valued accomplish-
ments to which she has committed herself. Through experience she is
able to change and adjust her overall manner of processing cases, of arranging the working day and adjusting the manner in which she treats and regards recipients.

All three of the mediating factors (commitment, self-discipline, and treatment of the recipients) are intertwined. For example, a worker's commitment to a project of "helping" recipients constitutes (or generates) her perception of clients and the priority she gives to certain kinds of case actions. Change in one of the elements or all of them, produces a different experience and overall disposition. Depending on the success of her actions in producing valued accomplishments, such outcomes may either satisfy, signal the need to alter her commitments, or indicate the need to refine her strategies of pursuing the particular goal or commitment. Her experience may be sublime, harried, boring, frustrating, or confusing depending on the type of commitment, the manner in which a commitment is undertaken and the response of recipients or administrators to the implementation of those personal commitments. The table below illustrates the elements and action-consequences of these dispositions (see Table VI).

What these elements represent in combination, is a disposition or style. I will use these two terms interchangeably. A disposition is a general pattern of acting which stems from a commitment. It is not simply a set of discrete behaviors or "attitudes" which comprise a disposition. Rather the disposition is the product of an attempt to endow actions with meaning by inventing purpose and meaning (rather than just mechanically performing the job) and developing a manner of self-discipline and action which activate that commitment. The
Table VI. Typology of Worker Dispositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disposition Type</th>
<th>Primary Commitments: Desired Accomplishment</th>
<th>Rewards</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Adherence to Regulations, Administrative Instructions</th>
<th>Rapport with Clients</th>
<th>Method of Understanding Clients</th>
<th>Judgments about Recipients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HELPER</td>
<td>to change, reform recipients</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Unsettled: Generates conflict</td>
<td>Contingent on 'reasonableness'</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>Moralistic; Individualistic (passive Horizon-bound)</td>
<td>Harsh: (personal sloth, incapacity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WITHDRAWERS</td>
<td>to find worthy, practicable commitment</td>
<td>&quot;Finishing the work&quot;</td>
<td>Faithful adherence</td>
<td>Desired, but frustrated</td>
<td>Individualistic (Passive; Horizon-bound)</td>
<td>Restrained: (Cooperative vs. Uncooperative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOILERS</td>
<td>to avoid commitments</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>'On Edge'</td>
<td>Contingent on burden</td>
<td>Avoided</td>
<td>Individualistic (Passive)</td>
<td>Resentful: (Cooperative vs. Uncooperative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETACHERS</td>
<td>to avoid commitments</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>'On Edge'</td>
<td>Contingent on burden</td>
<td>Avoided</td>
<td>Individualistic (Passive)</td>
<td>Resentful: (Cooperative vs. Uncooperative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITUATIONALIST</td>
<td>equivocal; &quot;listening&quot;; &quot;occasional opportunity to relieve a problem&quot;</td>
<td>Equanimity</td>
<td>Contingent on &quot;more important matters&quot;</td>
<td>Frequent; Desired but Contingent on recipient</td>
<td>Sociological</td>
<td>Patient: &quot;Unfortunate&quot; &quot;Circumstances&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


definitive quality of the actions of the worker is not an array of isolatable attitudinal or behavioral particulate, but the strategic combination of valuational and action elements in the entire experience of the workers in response to the worker's perception of the work circumstances taken as a whole. The worker is compelled to seek strategies compatible with commitments she respects and finds worthy of herself. Rather than responding to the objective conditions or to affective factors beyond the workers' own comprehension and control, workers are seen to seek appropriate strategies to fulfill valued commitments and that the workers are in control of the facilities which form those strategies and which weigh those commitments.

The Consequences of Dispositions

The ability of the income maintenance workers to influence their charges is greatly circumscribed. Regulations and the surveillance of the case records make it unlikely that the case worker will engage in gross violations of the regulations. However, the ambiguity of the many manual sections leaves the latitude for discretion. While this interpretive latitude is not acknowledged by higher officials in the agency, it exists by the defaulting of the regulations to provide clear procedures and requirements in the processing of cases. While the worker has the ability to grant monies in clear and detectable violation of the standards and regulations contained in the manual, the "small" discretionary actions involving interpretation of the manual are less likely to be detected. This is not to say that there are "violations" of the regulations. Indeed as iterated at several points of our discussion, the ambiguity of
the manual makes it impossible to discern clear prescriptions. The latitude of the worker is permitted in reference to sections of the manual which are ambiguous. These do not include the standards of need and the allowances of money given to the families receiving assistance for AFDC. The standard of money assistance is clear. What is less clear are the definitions of household membership, that is, whether a person can be said to be a member of a household and whether a particular relationship among household members can be said to be authentic in the official regulations.

The disposition of the worker toward clients and to the entire job matters greatly to the extent that this disposition influences the way workers interpret the manual, or the willingness to invent interpretations which help some types of clients. The AFDC designation of "essential" persons (adults) receiving the assistance and the children on whose behalf she receives assistance is one such instance. The relationship in question could be a genuine parental relationship but not be certifiably so, as in the case of a woman who takes in a neighbor's neglected or abused child. But the worker can include the child in the household if she feels the relationship to be an authentic one and believes the recipient's claim that she is taking care of the child. The generous interpretation of the regulations (not to say illegal or non-compliant) permits the worker to "protect" the child. This is one instance where the disposition of a worker is distinct from that of another disposition. This is a difference undetectable to others unfamiliar with the work situation. As "private" as some dispositions are among individual workers, there are great differences in their consequences for recipients.
Each type of disposition evokes different overall priorities, concerns, preoccupations and abilities to extend sympathy and energies toward recipients.

Dispositions also evoke alternate forms and degrees of attention to clients. This second action-evoking dimension of worker's dispositions has less to do with the actual interpretations of the manual than it does with the manner in which the workers understand the ways and reasons for ways clients live in the wider society. Some dispositions are prone to preoccupations with the physical and social deportment of recipients. The facts surrounding deportment are highly structured by the horizons imposed by the welfare unit. Others are far more vigorous in searching for reasons and understandings of the recipients which include facts and images extending far beyond the physical boundaries of the welfare office. The type of understanding of the client, whether seen passively as an artifact of the welfare unit or analyzed as a creature of society, presages the understanding of the worker as to the effects of her own actions upon the client.

Some circumstances, both in the wider society and in the processing of some types of case actions threaten the stability and shelter of the recipients and more often put the families at risk. To the extent that different dispositions among workers evoke different sensitivities to these risks and threats, and to the extent that the worker can effectively diminish them, the dispositions of workers can, in subtle ways, affect the stability and shelter of the recipients. The question is then, how can the worker effectively diminish these potential risks? The worker's capacities are severely circumscribed by time and by statutory authority.
But one facility which she has some control over is the type and amount of attention she gives to the orchestration and expedition of such case actions and the effort she provides in convincing, persuading and reassuring persons on whom the recipient depends (such as employers, landlords, schools, housing officials, rehabilitation houses). Thus, the differences of "dispositions" among welfare workers are subtle and barely visible. At the same time they bear very important consequences. Since dispositions form the central feature which organizes workers' experience of their jobs, the evolution of those dispositions are then interesting factors in the provision of income maintenance services.

The distinctions among the three clusters or forms of responses to the circumstances of work occur according to the type of investment the worker makes in the job and the gratifications the worker expects in return. These are the Helper, Withdrawer and "Situationalist" dispositions.

Helpers

Most workers in the Income Maintenance Series had prepared themselves in college to the (then) vaguely articulated end of "working with people" and "helping." The "helping" occupations they sought, while perhaps not steeped in the respect and esteem of professional social work, would, they expected, allow them a job and career which permitted them to "work with people" and to help "make a difference" in the ways people lived and got along in the world. The Helper style is not isomorphic to the original reasons for entering into their college majors, but the most strongly held commitment to "helping people" exemplifies the goal of the Helpers.
The workers who possess the helping commitment and retain it tend to be very frustrated. The frustration is due in large part to the "maintenance" nature of the policies, which limit the ability of workers to intervene actively in the clients' lives. Recipients leave public assistance infrequently, and those who do either return or they leave permanently through means very much unrelated to what the worker can and does do for them. Most workers, including those in this Helper group, believed that AFDC recipients leave the agency's caseload when they get remarried, when their deserting husband returns, when they receive a promotion or get a new job. The instances of a recipient's leaving public assistance have nothing to do with the efforts of the worker to "help." GA cases leave if they fail to comply with weekly "work search" requirements or when their disability expires. The worker has nothing to do with the precipitating factors which occasion the termination of AFDC and GA cases, other than to fill out the paperwork.

"Better Lives"

The Helper's commitment to assist in helping other people lead "better" and more independent lives is frustrated. The workers, without exception, all saw the independent, productive life of full employment as being the best possible circumstance for all people, including recipients. They all saw the helping of people to become independent as being the best thing that they could accomplish in their jobs. However, what distinguishes the Helpers is that the will to make a difference is the central feature of how they regard their work, taken as a whole.
As a result of the strongly held commitment and the sheer absence of an opportunity to activate that commitment due to the independence of the client's circumstances from the control of the worker, the "Helping" workers were the most frustrated and embittered of all these workers.

Many workers change their expectations of the job. Several stated that they were so shocked at the types of ways their recipients lived that they decided that they shouldn't even try to change their lives and circumstances. It was also seen to be too outlandish and elusive a task, given the limitations of policies and the lack of control over clients, to try to "make a difference" in the lives of the clients. They simply could not maintain that image of their job. The commitment to "help" ebbed and subsided as some workers' central image of the job and its purpose changed. However, some workers maintain a sense of bitterness and believe that they are denied the ability to accomplish changes in their recipients. Some workers, though admitting that they entered so as to accomplish changes, indicated in further responses to questioning that these helping impulses die hard. Three women could not totally accept the fact that the outcomes of case actions were to maintain persons, not to help them.

Others changed their orientations to the job, the purpose with which they invested in it, and their objects and commitments. Those workers acquired the Withdrawer and the Situationalist styles. These entail, rather than the commitment to helping and creating changes in people typical of the Helper style, commitments to one's own career, and state of mind (Withdrawer) and commitments to no one or to no result in particular (Situationalist).
Helpers ironically make the harshest references to recipients. They refer to AFDC recipients as "lazy." Recipients were depicted in these interviews as being unwilling to work. Another type of explanation was also typical:

... they don't think for themselves. They sit at home and don't try to do anything. And they don't leave welfare. They just stay at home like lumps.

In this and other interviews with Helpers, the explanation given for the recipients being on welfare was one of two types. The first was that the recipients just didn't want to work and were "content" to be on public assistance. The recipient's lot in life was seen to be totally volitional. The other explanation was that there was a quality of mind among recipients characterized by the lack of initiative and will-power. In this explanation, the recipient was seen to be afflicted with sloth, not a willful sloth, but as one respondent put it, "They just don't know any other way."

In this Helper view, what recipients have is a need—to be made to work, or failing that, to be "motivated" by someone. This individualistic understanding of recipient circumstances and their behavior in general is fundamental to the Helper orientation. An assumption of the orientation is that the recipient himself or herself can be changed in isolation from other contextual features of the recipient's life. The phenomena of social and familial abandonment, high unemployment, low paying jobs, and the high and increasing cost of living in Honolulu are not seen to be relevant in accounting for the recipients' circumstances or behavior, or in inducing change.
No Control

As a result of this individualistic way of understanding recipients, coupled with the absence of effective means to induce recipients to "go and do something with yourself," these workers tend to view the job itself in terms of what is not possible in the job. With the project of reforming recipients frustrated, the worker views the job in terms of deficiencies of power and control. As a result these workers tend to truncate their conversations and interviews with clients. They do not take them seriously. The succession of recipients which come into their presence represents a continual assault to the Helper's commitment to change people. While frequently terse with recipients, often ignoring many of their statements, Helpers, for the most part, withdraw from an active commitment to helping people even when potential occasions for giving advice do arise. They do not want to talk with recipients; they want to help them. Since the recipient is seen to be deficient or immoral, and since the worker can "do nothing about it," the worker simply invests little patience and compassion during encounters with recipients. Possessing a blanket explanation for the "plight" of her recipients, the worker avoids listening to recipients "ramble on" about their problems. The individualist framework seals the understanding of recipients hermetically from further consideration.

The Placing of Blame

These workers were the most enthusiastic and detailed in giving accounts of the deficiencies of the Department of Social Services and Housing, the Program Development personnel in the writing of the manual, and the recipients.
Two of these workers gave vivid accounts of arguments they have had with the Program Development Office over the manual's ambiguity, gaps and omissions. These workers blamed their frustration on what they regarded as shortcomings in their legal authority to control clients. One expressed interest when I told her that I was a political scientist. She said that she had always wanted to know what factors went into making laws at the national level so that she could figure out "why things are so messed up with the welfare system."

These complaints were not merely idle complaints to an outsider, because the expressions of complaint were so pointed and unequivocal. They had obviously given these subjects much thought, even if not systematic thought, and gave extremely pointed evidence of their contentions. All recounted episodes of conflict with some of their superiors in the downtown "administration" over the manual and its lack of clarity. Some kept extensive records of these conflicts and other events which they perceived to be indictments of their superiors and the welfare "system." Other groups express similar misgivings, particularly about the manual, but not with the vigor and vividness of the Helpers, and not with personal accounts of conflict with the administration. Other workers saw the manual as something to "live with," for reasons peculiar to each of the Withdrawer and Situationalist styles and outlooks, and not as something to "get excited about."

Complacent Intellectual Orientation

Helpers' understanding of recipients through an individualistic framework evidences a passive intellectual style. It requires, and rests upon, minimal search and intellectual discipline. It entails a
surrender to the horizons which are given, if one is passive and unsearching, by the nature of the job. The worker sees only those who come into the office. These workers do not know any poor persons, and they are not likely to get to know and understand poor persons. Helpers are content to view recipients as they come into the office, as social isolates, unconnected to other commitments and relations. While the formation of opinions and the rendering of such images as "sitting at home like a lump," are active creations of the workers, they are at the same time based upon the idle acceptance of what they see coming into their offices as adequate boundaries of reality. Frustration with the inability to help leaves them with an intellectual dead-end to the extent they are not intellectually searching and disciplined enough to find other reasons for recipient behavior apart from those evoked by an individualist imagery.

"No Respect"

The perceived idleness of the administration in relation to the Helper's mission of reform would not be so galling to her were it not for a general lack of respect accorded her goals. Instead the Helper perceives herself to be forced to endure the recipient's "grousing" and "uncooperativeness," without being able to "turn them around." The inability to "help" becomes transformed into resentfulness of the clients, whose occasional abuse she must suffer and whose "whining," "lumplike" demeanors she must endure. Even in cases where the worker finds a client cooperative, to the worker the client is still unappreciative of the effort and assistance the worker has granted. Gratification with seeing successful change intervention would be nice, to the
worker, but the clients are only occasionally outwardly appreciative of the worker.

The absence of respect and appreciation coming from the administration is noticed more by Helpers than by other workers. The belief that the administration does not care about the workers, and that the administration is a "bunch of incompetents" was mentioned by all the Helpers, while it was mentioned only by a few of the others. More frustrating to the helpers is the low opinion that supervisors hold of the Helpers' moralistic judgments. The supervisors work constantly with new workers so as to inculcate an unmoralistic, "non-judgmental" attitude. Helpers personified the judgmental style which the supervisors exhorted their trainees to avoid.

Given the absence of gratification and the absence of respect and appreciation by recipients, supervisors and the administration, it is no surprise, then, that the lot of the Helper is a lonely one. Her burden is appreciated only by the few other Helpers.

What is truly noteworthy about the Helper style, aside from its relative rarity, is its resilience. It is in several respects the most "personal" of the types of dispositions because the Helper maintains the disposition through the strength of her personal resolve.

The Helpers are most expressive about elements of the work situation, particularly the manual, which "hold them back." They also feel strongly that they are unappreciated in spite of clear evidence (to them) that controlling the clients and making them work do both the clients and the agency a lot of good. However, the overall criteria of value to these persistent Helpers seemed to be located in the value of
receiving gratification from attempts to change clients and receiving respect from the agency for which the worker would be saving money and resources. The root of the frustration among the Helpers and the basis of the strength with which these workers held their resolve is the desire for self-gratification rather than a detached and altruistic motive.

Implications of Helper Disposition

The Helper disposition is an "uncomfortable" one which commits the worker to confront the recalcitrance of both administrative instructions and recipients toward her "mission." Both the administration and the recipients present obstacles to what the Helper establishes as her mission. Figure 1 illustrates the closed cycle of conflict and frustration which the Helper undergoes.

Recipients are seen to be undisciplined persons in need of discipline and requiring motivating "prods." However, the worker is not legally authorized to control the recipient to the degree she would like, and occasionally runs afoul of the administration through reprimands and through memoranda replying to Helper's complaints as to the inadequacy of the manual.

The Helper recoils somewhat from practicing her mission, though her perception of the recipients remains undaunted by her actual incapacity to control and reform them. The Helper's interviews are likely to be terse and official, unpunctuated by conversation. The worker has no need for listening to "grousing" if she "can't do anything about it." The worker tends to be unsympathetic and inattentive to problems occasionally expressed by recipients and is not attentive to the risks to social stability and shelter which the recipient may occasionally
B. Actions
(1) Toward Administration:
- complaints, over limitations of authority
(2) Toward Recipients:
- prodding, exhortations to clients

A. Strategies
(1) Toward Administration:
- selective, reform-inducing interpretation of regulations
- disregarding of 'worthless' instructions
(2) Toward Recipients:
- attempt to manipulate, reform

C. Responses to Worker Actions
(1) From Administration:
- intransigence, confirming the perception of incompetence
(2) From Recipients:
- Resistance, confirming perceptions of the need for control, more authority.

Figure 1. The Dynamics of the Helper Disposition: Self-Reinforcing Cycle of Conflict and Frustration with Administration and Recipients.
undergo. The Helper rarely acts as an advocate for the recipient in the latter's dealings with housing officials, landlords and other agencies related to the recipient but not to the agency. The Helper is frustrated by what the administration will not allow her to do. She complains about and occasionally departs from the regulations and will occasionally instruct recipients to get their act together or to go out and get a job.

Nine times out of ten, clients come in here and their basic problem is they don't want to work. They just sit around and act like some kind of magic is going to happen to them. Sometimes I say, "Look, Mrs. Whatever, nothing's going to change until you do something by yourself. You've got to get out and find a job." Most of the time they don't even answer but a couple of times I think they really thought about it.

Helpers think the agency's regulations and priorities are irrelevant to the real problems the Helpers perceive. The agency's attempt to increase the proportion of completed reviews is viewed as misplaced effort, something which may be a good thing, but not against the larger needs perceived by the Helper.

While Detachers' orientations to administrative instructions and the Manual are tempered by an attempt to "just get through the day," and the Recoilers' by an attempt to get all the instructed work done, Helpers actively dispute the basic thrust of the manual which they see as improperly limiting their authority. While not stridently disobedient toward the manual, the Helper interprets it on occasion so as to permit herself to "motivate" the recipient. The Helper is unhappy and may eventually forsake the unease provoked by attempts to reform clients by lessening or diverting her energies and altering her object of commitment, if she stays in the unit. These latter two responses are the "Detacher" and "Recoiler" dispositions, respectively.
Withdrawers

Thirteen of the twenty income maintenance workers subjected to lengthy interviews fell into the Withdrawer category. Yet, the motives, purposes, and demeanor of withdrawers are the most paradoxical. This category is further distilled into two categories, those of Recoiler and of Detacher. While the Helper invests her job with a commitment to accomplish changes in the clients and to transform poor persons into better, more independent ones, the Withdrawer has either recoiled from or rejected commitments of any kind. In our discussion of Helpers, we stated that some changed their orientations upon initiation or even later in their careers, as the burdens of faithfully undertaking the Helper style were eventually seen to be discordant with the possibilities for activating change-inducing commitments.

Those who recoil from the Helper orientation become Recoilers. The key to understanding the activities and outlooks of this group of "reformed" Helpers is to realize that while "helping" had been a major element organizing their outlook towards work, nothing of such magnitude of purpose or zeal replaces it. They have withdrawn from the commitment to changing their recipients and have retreated from active moralizing about their clients as well. They refrain from "getting sidetracked" or dwelling on upsetting encounters with clients and particularly frustrating sections of the manual. I employ the verbs recoil, refrain, retreat because the helping impulse and the seeking of "accomplishment" among such workers dies hard. They retain a desire to invest a sense of purpose which generates "accomplishments" but they recoil from them lest one's failures permit one to be frustrated.
Similarly, they may exist in a state of "suspense" relying upon supervisors and other workers for a sense of purpose and accomplishment. She does not "see" herself how to independently acquire such a definite sense of purpose, though she may occasionally scan her everyday work experiences for such assurances that one exists. By and large, the reassurances of the supervisor, and other workers (often in the same quandary), serve to abate her quest for purpose. Much as with the new worker who suspends judgments about the technical requirements of case processes, these more mature workers will likewise suspend independent estimates of overall purpose, relying upon the assurances of others that such purposes exist. However, the Detached worker is highly skeptical.

The Detached workers include those who entered the employ of the agency as Helpers and some who never subscribed to the Helper orientation. Those who have been Helpers have not "failed" to develop a style through which to satisfy a sense of purpose. They have rejected the quest altogether. If there is one orientation which characterizes this category, it is the tendency to look at the tasks, frustrations and ambiguities collectively as part of the job and to view the job as "Just a job."

While the emphasis of general strategies and disciplines of Recoiled and Detached workers are both centered around how to best protect oneself, the style of the Recoiler is one of service tempered by "self-preservation and the Detached worker, self-service The object of the former is to "do something," to "contribute something" but the worker has a difficult time inventing and articulating just what specifically it might be. The latter, Detached group, has rejected investing hope in accomplishing anything and while searching, its members are searching for a way out.
Though each approaches the practices of work in a similar way by imposing a discipline upon herself so as to lessen frustration, the way in which each views the possibilities of service distinguishes them.

"Keeping Yourself On Edge"

These workers referred to the manner in which they comported themselves as "keeping yourself calm" or "keeping yourself on edge." Since work tasks depend so much on the cooperation of outsiders (recipients), technical skill alone is not enough to process the case actions in one's caseload. Social skills are also required to meet with the clients and, as gracefully as possible, to cause them to deliver the appropriate documentation. Also required, then, is a degree of emotional discipline.

Workers typically described their jobs as entailing work under pressure or as some called it, "peak pressure." Several factors can frustrate the processing of cases. Phone calls and unannounced client visits interrupt the processing of pending cases and scheduled interviews. The worker typically finds herself shifting her attention back and forth from one case to another. Though most workers divided their days into interview portions and "free" paperwork times, even the latter are frequently interrupted. Ambiguity in the regulations also frustrates the expediting of paperwork and interpretations must be invented while an interview is in progress.

Workers attempt to hold their emotions in check during the working day. Many referred to the need to "not let things get to you." These "things" included the ambiguity of the regulations, the "uncooperativeness" of some clients, and the forced pace of work. Several mentioned that they attempted to remain calm throughout the day, though this was often difficult because as one put it, "while you are trying to get
something straight (a procedure), . . . or give instructions to a client, all your other case actions are piling up on you and you're going to have to deal with them somehow. Each extra time you spend trying to clear something up you take away from the other things that you have to do."

"Remaining calm" is the strategy for coping with this pressure.

"Keeping yourself on edge" highlights the need of workers to work as swiftly as possible. The worker extends herself to the maximum of her mental and physical capacities. The worker must be intensely involved in and interested in the case action directly at hand, but not enough to become frustrated by the frequent and predictable frustrating interruptions and ambiguities which either take up time or which draw her attention away from the issue at hand. Having her attention drawn away from the pressing matters at hand can cause her to lose track and force her to start over again.

Anger can lead to several adverse consequences for the worker's timely processing of pending cases. In recounting the need to remain calm and "on edge," several workers were extremely candid about the need to do this or else "you take it out on your clients." Taking it out on clients can have several results, besides the obvious fact that it will waste time. It can also spoil the relationship one has with a client, often a painful prospect to workers to whom cooperative, if not cordial relations are necessary to expedite case actions. It can also lessen the degree to which the client will be cooperative in the future and the degree to which the client will present her circumstances with candor.

As important as "keeping yourself on edge" is to expedite work and cultivate fruitful relations with recipients, it is not an ability that becomes "natural" for the worker. While the typical craftsman can
attain a level of self-sustaining skill and excellence, the welfare worker cannot. Hence the necessity of self-consciously "keeping yourself on edge." It is not a skill which becomes "second nature," or becomes, through experience, an extension of oneself, like a pianist's. The worker who tries to keep herself on edge, finds that she must periodically remind herself and monitor her state of mind to stay, of necessity, "close to" but not "over," a threshold of emotional detachment: The Edge.

This forced self-discipline represented the largest difficulty for the workers both in terms of how to find this balance and how to maintain it in the face of so many sources of threats to it. Maintaining this discipline is a constant effort. The worker's primary object in maintaining this disciplined stance is to ensure that she does not succumb to the frustrations which seem to surround her. She monitors and holds her frustrations in check. Each inconvenience, ambiguous regulation, and uncooperative client might individually and collectively "get to" her. By limiting her emotional commitment, she is able to deflect threats to the timely completion of case actions and to her own regime of measured, self-conscious work habits. Those income maintenance workers, particularly the "Recoilers," are engaged in the physical and mental aspect of the work while trying to avoid emotional investments in any specific case. Avoiding investments in clients, over which she learns she has little influence, whether punitive or helping and avoiding a sense of purpose, she manages to keep "on edge." By such means she is able to invest her work with honest, even exhausting, efforts to perform case actions, while recoiling from the resolve to thereby accomplish anything. This strategy and the cautious, self-monitored non-involvement
which characterizes it is essential to the performance of the job for these workers. The Recoiler has not "given up" the search for a generalizable purpose and mission. She is merely without one and is trying to find which "fits," which is worthy as a "purpose" while reasonable, given the practical circumstances. The Detached worker has given up the quest and is extremely skeptical about the chances.

"Recoil"ers and "Detachers"

It is typical of this Withdrawn group that the workers do not moralize about the recipients on their caseloads. Like the Helpers, they accept what they see of the recipients in front of them as the boundaries of reality. While not inventing images of the clients outside the welfare office (as do the Helpers), their intellectual orientation to the recipients is just as passive. They understand recipients in a passive way, by accepting what they see of the clients in their offices as the basis of what and who their recipients are. Aside from being amoralistic, the images of the recipients held by these workers are intriguing in another way. Bluntly stated, the workers hold almost no image of clients: who they are and what their problems are. While the Recoilers among them recoil from inferring about their clients, the Detached ones are clearly uninterested. How the recipient acts in the presence of the worker, specifically whether she is on time for the interview, whether she creates problems in the form of interruptions, or whether she is being cooperative in the submission of documents when asked, forms the basis of impressions about the recipient. Since there is a strain toward "not judging" the clients among the Recoilers and toward "not trying to figure them out" among the Detached ones, the images of recipients are
purely work-bound, and fall into the categories of "cooperative" and "uncooperative."

To this group, images of clients are artifacts of the work process. Clients can either be hindrances or help in the processing of case actions. That is, if late, interrupting, or uncooperative, they merely become hindrances. If punctual and cooperative, they provide no barriers to the expeditious completion of paperwork.

When the worker attempts to overcome the limitations of the horizons of the office, she finds her ability to do so contingent on her social skills. Workers may attempt this self-liberation by asking clients questions of a sociable, conversational nature. When a worker engages in the questioning of the recipients in order to find out more about them there generally follows one of two unpleasant results, one directly and the other indirectly. In the direct result, when the worker tries to "find out" about a recipient that she "wonders about" (in terms of how she lives, what her problems are), the recipient often gets defensive and hostile to what she perceives are "probing," personal questions to which she is unaccustomed in welfare interviews. From the client's standpoint, such extraordinary probings are seen as potential preludes to fraud investigations and are avoided.

Alternatively, if the recipient answers the worker's unusual questions, the worker often finds it hard not to suspend some of the official demeanor of her office. The recipient may respond in kind, reasoning that she has found a "friend" in the welfare office. Several of the Withdrawers mentioned during the interviews that they had been "burned" by clients that they had trusted. The practice of giving recipients "breaks" in the context of expectations of honesty and trust often
produced, in the eyes of these respondents, a backlash which returned at a later date to "burn" them. Workers perceived these unofficial conversations as preludes to "being made a fool of," and avoided them.

Satisfaction

Obviously for both the Recoiled and the Detached workers the job was experienced with a considerable degree of tension and caution. The necessity of "keeping yourself on edge," whether for "just getting by," or with the expectation that something better would come of the job to make it more bearable, impressed itself upon both groups of Withdrawers. Two of the "Detached" workers responded to the inquiry about what they most liked about the job: "Nothing," they said. These responses, oddly, were not made with any particular vehemence or anger, simply a plain, unemotional, "Nothing." Other Detached workers were more adamant, saying, in effect, that this was a "lousy job, period." Most Detachers made it clear, without my suggestion, that they were looking for other jobs, except those who had acquired too much of the state's retirement benefits to make a change of jobs economically profitable in the long run.

Every worker among the Recoilers responded that the most enjoyable part of the job was getting all the work done for that day. Work was described as an on-going daily succession of struggles against time and uncontrolled interruptions, where getting it all done was the best one had yet accomplished. Recoilers were "holding out" waiting for the job to make more sense in terms of service and accomplishment. They were unable to point to a purpose or identifiable function that they performed. Among the Recoilers a modicum of purpose was provided by
supervisory reassurances that they were doing well. That is, they were getting their work done and were maintaining a non-judgmental attitude. Considerable loyalties between workers and supervisors existed in the units where supervisors maintained an active stance of reassuring and indicating to their workers that they were "doing well" in their jobs.

Among the Detached workers, on the other hand, no such patience and faith was evident. In some cases, Detached workers had previously been "holding out" as Recoilers, but eventually had given in to the doubts that there was little or no chance to realistically invest the work with purpose. These workers did one of two things. They either left the agency, or were actively seeking employment in other agencies or in the private sector, or they stayed, for reasons of not being able to find employment elsewhere or having built up too much retirement for other sources to match. The latter group tended to be withdrawn from unit meetings and socializing during work breaks. These workers had given up on the job and were merely putting in time, while performing their jobs within the tolerances imposed by civil service laws and minimal standards of performance.

Consequences of Recoiler and Detacher Dispositions

Two major elements are important for analysis. One is the disposition toward regulations and the instructions of superior officials to complete reviews at their assigned times. The other is the disposition toward clients. We have mentioned the latter above and will dwell on it in some more detail in the context of workers' dispositions to act in general.
Recoilers tend to accept the manual and the administration's and supervisors' instructions to complete all the reviews with far more seriousness than others. Underlying this tendency is the inability of the Recoilers to find an independent perspective on the job and to find independent criteria to determine which are the most important or pressing of the many functions requested by their superiors. The absence of criteria distinguishes the group. The uncertainty of the Recoiler as to which duties have the highest priority causes her significant anxiety, since she is unable to perform all of them. She tends to regard all exhortations with equal seriousness and attempts to complete all "required" operations equally faithfully.

By contrast, the Detachers view such instructions with skepticism and tend particularly to view eligibility reviews with far less seriousness. Detached workers tend to view the job as a whole as a burden, having rejected the idea that the job has redeeming features. The personal incentive to comply with directives taken as a whole which she feels to be overly burdensome, even outlandish, is very low. The attitude of the Detached worker is generally that she will faithfully attend to the directives to perform reviews and other demands apart from immediate case demands only if she has the time. One Detached worker summarized that attitude:

You know, with all the other things we have to do, like interview clients when they come in with problems, and get all the paperwork done for the case, some of the reviews are just too much. It's crazy... to set up interviews to do reviews of clients that you know aren't going to have any changes (in income, resources or household composition). If they want me to do all this, that's too bad. I'm not going to knock myself out and stay late to do all the things they want.
So far as workers' efforts for clients are concerned, a large difference between these two subcategories of "Withdrawers" exists as well. For Recoilers all cases, or nearly all cases, are equal. In addition, the Recoiler tends to engender resistance while attempting to engage in conversations with clients. A Recoiler is clumsier than other workers when it comes to interviewing and particularly when she attempts to find out things about her recipients unrelated to the official tasks at hand. While the understanding of the recipients' circumstances might give to the worker a sense of which are the most pressing risks to the recipients, the Recoiler is less self-assured in the actual interviewing of recipients. Taking all official instructions seriously, confused about the nature and meaning of her job, she also tends to be unable to distinguish the inappropriate and inopportune moments for listening and inquiring of the clients from the appropriate and opportune ones. While vaguely desirous of helping people and having found no comfortable accommodation to the pressures of the job, the Recoiler seems not to know very much about people whom she had originally hoped to "work with." The inability to determine social cues in encounters with recipients frustrates the Recoiler's attempt to transcend her earlier "helping" aspirations. It is the capacity to know when to inquire and when to listen which represents an evolutionary bridge from the confused Recoiler type to the more self-assured and patient Situationalist. The absence of criteria for determining priorities among instructions makes the Recoiler unable to decide what are the most important things to do and blinds her from sensitivity to the more precarious and potentially costly case actions for recipients. The ability to
learn, from the recipients, how these actions affect them, may permit a Recoiler gradually to infuse the work with a sense of priority.

On the other hand, the Recoiler may simply give up her attempt to infuse meaning and a sense of accomplishment into the job. It is this person who then becomes a member of the Detached group. However, the Recoiler who stays with the agency and continues the search even as she is confused by the elusiveness of worthy accomplishments and frustrated by the pressure of the job, will in all likelihood become a Situationalist.

The Detached worker finds recipients to be altogether burdensome and sees them as barriers to her fulfilling her strategy of avoiding commitments, of avoiding situations which will frustrate her, and merely expediting her case processing. Recipients are, however, rarely without some special quality and problem which frustrates the Detacher's attempted self-insulation from such "hassles." Such "hassles" necessitate the worker's taking of time to look up a problematic part of the manual, to require closer examination of a recipient's problem, which means talking to her in more depth about the changes the client is reporting. To the commitment-avoiding Detacher, such a project of detachment is itself laborious and is frequently frustrated. Such workers tend to be abrupt and terse in interviews with their clients and will generally encourage the clients not to talk about affairs deemed to be tangential:

"Sometimes they come in here and just want to talk and I just don't have time for that stuff. They come in and just complain about this and that, and sometimes ramble on and on . . ."

In many respects, particularly in the relations with clients, the Detached workers are similar to the Helpers. Frustrated by the inability
to help in the manner which would, in their imaginations, alleviate the
dependence of the clients, Helpers turn away from the recipients,
operating as mechanically as the Detachers. The Helper blames the
administration for not sanctioning forcefulness toward clients, and
translates her personal frustration into regular criticism of the
administration. The Detachers feel that such zeal is misplaced and
would be better spent in trying to find another job or in enjoying pur-
suits outside the job. The inattentiveness of the Detacher toward the
clients disposes her to ignore the hazards of some case actions and to
generally refuse recipients serious consideration or attention. The
recipient is simply another burden in a burdensome job.

One Detacher explained to me at the very beginning of the
interview:

I'm not quite sure what you're interested in. But
I'll tell you what I know. I'm trying to find another
job . . . this is really a bad job. Everybody here is
looking for another job.

It is no surprise that Detachers would place considerable psychic dis-
tance between themselves and aspects of the job toward which their
attentions might otherwise be compelled.

Figure 2 illustrates the dynamics of the Recoilers' and Detachers'
dispositions and the reinforcing response which each elicits from
recipients.

There are two different self-reinforcing dispositions toward work,
which influence the manner in which recipients are understood and the
manner in which they are treated. The treatment of the clients, owing
to the Detachers' attempt to avoid encounters with recipients leads to
further "hassles" and frustration. For the Detacher, the cycle is
Figure 2. Self-Reinforcing Cycles of Frustration Among Workers with Detacher and Recoiler Dispositions
broken when she resigns from the agency. For the Recoiler, the frustrat-
ing self-reinforcing cycle is broken only when the worker, partially through her own reflection and the occasional informative and cordial interview, which sheds light upon the recipients as social actors, permits her to distinguish among recipients and among the gravity of case actions. It is finally complete through her decision to lessen the work burden for herself by establishing priorities among the operations and reviews she is assigned by the administration. This enables her to treat some clients in a less rushed and more satisfying manner. Recoilers' self-liberation from frustration presage an emergent independence of mind and the formation of independent criteria of priorities in the job. As this emergent priority matures, and is employed with confidence, the Recoiler becomes a Situationalist.

Situationalists

In marked contrast to the Helper and Withdrawer styles is the Situationalist style. This style is characterized by commitments and understanding of the work and the recipients which evokes a much less conflict-ridden and tumultuous work experience. The Situationalists' sense of commitment is a contingent one. Other types are committed to changing recipients ( Helpers), to the search for such a commitment (Recoilers), or to the rejection of commitment altogether (Detachers). The Situationalists adhere to no such generalized project. They do not see themselves as accomplishing one object. The Situationalists' approach to work is the "taking of pleasures where they can be found." It is not, however, the pleasure of fulfillment of purpose or of fulfilling expectations which compels the Situationalist. She had formed
few expectations prior to her employment. She uses opportunities for rendering assistance or giving information where the opportunities present themselves. They are able to perform the case actions for their clients in a detached and proficient manner and they can also, if the occasion arises, get to know their clients more intimately.

The Situationalist entertains few illusions about the purpose of the job; she does not try to invest the work with purposes which are not possible to execute faithfully. She conducts herself in a manner which permits her to have satisfactory experiences without binding herself to images and purposes which make unreasonable and impossible demands upon her energies and emotions.

Rather than hold or search for an image of the work or a set of purposes which stress the need to help people, to make people better, such as the Helpers and the Recoilers subscribe, the Situationalists remain open to the possibility that they may help someone, but they do not presume to help any particular client. Those interviewed held the view that occasionally one could help a client but the opportunity did not regularly present itself. One generally has other functions to attend and these were seen to be not altogether burdensome or unpleasant as were the case for the others.

All the Situationalists interviewed gave ample indications that they consistently found some pleasure in the performance of their jobs. Though it was not the satisfaction of the dramatic sort envisioned or hoped by Helpers and Recoilers, these were experiences as sublime pleasures nonetheless. One worker stated that an interesting thing she had learned how to do was to "listen" to people. All the Situationists mentioned, without prodding or guidance from the interviewer,
that they learned things from their clients. These were not astounding lessons, but lessons about the ways in which they lived and the types of social relations and customs of which compelled them socially and whose satisfaction they sought. One of the several types of these lessons learned from clients was finding out how people in other ethnic groups lived as contrasted with their own. Two of them noted that they had learned much about Samoan culture, cultures in which each had held increasing curiosity.

Although the interest in the cultures and social relations of their recipients is not the distinguishing aspect of the Situationalists as against the other styles, the patience and respect extended to recipients clearly was. No other group mentioned their recipients in generous terms. The pleasures and the satisfactions obtained from the job by the Situationalists were pleasures owed to their patience and lack of anxiety about the results of their interview.

None of the Situationalists was particularly expressive about the faults of the manual because these workers spent their energies in relation to other facets of the job. While the Helpers expressed their disdain for the administration in terms of how the administration didn't permit them to operate in a manner which "motivated" their clients, and the Withdrawers frequently mentioned the confusing and arbitrary nature of the manual, Situationalists regarded their jobs more in terms of what can be done. Like the others, the Situationalists had not found the proverbial silk purse in the sow's ear. They had found a few strands of silk, nonetheless.

The tendency of Situationalists is to wait for opportunities in which they could help persons, to make a difference, rather than attempt
to compulsively activate that commitment. Opportunities for helping arise in several ways. One such opportunity is a case action which requires considerable timing. Perhaps the best example of such a case action is the "change of address" case action mentioned above. The case action may be complicated by many factors, owing to the number of actors whose cooperation is required for the deft completion of a successful change of address which results in a successful move. Situationalists look at these as an opportunity to make sure that their clients are not left without a place to live. They will have "helped" the recipients if the action is completed and it results in a successful move. The worker's sensitivity to the potential costs of the failure to orchestrate this case action properly makes it an "opportunity" to help the recipient. The worker is protecting the recipient from the otherwise costly probability of failure to induce the cooperation of all parties involved.

Situationalists take pleasures, even if limited ones, from the execution of case actions which most other workers find to be particularly troublesome and annoying. In addition, the patient disposition of the Situationalist permits other pleasures as well. Among these are the ability to establish a greater number of cordial relationships with her recipients. While the attempts of Recoilers and Helpers to find out about their clients are made manifest to the recipients as either "inquisitions" or the preludes to special favor, the inquisitiveness of the Situationalists is expressed in a more passive way.

The Situationalist does not "come on," as do the more clumsy Recoilers. She takes cues from the recipients who will themselves either indicate that they want to talk and discuss either a problem or ask a question strictly unrelated to the official duties and authority
Situationalists asserted that they had become good listeners. The worker does not so much engage in a "strategy of questioning" but a "posture of listening." The overall demeanor of patience and the practice of not forcing her curiosities upon the recipients by questioning them unless the recipient initiates the conversation exemplifies the Situationalist style.

Because of the patient and unforceful demeanor of the Situationalists, one might wrongly characterize them as "uninterested" in the work. However, it is the lack of forcefulness and the absence of a definite purpose and commitment toward the job which permits them to know recipients and to articulate much more knowledge about the recipients than their counterparts. Of the five Situationalists interviewed, three of them had in fact entered the employ of the DSSH almost by accident. They mentioned that they had simply been in need of jobs themselves and had heard about openings in the Division of Public Welfare. One other had quit a higher-salaried commercial job before entering the agency because of the lack of its "social value."

**Sociological Perspective**

It is primarily because the Situationalist has an equivocal image of the job and contingent approach to agency instructions that she is able to avoid the agonizing pitfalls of her counterparts. She is able to develop a capacity to understand the recipients in terms which are not merely extensions of her own commitments (Helpers), confusion (Re-coilers), or disdain (Detachers). The Situationalist retains a perspective about recipients which is not attached so much to her own commitments
as it is attached to her own lack of a single commitment and to the patient style of waiting for clients themselves to reveal knowledge about themselves.

While the Situationalist is patient, insofar as she awaits the recipient's own self-disclosure, her intellectual style is far from passive. It was argued above that the intellectual orientation of the Helper is passive by her acceptance of what little she sees of the client in the office as the appropriate universe of fact from which to infer about the recipients. By contrast, the Situationalist attempts to "figure out" her recipients as actors in social networks bound by cultural conventions and economic circumstances.

Situationalists believe themselves to be knowledgeable about clients. More interesting, they tend not to generalize about recipients. They speak of different categories of recipients, categories defined by the specific occupation, skills, ethnicity, causes for being on public assistance, type of living situation, and many others. To the Situationalist, the recipient is understood as a social being, whose fate is intimately bound up in social relations and opportunities. While the Helper orientation is individualistic due to its surrender to the horizons of the office and moralistic in its commitment to the project of "reforming" the recipient, the Situationalist's understanding is sociological. To a Situationalist, to understand the client is to have understood the client's social relations and the conventions and opportunities presented by such relations.

Implications of Situationalist Disposition

Situationalists' dispositions are characterized by work activities which elicit far different responses from their clients. The
Situationalists' faithfulness to regulations is tempered by contingencies. But while the Helpers' faithfulness to these instructions is contingent as well, the Situationalists' are contingent upon the extent to which these interfere with attention to the most risky and important operations for the clients.

The overall projects of the Situationalist is more contingent and equivocal than any of the others. While the Recoiler is confused, and the Detacher is withdrawn, the Situationalist incorporates priorities within her working practices and disposition. While she is not entirely faithful to administrative instructions, she does not particularly dislike them as much as finds them unimportant in some instances. These instances occur when there are "more important" things to be done, such as receive clients who are having problems moving, and having problems with other institutions. Her patient style of listening and giving cues to the clients that she is willing to listen if they want to talk, permits her to acquire a sensitivity to the effects that she and the agency can have on clients.

Other workers do not particularly shun such activities as much as they are indisposed to know about them. While the Helper is more prone to "blame" or moralize to the client about what she "should have done," or must do in the future to avoid such straits and the Recoiler is not prone to spend the time to express her sympathy or to listen, the Situationalist will generally do as much as she can to extract the client from whatever institutional or other problems she can, through persuading the "complicating" landlord, for example.

The Situationalist's feeling about and use of the regulations and the other instructions passed from the administration are rarely publicly
A. Overall Strategy

- Compliance with administrative instructions contingent on priorities

- Listening to Clients: Seeking Opportunities to Assist

B. Specific Actions

- Work Paced to Accommodate Priority Case Actions

- Sensitivity to Risk Potentials of Case Actions; Advocacy

C. Response to Worker Actions

- Non-Compliance with Administrative Instructions is Undetected; No Resistance

- Recipients Cooperative

Figure 3. Self-Reinforcing Cycle of Situationalist Disposition
displayed. The Situationalist does not complain or engage in memoranda skirmishes with the Program Development Office. While she notes that the manual is a problem, it is not perceived to be a problem which wounds her pride (the Helper), confuses her (Recoiler), or irritates her (Detacher).

Situationalists' conduct toward recipients reinforces the pattern of responsiveness. The response of the clients to the Situationalist's patient and contingent response to the workplace makes it easier to conduct interviews with clients. The avoidance of some of the directives of the administration is not vociferous, as this type of worker generally acknowledges that there is no way to obey them all and there is no way to get the administration to remove such instructions. The attitude of the Situationalist toward such instructions could be phrased as, "Yes, they do ask too much but they are never going to ask any less, so why bother complaining?"

**Turnover of Income Maintenance Workers**

The stresses and frustrations of the workers performing in such difficult conditions with circumscribed powers results in an extremely high rate of turnover. In June, 1980, the Oahu Branch had 33 vacancies among its total of 290 Income Maintenance workers (including the Food Stamps and Medicaid only units). In addition, the units have what most supervisors and Branch administrators consider to be a high rate of turnover among supporting clerical employees in income maintenance units. Fourteen of these positions were vacant in July 1980. The mere counting of position vacancies, however, does not convey the magnitude of the severity of the turnover rate and their consequences for the remaining workers.
All categories of workers (Helpers, Recoilers, Detachers, and Situationalists), contribute to the vacancy statistics. While the Helpers are understandably the most frustrated, Recoilers and Situationalists also frequently leave the employ of the Public Welfare Division and the Department. Detachers contribute as well, as they are very determinedly on the lookout for alternative employment. Situationalists, while not as chronically unhappy and frustrated as others, will seek and find alternative employment as well. While all the latter group found a degree of satisfaction which was clearly lacking among the other categories, they nonetheless had few job attachments strong enough to preclude resigning to take another job. By the time these women have learned to use the manual, how to organize their time, how to interview people, and how to master the administrative requirements imposed upon them by the agency, they will have acquired considerable administrative and managerial skills. Detachers were particularly vocal about the fact that their mastery of this job made them "ready for anything."

The unit supervisors of each of the three units where interviews were conducted were asked to make a list of personnel actions from November 1978 to July 1980. During this 21-month span of time, the units' position counts (not the official positions, according to the Division's positional organization chart, but the maximum number of positions filled at any time) totalled 27. Each unit ranged from 8-10 maximum positions (8, 9, and 10). During this time, 26 workers left the employ of their units. Various reasons compelled them to leave:
Twenty permanent transfers out of the units account for a 70 percent turnover for the entire 21-month period. It represents a monthly turnover average of 3.5 percent and a yearly permanent turnover rate of 42 percent. That is, an average of 42 percent of the members present in these units at the beginning of a 12-month period were permanently absent from the unit at the end of that period.

While not permanent absences, those taking maternity or sick leave affect their units, as their caseloads will be divided among the remaining mature workers. Since these are temporary absences of workers, generally 4-8 months, we will not define them as "turnover" but as "leavings" from units. If we combine the 20 permanent "turnover" with temporary "leavers," a total of 25 "leavers" results for the 21-month period; this is 92.5 percent of the total. The total yearly average "leavers" was 53 percent of the total number of positions (14 of 27) and an average of 4.4 percent of the total positions (1.2 of 27) vacated in a single average month.
"Down the Tubes"

Workers generally tend not to leave in a regular order, scattered evenly throughout the year. Supervisors speak of a phenomenon known as "the unit going down the tubes." This is characterized by three or more workers leaving a single unit within a three to four month period.

Going down the tubes is provoked by the increased caseload of the remaining workers and the snowballing of resignations due to their incapability to "keep up" under the pressure of managing more cases. For example, in each of these units, the total caseload was around 2,000, with an average of nine workers. This leaves an average caseload of 222 cases. When one worker resigns or transfers, the average individual caseload increases 12.5 percent to 250 cases. If another worker leaves the load increases by another 14.4 percent to 286, or a 29 percent jump from the original. Occasionally such a load will represent the final indignity and burden to a remaining worker, even a Situationalist, who will leave the remaining six workers with an average caseload of 333, or 50 percent more than the average prior to the exodus.

Replacements for income maintenance workers are slow to arrive and it is rare that the department in concert with the State's Department of Personnel Services will fill a vacated position within two months. Even so, the replacement of the positions with novice workers will not immediately result in lightening the worker's caseloads, as the new worker will have to be trained by her supervisor. In the past, initiates were occasionally given a "quickie" orientation followed by a baptism by fire, assuming a full caseload within one to two months. This was a practice each of the supervisors abhorred since it was, in their eyes, not only cruel to the new workers, but it also increased
errors and the neglect of recipients since these new workers were improperly trained. However, the pressures to quickly give the new worker a full caseload are considerable under such conditions.

The gravity and frequency of "going down the tubes" is partially reflected by the expectations of the unit supervisors, who expect to occasionally "go down the tubes" every year and a half or so. One supervisor remarked that she hadn't trained a new worker in six months and as a result had had enough time to manage her unit and conduct research into the composition of its caseload. She stated that, "... any week now, I expect to have some people leave, it's been so long since anyone did." Her unit had "gone down the tubes" ten months prior to my interview, losing first one worker, and two during the following month. It was not until four months later that the unit was staffed at its previous level. This unit of nine positions labored for four of these ten months with seven workers or less (five was the low point—one month).

Another unit of ten workers had ebbed to six workers one year prior to our interview. The supervisor stated that she had just finished "digging out" four months prior. The other unit of the three also had "gone down the tubes," so low in morale that this particular episode, prior to the present supervisor's tenure, was legend among other unit supervisors. This episode took place in a unit whose jurisdiction includes a more mobile population, and a greater number of alcoholic and drug abuse treatment houses than other units' areas. Hence, the workers in the unit with the greatest proportion of client-initiated encounters in the Honolulu corridor slowly resigned their positions, going from ten workers down to five.
CONCLUSION

The work of the income maintenance workers in this State agency is structured less by the regulations, policies, and instructions given by superior officials and policy-makers than it is by a consistent set of conceptual responses to the general situation of work. The work includes those imperative dependencies and paces required to fulfill the mandated instructions. Workers employ the available means, self-discipline and tolerance to dispatch their case processing actions and interviews.

In this chapter we have demonstrated that the outcomes of public policy and administration are formed and created by operatives' responses to these situations. As described earlier, the worker is placed under significant stress as she attempts to implement policy instructions in a context of time constraints, dependency on recipients, and the irregularities of recipient demands. The situation of work is structured in such a way as to disable the worker from controlling the pace of working and the required elements (documentation) for completing case actions. Adding to the structural incapacity to control important elements of case processing are the absence of clear standards and priorities to enable workers to order their priorities. Division administrators stress the performance of all instructed tasks with equal priority.

Under these conditions, the worker must arrive at her own gauge of priority. This priority is, however, attached to other features of the worker's own individual self-image, ambitions, missions, desires for accomplishment, discipline and patience. The priority among "required"
operations, the sensitivity of workers to the impacts of case actions upon their recipients, and the efforts undertaken to protect the recipient from potential adversities are all consequences of each worker's independently-formed understanding of the work situation. From the standpoints of both (1) the implementation of public policy as articulated by Congress, the Hawaii Legislature, the federal DHHS and the State Department of Social Services and Housing, and (2) the care and protection of recipients, it is the "disposition" of the workers which is critical. The generative element of the distinctions among the different dispositions are the accomplishments which workers either desire (Helpers and Recoilers), settle for (Equivocators) or flatly reject (Detachers).

Even as the more frustrated types of workers are more prone to resign, others are also prone to leave as contingencies exist in their units (as in the case of a unit's "going down the tubes"). A psychological analysis of workers' dispositions would perhaps suggest that most workers are ill-adjusted to their surroundings, and that their outlooks are ill-suited to the context of work. Helpers' missions are out of proportion to their authority and power. Recoilers have little facility to frame their actions within a coherent set of priorities or criteria. Detachers interpret the job with loathing, as a series of futile often burdensome episodes followed by equally burdensome paperwork. Equivocators are the only ones among these workers who have a strategy well-adjusted to the circumstances generally beyond control.

From the standpoint of the execution of policy and the performance of eligibility reviews, the Recoilers are the most faithful. Ironically, it is the Recoilers who are "lost" in the job and have the least sense
of priority and self-confidence. The Recoilers' priorities are determined by instructions, which taken as a whole possess no distinguishing guidelines for assigning priorities. Yet it is the Recoilers who become Detachers after the search for accomplishment fails to bear a respectable and practicable mission or purpose. Recoilers represent the largest number of workers at any moment, but they frequently disengage from their search and become Detachers.

Mature workers tend to become Recoilers. The absence of overall priorities and standards for suggesting one's overall priorities and accomplishments frustrates and later frequently angers these workers. The metamorphosis of the new workers first to Recoiler than to Detacher is thus complete and the worker tries to get out.

For policy execution, the result is ironic: The worker most faithful to policy and instructions often cannot bear to stay on the job. The disposition of the Recoiler cannot remain suspended in a void of priority. Faithfulness to instructions over time in this context where there is little control over time and no ability independently to expedite case actions cannot be reconciled with reality, unless the Recoiler eventually establishes her own priorities or rejects the possibility of such reconciliation and commitment. Other dispositions retain commitments—the Helper to reforming and prodding her recipients, the Detacher to leaving the agency, and the Situationalist to her contingent priorities. Each of these dispositions is characterized by either a complete or conditional rejection of faithfulness to administrative instructions.

The type of worker who is disposed to be more satisfied on the job, to remain in the unit longer, is less likely to "knock herself out" by
being faithful to such instructions. The Situationalist is thus prone to carry out eligibility reviews to the extent that these do not prevent her from performing what, to her, are the more important functions. Within limits, the energies of this type of worker are directed toward saving clients from potential hazards.

Further analysis of the policy-making and administrative units which write regulations and give instructions to workers reveals that this stressful work situation is generated by forces outside of the income maintenance units. Federal mandates and the various responses of several staffs with the State agency generated the disintegration and fragmentation of both attention, policy-making and day-to-day administration of the DSSH as an organization. The inability of the agency to attend to and regulate the operations of the unit employees is largely an artifact of its own inability to regulate itself.


3. In the early phases of my interviewing I was somewhat frustrated by the fact that I could not seem to provoke or encourage these respondents to talk about the clients and give their impressions about what their problems were (whether impressions of the precipitating factors for their seeking assistance, impressions of what the difficulties were that they faced, or the kinds of social and geographic circumstances they lived in). It later became clear after several more interviews that the project of "keeping oneself on edge" would require that such workers, both the Detached and the Recoiled workers, avoid making and forming such impressions lest they let the clients "get to them."


CHAPTER VII
TASK STRUCTURES AND ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES

In this chapter analysis will suggest a broader scope of interaction structures than surveyed in previous chapters. As in previous chapters, analysis is concerned with the question of the generative sources of the task structure of income maintenance workers, the factors which influence and sustain it. The interpretations below of the agency's interaction structure refer to several such factors. One has to do with the general emphasis of policy. This emphasis has endured in both private and public welfare: the emphasis on the remediation of individual problems, rather than on structural and/or preventative public policies. Another is the recent regulatory thrust in policies and the indirect federation of welfare policy indicated by the quality control program.

Program Evolution and the Change in Intergovernmental Relations

Before the 1970s the relationship between the federal and state agencies responsible for the administration of federal welfare policies was characterized by mutual accommodation. It was in what Derthick calls a "professional fiefdom" that public assistance was administered. Members of the social work profession, committed to the concept of casework, shared administrative responsibilities with counterparts at other levels of the intergovernmental categorical grants systems for social services and income support. This federal "fiefdom" was unchallenged through most of the 1960s to the extent that the "social work establishment" monopolized official discussions of the remedies
for the poverty problems. In 1967 it was threatened and then dismantled in the early 1970s. Reorganization of the old Bureau of Family Services into the Social and Rehabilitation Service in 1967, was the first in a succession of reorganizations. Indeed, reorganization of the social services and public money assistance programs is one of the persistent features of the federal welfare system. Three major and several minor reorganizations occurred in the 1970s. Reorganizations have served to break up the control of the federal programs by the social work "fiefdom." While it possessed definite boundaries and was composed of members with similar professional commitments, the subgovernment politics which appeared thereafter possesses far more indefinite boundaries.

Concurrent with the breaking up of the "professional fiefdom" in social welfare policy and administration, Congress shifted emphasis in substantive policy. The details of program administration previously had been the product of informal bargaining and adjustments among the fiefdom's membership at the state and federal levels. The newer Congressional intrusions and policy designs have resulted in a regulatory emphasis. The increased "regulating-orientation" has been complemented by an attempt to nationalize the administration of the programs, through indirect means. As mentioned in Chapter I, the shift to an administrative process from a professionalized one within the welfare subgovernment is characterized by an increase in mandatory program elements (as opposed to allowing professional discretion). The mandatory nature of the shifts was indicated by the addition of the Work Incentive (WIN) Program, initiated in 1967 by a Congress frustrated by the intransigence of poverty. WIN was subsequently elaborated in successive stages after the Talmadge Amendments of 1971. In addition, the Child Support Enforcement
Act of 1975 resulted in another set of mandatory regulations which impose upon the operational levels of public assistance administration.

The 1969 mandate to separate the states' administration of income maintenance programs from the social services rendered by social workers served to remove the vestiges of professional discretion from income support programs. Throughout the period following the separation of services from income maintenance, particularly since 1973 when hopes for the passage of some form of the Family Assistance Plan were finally abandoned, HEW has attempted to assist states in simplifying and clarifying the policies and operations of the new-won professional income maintenance workers. This assistance has been largely in the form of technical assistance and guidance, since the federal agency has respected the sovereignty of states in most administrative matters.

Federal regulations have mandated eligibility reviews, have increased the number of mandatory case actions (a direct result of the WIN and the Child Support programs), and have resulted in greater specificity of manual regulations. Program elements have thus been frequently added to, revised, and supplanted, as in the case of the Food Stamp program after the passage of the Food Stamp Act of 1977. Such an increase in the operational requirements have made their impacts on the daily work of the income maintenance workers as well as the program officials at the divisional and department levels. The impact takes the form of having more tasks to perform (WIN registration, Child Support documentation, eligibility reviews, work expense budgets and others). In Hawaii the addition of these tasks has occurred without a change in the recommended caseload, which has been 200 since before the separation of services.
An increase in the numbers and specificity of the regulations in public assistance and related policies is reflected in the physical growth of the public welfare manual itself. In the past three years, a yearly average of 50 transmittals of new or revised regulations per program element (AFDC, Medicaid, and Food Stamps) have arrived at the Program Development office. To give a rough impression of the magnitude of the emphasis and burden created by the new Work Incentive and Child Support programs, the number of pages occupied by them in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is somewhat instructive. Of the 153 total pages in the Chapter II of the CFR which contains public assistance law, 26 percent is taken up by operational regulations regarding applications, eligibility and criteria for children without families, while another 21 percent of the total is accounted by the newer WIN and Child Support Programs. In addition, while not pressing directly upon the operation of the case worker, Chapter III is totally devoted to the administration of the Child Support Program including investigation, detection and enforcement which the case workers do not undertake. These measures underestimate the extent of "regulatory" additions, however, since many regulations, such as those in Section 233, "Coverage and Conditions of Eligibility in Financial Assistance Programs," including requirements such as the mandatory six month eligibility review (or "eligibility redetermination") had not existed prior to the new administrative emphasis in the programs.

The centerpiece of the new emphasis is the federally mandated Quality Control Program. 5 A requirement for federal financial assistance, the Quality Control (QC) Program defines the method, sampling technique and criteria for state quality control investigators to follow. The
QC Program distributes a manual of instructions, approximately 3 inches thick, to the investigator. The program is administered by a non-line agency in HHS, the Office of Quality Assurance within the Social Security Administration. Since the federal agency has no direct means of inspecting the performance of state agencies, the QC Program is the only vehicle for the monitoring and surveillance of state operations. Inspections focus on the case decisions of welfare workers, whose files are sampled and scrutinized, then followed by a very intensive field investigation of each case which includes a home interview of the recipients, and an intensive investigation of recipients' bank accounts and resources.

Fiscal sanctions have long been threatened against states with error rates beyond the officially allowable threshold. Federal law permits less than 3 percent ineligibility errors and 5 percent overpayment errors. For several years, Hawaii has been hovering in the range of 14-20 percent overpayment errors. Its chief public welfare administrators are understandably concerned to reduce these.

The tone and emphasis of federal income maintenance policies has created a markedly different relationship between the federal and the state agencies. New requirements, of a mandatory nature have been imposed as a condition of the grants. The pace and frequency of the changes in federal regulations transmitted to the state, and the mandatory non-negotiable qualities of many of them, have indirectly created a new organizational dynamic within the state agency as a result.

Task Structures and Problem Solving: An Analysis of Wider Organizational Processes

Two staffs, a Departmental-level Program Evaluation staff and a Division-level Program Development staff, are assigned direct
responsibilities for implementing federal AFDC regulations. The Program Evaluation staff is assigned monitoring, investigative, and analytical roles by federal laws. The Program Evaluation function is also a federal instrument designed to compel states to comply with federal program regulations. The findings and analysis conducted by this staff set the premise for wider departmental discussions on the remediation of the problems of high case decision errors at the unit levels. The Program Development staff, on the other hand, writes the federal regulations into the state's public welfare manual and is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the State's AFDC program as a whole.

The duties of these two staffs induce each of them to monopolize their respective implementation and analytic functions, in the absence of line officers' capacities to undertake studies. For instance, the Oahu Branch, which possesses most (70-80%) of the state's AFDC cases, has no staff of its own. The distance of staffs from the administration does not discourage staff from involvement in many direct operational issues. Indeed, the roles of the line officials have become somewhat abbreviated insofar as both the assessment of and response to operational problems are concerned. A progressive process, initiated by the gradual accumulation of federal regulations since the early 1970s has resulted in the freezing of organizational relations (in increments) into an organizational dynamic characterized by mutual avoidance. The avoidant pattern has resulted in the fragmentation of staff and line functions which are logically and practically interrelated. Fundamental to this avoidance pattern are the concepts of jurisdiction and task. Each staff has a specified jurisdictional area within which it is compelled to perform certain tasks. However, in the same ways in which the burdens
of multiple demands at the unit levels create a task situation in which attention to each demand is limited, so too does the program staff go about meeting its obligations to the legislature, courts, federal government and the operators. Attention to each, in the context of limited time and resources, is likely to suffer.

In the event of such limits, such staffs are likely to resist the undertaking of further burdens, particularly if not mandated by law. We find a very strong sense of defensiveness among staff and line officials who are unable to undertake new functions and reform their operations. The defensive strategies bear with them an interaction structure characterized by caution. Caution is the counterpart of self-protection and defensiveness. If new obligations are seen as burdens, then one attempts to limit his requests, as much as he avoids obligating himself to the requests of others.

The process of avoidance to which we refer has occurred, then, over recent years and has all indications of a self-generating cycle. Each succeeding response to a problem has resulted in counter-responses which reinforced the original response pattern. Each demand meets with a greater resistance. Each request falls on 'deaf' ears. The pattern matures into a full-fledged pattern of avoidance among task units and into rigidity within each such unit. As a result the organization exhibits centrifugal tendencies (seemingly) on the eve of a substantial federal fiscal sanction for high case errors. The avoidance of responsibility and the placing of blame for current circumstances marks the collective attempt to resolve the problems.

We find that the organization is, as a whole, unable to control the manner in which it both responds to particular changes in federal
regulations, and the manner within which it responds to federal imperatives to correct the agency's high case decision error rates in case decisions. The organization is best understood and analyzed as a series of interacting "task units," each with its own unique amalgam of mandates, concerns, and imperatives. Each is unprepared to cooperate with other such task units and is unable to respond to mandates and imperatives imposed upon the agency as a whole.

**Program Development Office: the Structure of Tasks and Conduct**

As mentioned above, the type and increased frequency of new federal regulations have placed a greater burden upon the Program Development Office. In addition to the Program Development Officer, Program Development encompasses six staff members. These include two Program Specialists for the Food Stamps Program and one field representative who consults with the Unit level operatives in the Food Stamps program. The Money Payments programs possess another two Program Specialists and a field representative.  

In recent years an overburdening of the Program Development Staff has occurred. The ostensible function of the Program Development Office is to maintain the integrity of the income maintenance programs of the Division. While the programs of the 1960s demanded that such integrity be protected, current programs demand stricter regulation and accounting for decisions made at the unit levels. Programs of the previous "professional fiefdom" era were marked not only by lax inspection and fewer regulations, but, within the context of regulations, much wider delegations of authority to professional social workers in whose hands the making of case decisions then rested. The new burden of the Program
Development Office is to protect the integrity of the programs, but programs whose tolerance for discretionary decision-making is now very low. With the new regulatory emphasis has come an even greater need to monitor the internal consistency of program elements. As we have shown in previous sections, however, the programs have to a large extent "gotten out of hand"; the integrity of the programs has been violated as seen by the existence of considerable contradiction and ambiguity within the public welfare manual. The question is, why has the integrity of the program, indicated by the widely acknowledged existence of contradiction and ambiguity within the manual, been diminished? Why would the burden of writing regulations be great enough to confound the usability of the manual by case workers? The answer lay not in accounts of the personal qualities of the staffs or in their unpreparedness for the accumulation of new functions, but in the wider context of the work of the Office and in the wider context of functions, besides the writing of regulations and the protection of the program's internal consistency, which have also been generated by changes in the emphasis of federal regulations.

Viewed from the analytic standpoint of task structure (the imperatives of the situation experienced by a group of persons working in a shared work context) the answer to the question as to why the manual exists in such a state is somewhat clearer. Interviews with members of the Program Development staff, including its head, indicate that the deficiencies of the manual are known by them only too well. However, in the context of other obligations imposed on the staff by these same programs, there is a limited attentiveness to the operational context
The Program Development (PD) staff must attend to other commitments in addition to the programs themselves. First, the Program staff are necessarily very attentive to the federal offices (for AFDC this is the Office of Family Assistance, from which action transmittals are sent). Upon the receipt of new action transmittals related to the AFDC program, the staff frequently communicates with the Field Office in Honolulu to determine the purpose and desired response prior to the usual 90-day implementation deadline. In the past three years this communication has intensified between the field representative on the one hand and the Division's Program Development Office and the Money Payments Field Representative on the other. Since the Department has not been able in recent years to reduce the overall error rate for case decisions, it has been consulting with the local field representative frequently with regard both to implementation of new regulations and in the attempted corrective administrative changes.

Secondly, within the panoply of actors related to the role of this staff are its relations with the Hawaii legislature. The program development officer and staff, being among the most knowledgeable in the state of Hawaii on the state's income maintenance programs, are called to testify by the Department in Legislative hearings which consider changes in the programs and administration of the State's administration of AFDC as well as state funded General Assistance program. The attempt to educate the legislative committees in the nuances of welfare law and the overall administration of programs frequently consumes two or more of the staff during the legislative sessions, particularly during the
biennial budget sessions. The task of educating the legislators is no easy matter, since the level of attention given to the Income Maintenance area by the legislators is secondary to other areas of legislation more amenable to providing resources for building political careers. In addition, the fact that welfare laws frequently do change burdens the education process more than would otherwise be the case.

A third preoccupation of the Program Development office has been generated by the body of lawsuits resulting in constitutional protections and rights for welfare recipients. The provision of legal assistance for the poor by the Legal Services Administration and its successors to enable the poor to participate in the political and legal process has meant that the Program Development Officer is frequently called upon to testify on behalf of the state in class-action and individual suits brought against the Department. While not a direct outcome of the new federal regulatory emphasis, the function is a direct outcome of the capacity for redress provided by poverty lawyers and the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii and is mandated within federal welfare law itself. 10

Each of these three collateral functions and roles possessed by the Program Development Staff do not, in themselves, obviate attention to the operational integrity of the public welfare manual. However, attention to the operational difficulties of workers and the integrity of the manual must be seen in the context of the multitude of required functions. In the same sense that the attentiveness and disposition of the income maintenance workers toward clients is conditioned by their experiences of the situational imperatives of their work, so too are the attentions given to the implications of welfare regulations written by the program staff conditioned by the whole texture of their experience.
and the panoply of operational demands placed upon them by virtue of their jurisdiction.

The situational imperatives of the staff, seen as a whole, are quite varied. The three sets of activities (federal administration, legislative, and legal) are highly diverse. The management of these obligations requires the familiarity with different frames of reference and three different forms of understanding of the welfare programs. Each institution employs a different dialect of language and each set of actors has a different set of concerns owing to the structure and obligations of each institution.

Staff members work individually on successions of problem areas of administration and on particular deficiencies within the program manual. Staffers frequently launch into special projects of investigation. Recently, a staffer was investigating the projected implementation problems and operational consequences of the use of retrospective budgeting of recipients who possess earned income. This investigation was carried out in order to survey the consequences of an anticipated federal mandate to employ that budgeting technique. It turned out that several problems were encountered in the uses of retrospective budgeting. It was abandoned as a prospective mandate by OFA.

Staffing for the Program Development Office has not appreciably expanded. According to Division officials, the Department has requested new staff positions for both the Division and for Oahu Branch in particular. However, the state has been unwilling to increase the number of staff positions. Position requests must pass the muster of the Department of Budget and Finance which makes an authoritative recommendation to the legislature. DBF has been unpersuaded by such requests.
The dynamics of staff assignments and conduct may be seen as "reactive." The PD officials react constantly to circumstances and deadlines which are largely beyond their control. The ability to initiate and complete investigations into the use and nature of the manual is tempered by the existence of other legally obligated, less negotiable schedules and mandates. The only negotiable elements of work which fall within the scope of Program Development responsibilities are concerned with the time and effort given to analyzing and writing new regulations. While its other obligations are non-negotiable, the attention to operations and the texture of the manual regulations are the only element which can "give." Its energies are obligated to institutions with greater authority than the operators of the Unit levels.

These obligations notwithstanding, the lucidity and operational compatibility of the instructions given to program operatives is a precondition for the integrity of a program. Without a coherent policy statement, which specifies instructions in the events most frequently encountered, a program cannot remain a program for long. That is, without guidelines, the various persons engaged in the mundane tasks of activating it into practice will give it their own interpretations. The various perspectives brought to it, as opposed to an internal rationale, form the basis of operatives' practices.

Clarification Requests and Responses

Laboring under a heavy amount of contradiction and ambiguity and faced with the burden of judgment, welfare workers occasionally request clarifications from the Program Development Office on the interpretation of manual regulations. In recent years, as part of a project to reduce
case decision errors, the Oahu branch administration has attempted to encourage case workers to express their confusion at the confounding sections of the manual and, in effect, to signal the Program Development Office as to the offending sections of the manual.

Income Maintenance workers occasionally address a "Request for Clarification" (RFC) to the program officials pointing out an unclear manual or section. The Program Development Office is not known for its prompt responses to RFC's and several workers stated that they had waited two and three months for responses. Some replies were said to have taken even longer. The Program Development Office sends its replies by way of Internal Communications Forms (ICF). The Office had previously sent copies to all the Income Maintenance Units, if it believed that the problem was serious enough to require a new interpretation. Welfare workers in all units received such ICF memoranda.

This process continued until the Department lost a federal court case, Koolauloa Welfare Rights Group v. Chang, in 1976 in which the Department was found to be in violation of the state's Administrative Procedures Act. The Act requires that all administrative regulations be approved through a formal process of announcement, and hearing, thus allowing opportunities for concerned parties to participate. The use of ICF's to clarify regulations was in effect, to use an illegal means of creating regulations. 11

The response of the Program Development Office is particularly striking and consistent with the interpretation that the Office has, in effect, gone to the limit of its capacity to take on more work and has allowed the program elements to remain the last priority of activities among other task within jurisdiction. Rather than initiate the public
hearing process to help clear up the ambiguity of the programs, the Office sends ICF replies only to the Income Maintenance Unit whose worker requests the clarification.

The practice of clarifying manual sections for the inquiring unit only has an important consequence. While the IFC response does not represent a "regulation," in the legal definition, it represents the clarification of an ambiguous regulation or set of regulations but which is only delivered to one unit. Apparently, it is the limited distribution of the ICF memo which allows it to qualify as something other than a regulation under the law. It is debilitating, however, to the program since the actions of the various units come to be guided, in effect, by different understandings of the policies. Only if every unit had a worker who submitted an RFC could it be said that practices were consistent among units. The "program," as practiced, thus varies from unit to unit.

These observations should be made along with a structural analytic perspective. The inattentiveness of the Program Development Office and its lack of faithfulness to its function as protector of the programs' integrities are structural. The attentiveness and the energy exerted on behalf of the manual sections are limited by other structural obligations. The pattern of inattentiveness and reaction is exhibited by another example, the development of the application form, an important element which structures the work of the income maintenance workers.

The Application Form

The application form used by the Department is a pink, eight page document used by both the applicant and the worker. It is the focal point
of the recipient-worker encounter for the purposes of application and the periodic "eligibility review." Periodic additions have been and continue to be made to the form, owing to changes in the federal regulations regarding conditions for eligibility for the federal programs.

While seemingly not a major element of the policies and procedures within the AFDC program, the application form asks for the information upon which eligibility decisions are made. However, the successive changes in regulations regarding both eligibility conditions and the extent of information required for determination had not caused the Division to review the application itself for redundancies and operational inconvenience created by such "adding on" of both information "blanks" and questions.

In 1974, the application form was revised. The form was used for the applications and reviews of each of the three federal programs. At several successive times, additions were made, in accordance with the changes in federal requirements for information and in eligibility conditions.

Upon taking her job, in 1976, a staff member conducting an "effectiveness and efficiency review" then mandated by the Food Stamp program, encountered workers' complaints about the old (1974) form. It appeared that the form had evolved through successive additions to such a condition that it asked some questions twice. The form had evolved in an incremental, piecemeal process. Successive revisions were completed literally by pasting a new question onto a copy of the old form and having new forms printed on that basis. The workers might have ignored the redundancies of the forms were it not for the legal definition of the form as a binding legal statement by the recipient as to his or her
income, resources, and household composition. Thus workers were compel
ted to ask every question on the form in order to qualify the form as a legal declaration. Workers were told that diligence in asking all questions on the form was necessary for fraud prosecutions. Files containing copies of the older forms and the pasted-together versions of their successors show the process to be one of (literally) piecemeal, incremental change.

Successive revisions had not taken into account the burdens upon structure of the work of the eligibility workers and only the availability of a staff member investigating case files for one of the federal programs had provoked a review of the form, in response to the complaints of workers. Through 1977, analyses were made of the forms and whether redundancies could be removed. In 1978, revision was undertaken in earnest. An informal working group was comprised of a Staff Training officer, a Program Development staffer, several Unit Supervisors, and a representative from the Deputy Director's Office and a member of the Attorney General's staff. This group, ranging at any one time from 4 to 12, met to revise the application form. The project was finished in July 1979 and the form was printed in September of that year.

Program Evaluation Office

This office was established by the department in 1966 and its chief officer, the Program Evaluation Officer (PEO) answers to the Director of the Department. While the Program Development Office is devoted to the fulfillment of numerous specialized mandatory obligations, the task of the Program Evaluation Office is extremely singular. The attentions and mandates of the former are divided and equivocal, and the latter's are
precise and focused. By federal law, the Program Evaluation Office is charged to follow the guidelines of the Medicaid and the AFDC Quality Control manuals.12 "Program evaluation" in the Department of Social Services and Housing means, in effect, whatever the PEO does. The PEO is mandated to report the results of these quality control investigations to the federal regional office of the Department of Health and Human Services. Within the reports the sources of the errors discovered in investigations are analyzed. Finally, the reports suggest corrective actions for the incidence of errors. The analytic and remedial tasks have generally taken on great significance in the Department since the error rates have consistently been over the acceptable levels set by Congress.

The implementation of each Quality Control (QC) study is highly circumscribed by both the methods and the definitions of error contained in the federal quality control manuals. Two 3-inch manuals, one each for the AFDC and Medicaid programs, provide the basis for QC investigations. The twice-yearly AFDC QC studies report errors by "program category" and "source" of error contained in eight tables appended to each QC report.

The categories in these tables provide the basis for the analysis contained in analytic sections of the reports. The Quality Control studies are used for more than external reporting on the progress of the state's compliance with the federal laws, however; they also form the basis for the agency's overall attempt to discover the factors contributing to the high error rates and to implement remedial actions. The singularity of the mission of the program evaluation office and the
The federal quality control guidelines have a great influence upon the definition of the problems of case errors. The reports constitute an agenda-setting instrument which form the basis of discussion simply through the manner whereby the quality control manual defines and locates errors. It locates errors exclusively at the level of decisions made by the "eligibility worker" (the federal term for income maintenance worker). The tables on which errors are recorded list the categories of errors according to the program elements and to the type of error committed. The former program categories are, those such as "Basic Program Requirements" and are subdivided further into categories such as "WIN Program-Talmadge Amendment," "Age" (of children), and "Child Support Program." Another table lists errors by "type of error." These are divided into "Agency Errors" and "Client Errors." The agency errors are broken into three types: "Policy Misapplied," "Failure to Take Indicated Action," and "Arithmetic Computation." Client-Errors are divided into "Information Not Reported" and "Information Incorrect or Incomplete."

State Correction Action Panel

What is particularly interesting about these error categories and reporting requirements, is how, in the absence of other categories and other analyses, they have become the analytic bedrock upon which authoritative discussions as to the sources of errors and the remedies of errors are based. The vehicle for the discussion is a body called
the State Corrective Action Panel (SCAP). This group is charged with analyzing the error problem and recommending corrective actions. It is made up of the heads of all the staffs in the Department (Personnel, Research and Statistics, Program Development, Program Evaluation, Information Systems, Administrative Services) and includes AFDC and Income Maintenance specialists from the Program Development, and Personnel staff. In addition, the Public Welfare Administrator, the Deputy Departmental Director, the Oahu Branch Administrator and the Section Head for Section I of Oahu Branch participate in the meetings of the panel. The full membership meets following the issuance of each Quality Control report, to discuss the findings and the PEO's recommendations for corrective action, and to appraise previous corrective actions.

Members of the SCAP were interviewed for their impressions of the deliberations over the QC reports and over the corrective actions suggested both in these documents and by the other members of the panel. A theme which emerges from their accounts is the struggle between the definition of the problems. This involved the Program Evaluation Officer on the one hand and the line administrators on the other. Since the other members of the panel are staff members themselves and have limited familiarity with the actual operations at the unit level, a large group of "non-committed" specialists is frequently drawn into the discussion as well.

Of all the participants, only the line administrators, the program development officer and the program evaluation officer have a direct stake in the deliberations. The other participants are removed from the direct burden of administration and the burdens such remedial actions generate and have intense interest in the deliberations. They were
chosen because their expertise in personnel and other matters might be brought to bear if corrective actions were related to, for example, position reclassification or revision of the automatic data processing requirements of the programs.

Though not affected directly, these staffs have very definite impressions of the work of the income maintenance workers and of the problems of the error rates in general. For instance, in an interview with the Director of the Research and Statistics Office (whose primary function is to provide the agency and the legislature with statistical summaries and studies of the programs and of the overall administration of the department), such impressions were conveyed in bold detail. The Director of this staff was certain that the tasks of the workers could be nearly completely automated. He proposed to me that a computer program could be devised to remove the possibility of error from the case workers' performance, through programming of a series of steps for each worker indicated on a desk terminal. (The worker would ask a question flashed on the screen and record the applicant's or recipient's answer, whereupon the program would then indicate another question on the screen.) Such an innovation would, in his estimation, remove the entire burden of program complexity from the workers. It would not, in his analysis, even require workers to be familiar with the contents of the public welfare manual. The tasks of the workers could be made into a totally clerical operation, requiring only typing skills.

Such a view was shared by the head of Staff Development who mentioned several times during interviews that the job of the workers was essentially that of "checking off" the recipients' responses to questions asked by the case workers. These two sets of impressions conveyed to me
are striking in their adherence to the "compliance" perspective held by the Program Evaluation Officer, who also referred, several times, to the need for the workers to "follow the regulations" in the manual.

In light of the analysis of the structure of the work tasks and the working conditions in the three preceding chapters, these responses and impressions are particularly important. It was assumed by each of these members of the SCAP that the regulations were clear (even if complex) and that the regulations provided a direct guide to the practice of work in the welfare units. Their impressions of work were particularly striking in that they were lacking in the acknowledgment that other tasks existed besides asking questions. The dependence of the worker on the prompt and complete surrender of the verification documents, the fact that workers worked on several cases simultaneously, the fact that interruptions confounded the attention and concentration of the workers, and the attempt of the workers to make sense of their jobs in terms of a worthy accomplishment were totally absent in all these perspectives.

During my interviews I asked them if they saw any problems of ambiguity in the manual. While these persons responded that they did think that the manual had some "rough spots" these impressions did not deflect their general impression of the work. The manual was acknowledged to be "complex," but this is not the same as to acknowledge that the manual was ambiguous and, thereby, requiring workers' judgments.

These staff members were not, however, in the mainstream of the sometimes cautious, sometimes adversarial discussions in SCAP. The staff members were not directly affected and they did not have to bear the burden of the consequences of the corrective actions. Staff members were brought into the fray only occasionally and when they did
participate they seemed to be uncomfortable with the responsibility they found themselves undertaking. The line administrators have found themselves typically resisting the implications of the panel members' discussions about the error rates and its possible remedies.

**Dealing with the "Error-Rate" Problem**

Federal guidelines have fixed the tolerable limits for case errors. The limit for "ineligibility errors," which result in applicants or recipients being declared eligible when they are not, is 3 percent. That is, no more than 3 percent of the sampled cases may be "Ineligible." The limit for "Overpayment Errors" is 5 percent; no more than 5 percent may be overpaid. Hawaii has not fared well in the findings of the Quality Control studies, as indicated in Table VII. Only once in August 1976 has the error rate been below either the ineligibility or the overpayment limit.

The concerted attempt to deal with the error rate problem seems to have begun in Hawaii in 1975. During that year the (then) Department of Health, Education and Welfare attempted to penalize states (Hawaii among them) with high error rates and was met by a lawsuit initiated by a group of states. The Supreme Court decided in *Maryland vs. Mathews* that the Department had acted, in this instance, in an "arbitrary and capricious manner," but did not question the authority of the federal agency to sanction the states. In that year, Hawaii's Quality Control Reports changed from mere statistical summaries to serious analytic documents. Attempts have thereafter been made to propose causes for Hawaii's (consistently high) error rates, and to propose remedial actions. The Corrective Action Panel, formed in 1973, began in 1975 to meet and deliberate in earnest.
Table VII. Levels of Eligibility and Overpayment Errors in Successive Review Periods.
Hawaii State Department of Social Services and Housing

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<td>Percent of Cases with Eligibility Errors</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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<td>7.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Cases with Overpayment Errors</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
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The first of the "analytic" Quality Control Reports was issued in April, 1975. Written in tandem with related discussions concerning the AFDC program and personnel, it considered a variety of alternative sources of and remedies for the high errors in the prior 6-month review period (5.5% "Ineligibility Errors" and 23% "Overpayment Errors"). These reports cited the shortage of income maintenance positions and the consequent high workloads as the major source of problems. The addition of 45 temporary positions and the eventual creation of 90 new permanent positions (of the 175 requested from DBF) would, the report suggested, solve the problem. By August, 1976 a total of 148 positions to serve 20,026 AFDC and GA recipients would be in place, resulting in average caseloads of 175 per money payment worker.

The following report of September 1975, continued an emphasis on high workload as the primary source of the problem. In addition, this report contained a large section analyzing the errors according to program element and type of error ("failure of worker to take action" and "policy misapplication by the worker"). The August of 1976 Report indicated a strong shift in emphasis. Just months after completion of training for the workers in the recently created positions, this report questioned the abilities of the workers to conduct their responsibilities. In this analysis, the author engages in some serious oversights.

The August report's statistical summary acknowledged an improvement in error rates. The author noted that 20 unit workers had resigned from January through June of that year. The author concludes:

Staff turnover . . . does not appear to pose a major problem with a turnover rate of 2.25 percent of total staff.
However, it declines to note that this is a monthly rate. At that rate, the yearly turnover rate was 27 percent.

The February, 1977 report (indicates 4.4% Ineligibility errors and 18.8% overpayments) concluded that the operational complexity of the manual regulation was not a significant problem:

program regulations are numerous but mostly well established and defined. 20

The staffing problem was also viewed as unproblematic:

. . . staff changes (turnover) has been minimal, and use of temporary positions has decreased (Oahu branch has 8.9% temporary positions in IM) all of which suggest a work environment which includes a stable program and a stable staff to do the job. 21

The major suggestions for corrective action were,

1) The modifications of the department's "declaration" method of application, by which recipients were trusted to declare their income and resources. The department was urged to begin verifying these "specific eligibility factors" 22 Verification later became an accepted practice.

2) A personnel reclassification was proposed. The author suggested the possibility that an inappropriate class of personnel and an inappropriate level of pricing lay at the root of the problem. The author mentioned that the proportion of "agency-caused" errors to "client-caused" errors was far greater in Hawaii than the national average for the period. Hawaii had 78% "agency-caused" versus the national rate of 51%. The shortcoming of the agency-caused errors were laid at the doorstep of the workers. 23 The precise nature of the workers' shortcomings were not noted until the following report issued in October of 1977.

This October, 1977 report made note of the fact that 87 percent of the overpayment errors (which occurred in 16.2 percent of all the sample cases) occurred in three program elements. (These were the Child Support Program, WIN, and earned income.)

. . . the specific nature of these errors primarily related to worker carelessness in computing earned income resources and budgeting; inability to act promptly on reported changes (regarding employment
earnings); and failure to upkeep or update WIN registration requirements.\textsuperscript{24}

... causal factors continue to point to such areas as caseload, management, supervision and accountability.\textsuperscript{25}

While the author equivocates at the end of his analysis, by mixing such words as "carelessness" with "caseload," the report continues to suggest that the workers are themselves unsuited and that "agency errors" are attributable to the workers themselves.

The reports of March and September 1978, of May and November, 1979, and June 1980 bring the nature of the workers' perceived shortcomings into clearer focus. While the caseload per worker had expanded without appreciable staff increases, the workers are admonished to encourage their recipients to report changes in their circumstances.

If a single corrective measure were to be developed addressing both client and agency caused defects, improved communications should prove most effective. There should be frequent, free-flowing personal communication on a pseudo-personal basis between client and agency EW. The relationship should emanate empathy and trust on a free-flowing mutual basis. Such a relationship should in time develop and sustain responsible reporting by clients and timely empathetic actions on the part of EW's.\textsuperscript{25}

Again the author equivocates:

More realistically, however, realization of such ideal measures can only come through focusing on more definitive activities such as manpower, workload, staff turnover, personnel expectations, and production rate.\textsuperscript{27}

The definitive element of the workers' shortcomings, then, turn out to be workers' expectations. A study of the personnel series suggested to the author that these "expectations" needed "upgrading."\textsuperscript{28} The workers recruited under the personnel classification did not, in the minds of the authors of the study, perceive the seriousness of their responsibilities toward both the clients and the agency. The "expectations" of workers were seen to be too "low," and incognizant of these
responsibilities. The image of the ideal worker is filled out in the context of a suggestion in the March 1978 report to encourage the University of Hawaii School of Social Work to establish an undergraduate major in Social Work:

This might reprofessionalize IM work, while our review of the SSA series might represent similar efforts. 29

A persistent feature of the analysis contained throughout these reports is the absence of an appraisal of the context of the work in which the IM workers labor. The persistent reduction of causes for errors to such elements as "failure to take indicated actions" and "policy misapplied," to "carelessness" of workers, the workers' presumed incapacity to establish "free-flowing, personal communication" with recipients, and the workers' personalities and attitudes, exclude analysis of the context. The context, mentioned only occasionally, and in passing, is defined as "caseload." However no appreciation for the experiential qualities of work imposed by high caseloads is recognizable after the April, 1975 report.

Also missing is an assessment of the integrity of the program itself, particularly as indicated by the manual. While the additions to the programs of Child Support and WIN, as well as the constant revision of federal regulations accumulate and while other money support, food stamps and medicaid programs contribute to the workloads, these are not suggested as possible sources of problems.

The Emphasis of Corrective Actions

While the Reports' and the SCAP members place persistent emphasis on worker responsibility for the error rate problem, it is to a considerable extent an artifact. It is an artifact of DSSH incapacity to compel the
DPS and DBF to reclassify and/or reprice the worker series and to expand the positions for money payments in accord with the increased work burden. Even without this ability the Panel has still been under obligation to discuss, analyze and propose action, and has focused upon other items more likely within their control. Corrective actions have largely been focused upon phenomena within the grasp (or thought to be in the grasp) of the Department and the Public Welfare Division. Some of these have been imposed directly on the recipients. The verification requirements which modified the declaration method of application is one example. The requirement for the recipient to inform the Department of any changes in household circumstances, income and resources is another. These changes also impose on the workers by increasing the number of mandatory operations while creating no less caseload. In addition, the use of management "controls" to inform workers of impending reviews also means workers must report and justify incomplete reviews at the end of each month. The corrective actions which have been implemented have been oriented toward requiring and providing easier opportunities for recipients to report changes. They have also provided greater visibility to investigators and supervisors of the degree of worker compliance with review deadlines and the taking of other mandatory actions. Corrective actions have created a larger work burden for the employees and a greater burden for recipients.

**Dependence Upon Central Staff Agencies**

The costs for the administration of the AFDC program are the second lowest in the nation. In 1977 only Wisconsin committed less to the AFDC program than Hawaii's 4.0 percent of the total costs per benefit.
In spite of the generally acknowledged scarcity of staff in the program, the Department has been unable to acquire more positions in recent years. The inability to acquire staff has had especially acute results, given the increase in staff requirements owing to the changes in federal programs and the increase in the number of cases.

One problem for the Division has been the budget strategy of the Department, which is particularly influenced by the Administrative Services staff. The staff's strategies in budget sessions of the Legislature anticipate the cuts by the Department of Budget and Finance (DBF) through whom such requests must be submitted. The Division, according to its administrator, has never been able to get all its positions requests into the first, Departmental stage of budget process. Then, at the next stage, in the DBF's hands, the positions typically suffer another severe cut. Many times, according to the Administrator, the requests have been cut back to between 50 percent and 30 percent of the departmental budget request. Several times, the requests have been altogether denied at the DBF level. By the time the budget reaches the legislature, the requests are mere fragments of the original Divisional request.

The Public Welfare Division has had just as bad luck with obtaining a repricing and reclassification of personnel in the workers' series. The reluctance of this agency occurs, however, for a different reason. The Department of Personnel Services is under no real compulsion to respond to such requests. The attempt to reclassify the workers' series took eight years.

Prior to and during the period covered by these reports an attempt to reclassify the series had been underway by the Department's Personnel
Office (since 1972, when the separation of services from money payments was finalized). Some qualifications were changed during this period, such as increasing the experience necessary, but allowing college degrees to substitute for experience. This had the effect of excluding many high school graduates, thus changing the "profile" of the workers. Attempts to reprice the series have had no success. A more ambitious group of income maintenance workers with higher expectations has thus been recruited over time without expanding the compensations or changing the working conditions. Then, the reclassification when obtained in July, 1980\(^{31}\) was an extremely mild one, whose major effect seems to have been to allow "Food Stamp Only" workers to be rescheduled into a higher position within the series. The extraordinary lethargy of the DPS in particular was cited in a 1977 report of the Commission on Government Reorganization.\(^{32}\)

The inability of the department to persuade the legislature, DBF, and DPS to expand the staff at the line levels to accord with workloads has had a curious effect on the deliberators of the Panel (SCAP), which upon reflection seems to be a logical response to the inability to control important conditions under which (1) work in the IM units is done, and (2) program development functions are performed.

The Response of Line Administrators and Unit Workers

Line administrators within the Public Welfare Division (the Administrator, the Oahu Branch Administrator, and the Section Chief) have tended to view the deliberations of the SCAP with a considerable degree of frustration. Regarding the other members of the Panel as unacquainted with the subtleties of management and the potential costs
of deploying their proposals to monitor, and compel the actions of the unit employees, they find it difficult to make contributions to the analyses presented and discussed in the SCAP meetings.

While the line administrators are the carriers of a more contextual perspective on the problems of program administration, they are largely left out of the major flow of policy-making in most circumstances. Since the major influence on the work situation of their charges has more to do with the federal policies and the Program Development staff, they are largely without effect in this programmatic area of administration. Without access to DPS and DBF, they have little direct influence over the major impressive condition of work, as they see it: Overwork and understaffing at the unit levels and incapacity at the level of their own staffs.

Division administrators at all levels have been neglected in the planning of expenditures and priorities because the budgeting and staffing functions are deployed at the Departmental level in the DSSH. The Division Administrator and Oahu Branch Administrator both stated that they were never able to find out, for instance, how much money they had for administrative purposes. This is important information, since the request for temporary positions can only be made against uncommitted or unspent monies. Since they had little indication of their level of unspent monies, they often were slow to respond to crises of understaffing in the units.

Division administrators' absence of knowledge about the status of the division and branch expenditures is related to another disability of the Division at the Branch levels. The Oahu Branch Administrator was very expressive in this area, since his branch has been the largest of the
highly criticized operational units. The absence of a workload standard that was felt to be reasonable by most members of the SCAP was the particular context in which his comments were made: The department could not complete, for reasons unknown, a caseload study, beyond the mere recording of the caseloads actually assigned to the workers. With the help of an Income Maintenance worker temporarily assigned to the Branch office, he was able to devise an analysis of the time needed to perform different types of case actions (such as Eligibility Review, GA-Medical Review, etc.). By assigning these activities a different unit of time, they were able to suggest the maximum caseload allowable if workers were to be given adequate time to complete all case actions. The Oahu Branch Administrator came up with a maximum caseload of 135. Several unit Supervisors, asked to duplicate the analysis, came up with 138.

The Public Welfare Administrator characterized his Division as "always being behind the eightball." His characterization is true in several respects. First, the Division controls the operations of the unit only at the margins. The policies are set by the federal government and the conditions of work are controlled de facto by the staff Department (DBF and DPS). The strategy left to the Division and Branch administrators, short of out-and-out protest and resistance, is to attempt to persuade the other units of the Department to act on their behalf and to try to reform the thinking of these members of the state Corrective Action Panel.

The ability of the line administrators to appeal to the staff is tempered by the staffs' own views of the problems as well as their own obligations in the context of the configuration of each staff's
obligations. The staffs' views are somewhat inarticulate when it comes to knowledge about the units' problems. This inarticulateness is reflected in their simplistic understandings of operations at the unit level. The staff members of the Panel often learn, for the first time, things about the units' operations while in SCAP meetings. In this regard several staff members noted that the meetings were revealing but that they could not take the time to learn about the operations. Two members mentioned that they felt they were not supposed to learn about the "nitty-gritty" operations, but to help solve the error rate problems! The success of the line administrators in enlisting the aid and sympathy of the staff members who have at least access to knowledge in the techniques of getting of attentions of the Staff Departments, is thus frustrated by their unwillingness to entertain in a deeper appreciation for the administration of the programs, beyond the "compliance" and "checklist" imagery mentioned in preceding pages.

As direct "reformers" of the operations of the division, the line administrators, are somewhat cautious. It is more a caution encouraged by the unwillingness to alienate their subordinates than a reticence to entertain the possibility of change itself. To be sure, the branch administrator has performed several administrative experiments. Specifically, he has engaged in the methodical analysis of potential partial solutions through use of the quasi-experimental method. Several experiments including those involving work "pools" and unit reorganizations, have been attempted. The quickness and the ad hoc nature of the conclusions reached by other members of the SCAP seem, in the eyes of the line administrators, particularly frustrating
in view of the consequences of "going off half cocked" into untested corrective actions and reforms of the units.

The recalcitrance of the line administrators to entertain the somewhat coercive notions held by the other members of SCAP is due in great part to a knowledge of the potential costs of launching those suggestions. The costs of incautious reforming activity are only too apparent to the administrators. The Supervisors, in particular, and many unit workers have been increasingly bitter about what they consider to be the incompetent writing of regulations and the insensitive "piling on" of workloads (and mandatory case actions). Workers were articulate about what they perceived to be the disregard of the "administration" for their work situations and emotional well-being. The administration was generally perceived by workers to be a body of persons who made extreme demands on their working and non-working hours and who allowed their work situations to deteriorate such that no semblance of competent work could be done. The administrators were roundly perceived as withholders of attentions and sympathy and as deprivers of the satisfactions they attempt to seek. The characterizations of the work and of the workers contained in the QC Reports were so offensive to the Supervisors that the line administrators had ceased distributing them.

The perception of the problems of line workers has, in recent years, become defined in psychological terms, and an interest in the phenomenon of "staff burn-out" has come into being. Last year, a series of workshops for long-term workers was held and some of the workers mentioned them in interviews. It has been only recently since June 1980 that
the Quality Control has acknowledged the stress of the work, and only then, as a problem of "burn-out," not as a problem of the situation of work itself. According to the Staff Development Officer who is partially responsible for the contracted sessions, burn-out is occasioned by a disjunction of personal and professional goals. Hardly a situational analysis, it blames the worker as the source and burdens her with the remedy for the problems of stress engendered by the job itself. Consistent with the Reports' recent emphasis on worker "expectations" as being a source of the error problems, the problems of such expectations has thus been authoritatively psychologized as a personal problem.

CONCLUSION

Circumstances of the staffs in the agency compel them to invoke strategies of conduct oriented more to the cycles of deadlines, and to the predispositions of external agencies than to the internal operations of the Department. These external agencies exert influences both by action and inaction, in decisions and non-decisions. The reluctance of these external sources of influence to assist the Department in relieving its internal crisis, has occasioned internal conflict. The conflict has taken a muted form and results in avoidance and the breakdown of internal relations. As a result, the Department, as regards income maintenance had found itself in the midst of a standoff through the end of the period covered by this investigation.

The inability of the various organizational actors to control resources and staffing, is matched by the necessity of the PEO to do something about the problem of error rates. The dynamic of relations
this engenders is quite different from a concerted program of organizational action. The attempt of the PEO to force a resolution of the problem and to impress his analysis upon the other members has caused PD and line administrators to engage in defensive counter-strategies. The conflict has not led to open conflict as much as it does to caution and of the line administrators' avoidance of taking on obligations. The avoidance by these actors makes sense as an attempt to stay out of the discussions of SCAP, so as to distance themselves from complicity in the findings and implications, thereby forestalling coercive designs for remedial actions. The disengagement of these members has been defined by other staff participants as an overall reluctance to change and as being overly protective of workers "who aren't doing their jobs." Such perceived conservatism is taken by some to be itself a source of the problem. This confirms the "hardliners'" impressions of the problems and defines the "conservative" line administrators as accomplices.

The practice of avoidance has thus reproduced itself. A self-reinforcing cycle of avoidance, punctuated by infrequent but vigorous attempts to force a resolution of the "error rate problem," has taken on substantial form as an interaction structure. The reinforcing cycles of avoidance have affected relations with collateral institutions as well. The Attorney General's office which provides legal representation for the Department typically assigns its newest youngest and least experienced attorneys to represent the department. Though a career in poverty law is not the ideal of these ambitious recruits, the inability "to solve a problem once and for all" is a particularly discouraging element in their dealing with the Department's Public Welfare Division.
As the Program Development Office has recently been more a conduit for federal regulations than a protector of the programs' internal operational consistency and integrity, one would speculate that the potential for lawsuits will have increased. The absence of program consistency has resulted in worker's becoming "gunshy" in implementing regulations to the letter of the law (particularly in making case decisions adverse to recipients) in the ambiguous sections of the manual. Several workers mentioned that the reluctance of the Program Development Office to quickly clarify regulations left them without a clear basis to make some types of "adverse actions." The perception of the "administration's" failure to "back up the workers" is widespread among all workers.

Similarly, the relations of the Department with the Legislature are hindered by its members' perception that the Division can neither defend, control, nor plan its programs. The performance of the Division in defending itself in budget hearings is to an extent an artifact of the absence of staff positions to make such a defense and of the dynamic and complex nature of the programs, which defy simple characterization.

In such an event as organization members' inability to cooperate, it might be expected that higher authorities would intervene to "break the logjam" and coordinate these staff and line functions. However, three structural elements mitigate against such an intervention. Two elements are common to all states, while the third is not as common. First, there are persistent forces which cause the staff and line units to be repelled from one another:

(1) The diversity among the staffs' perspectives, and approaches to problem solving is structural; so too, is the difference between the staffs' and the line perspectives.
(2) The structural divisions among staffs is reinforced by federal law which divides the program from the analytic functions of program implementation.

(3) In Hawaii, the general fragmentation of the staffs is further heightened by the centralization of fiscal and personnel matters such that they find the latter as a primary point of orientation to the Departments of Personnel Services and of Budget and Finance.

Secondly, as in all states, public assistance is a pariah among the range of governmental functions:

(1) It frustrates legislators as expenditures grow at unpredictable rates within an open-ended formula of income-tested eligibility. In many states, as in Hawaii, such departments hold little brief with their respective legislatures.

(2) Furthermore, since the administrative separation of services from monetary assistance, even within Public Welfare agencies, the monetary payments sections take a back seat to the services. Lobbying occurs around the social service sections, and money assistance has for the most part been unable to generate an interest group lobby.

Third and particular especially to the state of Hawaii, the Department serves as an umbrella for a variety of diverse divisions: The Hawaii Housing Authority, the Corrections Division, and the Public Welfare Division. The Public Welfare Division, itself, administers a diverse collection of programs. As in the case of federal executive politics, the specialized agencies below the departmental level seem to be left to regulate themselves. Even if not a self-conscious strategy of self-regulation, however, the capacity for the Director to intervene in Public Welfare is affected by the necessity to respond to crises in housing and the state prisons. In recent years this has been the case: Housing and prisons have exhausted the capacity of the Director and his single Deputy to remain informed on the problems of the Public Welfare
Division, much less to intervene. This structural incapacity is heightened, again by the pariah nature of the public welfare function and the accumulation of lobbying and public pressure around the other departmental missions.
CHAPTER VII--NOTES


2. Ibid., pp. 125-127.

3. Ibid., p. 125.

4. See the summary of these trends in Chapter I.


7. Functional Organization Chart, Public Welfare Division, Hawaii Department of Social Services and Housing.


9. See Chapter IV above.

10. Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971); these authors argue that Supreme Court decisions regarding constitutional safeguards for welfare recipients and other indigents have had a major influence in the expansion of the numbers of AFDC recipients in the 1960s. See also "Administration of the AFDC Program" (1977), op. cit., especially Part Six, "The Appeals and Hearing Process Under the AFDC Program."

11. Koolauloa Welfare Rights Groups v. Chang and Tam, DSSH Hawaii C47912 (Lst Cir. 1976); in 1976 a number of court cases were brought against the Department. See Hawaii State Department of Social Services and Housing, 1977 Annual Report, Honolulu, 1978.


13. Hawaii State Department of Social Services and Housing, Program Evaluation Office, Quality Control in Public Assistance: Eligibility and Benefit Level Status in the AFDC and AFDC-UP Programs. Reports from April, 1975 through June, 1980.


19. Ibid., pp. 11-12.


22. Ibid., p. 7.

23. Ibid., p. 9.


25. Ibid., p. 10.


27. Ibid., p. 6.


CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSIONS: AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

In previous chapters, interpretations of several interaction structures in the Department of Social Services and Housing have been elaborated. In this chapter, these will be assimilated into a more explicit framework and compared with other organizational theories and interpretations of street-level conduct. Several additional strands of analysis must be regarded by a theory of street-level bureaucracy. These include an analysis of the conduct of operatives within the context of numerous commitments and obligations. This conduct is best organized in terms of a "task structure"—a persistent and diverse range of obligations. Another strand which needs to be assimilated is the impact of organizational processes upon the work of the street-level operative. Finally, the impact of policies on organizational processes, particularly the ability of the organization to collectively engage in problem-solving needs to be considered by such a theory. The perspective which assimilates these strands may be called an "ecological" one.

Michael Lipsky's theory of street-level bureaucracy analyzes the mundane conduct of such operatives who contribute substantially to the making of public policies as practiced. Both Lipsky and Jeffrey Prottas define the central feature of street-level labor as the plethora of organizational goals combined with the absence of resources to engage in actions commensurate with such goals. I found, however, that goals do not enter the experience of work at the level which Lipsky suggests.
It is the specific work situation and the ways in which operatives seek and find ways to perform their jobs which marks the immediate experience of the job. Organizational goals and policy-related goals do not enter the experience of the operative at the level of conduct.

The assumption made by Lipsky that rules and techniques are straightforward, but that the time and resources to undertake them are lacking, is not supported by this analysis. Rather, operatives struggle to make sense of regulations contained therein in order to invent such techniques. This is a pronounced and constant struggle in the DSSH. Contradiction and ambiguity in the manual, combined with the delegitimation of interpretation and judgment, heighten the stress of the operatives. Policy goals are expressed only rarely. Policies contained in the manual never articulate a rationale; unfortunately, for the operatives, it is as simple as that. Rationale and the purposes of the manual sections are invented by workers.

By ignoring the subtleties of the rule-applying process, Lipsky overlooks some important elements in the structure of work. He presumes, as do Thompson and March and Simon, that work is "carried out" as a stream of decision-making events which present themselves unproblematically to a waiting operative. However, the workers in the DSSH "on-going" income maintenance units who perform the vast majority of income maintenance operations, do not exhibit such passive demeanors. They cannot. An important element of the job is the summoning of recipients and their verification documents. Furthermore, the work of the operative is not organized in a serial order of discrete tasks. The structure of time and the simultaneity of the actions to complete
several case actions mitigate against such serial techniques. These factors place extraordinary burdens upon the concentration and mental discipline of the workers. A case decision rendered on the occasion of a recipient's office visit is the final act in an on-going cluster of numerous case-related activities. Though a case decision, particularly as evidenced by the official record of the case, is an obvious benchmark, it is only one trace of a larger series of actions which precede it.

In Chapter V, Wilson's concept of "task structure" was employed to examine the process of work at the operational levels of DSSH. It was concluded that not only was a particular collection of inventive steps necessary to respond to the "imperatives of the (operatives') situation," but that such a response required a particular stance of readiness and inventiveness in order to respond to unpredictable events and imperatives. The welfare operative is to a remarkable extent dependent on outsiders for the elements basic to the completion of the operational tasks themselves. Combined with the structure of time within which these operations are performed, the structure of the work situation generates an overall response pattern distinguished by the reaction of operatives to the uncontrolled events which require their attentions. A distinguishing element of this occupation is the uncontrollability of the daily workload.

The uncontrollable nature of the flurry of operations performed by case workers evokes a theory of work that is a considerable departure from those of Thompson and of March and Simon. There are very few work operations which are prescribed and proscribed enough to allow the workers to passively "carry them out." Most if not all features of the task operations are the inventions of the workers—the rationales invented for
the regulations, the "systems" deployed to process specific classes of cases, the strategies undertaken to implore cooperation from recipients, and mental discipline assimilated in order to "keep yourself on edge."

The mainstay of ethnomethodological insight is the suggestion that interactions and practices are the creative accomplishments of participants in specific social situations. However, I have found that the structure of an interaction setting does more than provoke episodic responses. Global reconstructions of meaning are applied to the overall context of street-level work. While many actions could be characterized as "getting by" and as accommodating expected or applied sanctions from persons with greater authority, there is more to this process than meets the ethnomethodological eye. Such a view neglects the influence of the subject's on-going strategies to cope with a persistent environment and to ground those strategies in a moral and intellectual code.

In other words, operatives are coping, but they also form persistent and rational overall strategies of coping. They develop, in the process, an interpretation of these settings in order to illuminate the conditions of work and ground their interventions in the circumstance of their recipients with a sense of purpose and accomplishment. They are not idly "coping" then. They are actively construing both the surrounding circumstances and their own activities while assimilating those activities into strategies which they find worthy of their efforts.

The analysis returns, then, to Muir's insightful study of the moral and intellectual quests of police officers. It will be recalled from the discussion in Chapter II that the moral and intellectual quandaries were concluded by Muir to be the major underpinning of police decision
making and conduct. The policeman was compelled by his own requirement to act according to a rationale and to order his actions through a moral and intellectual understanding of his role. In this analysis, the workers have undertaken to frame their conduct in accordance with a project of desired accomplishments. They do not want to be arbitrary; they want to be responsible to some standards. Problems and confusion arise for workers since the agency does not provide standards that are reasonable in the context of multiple demands and the shortness of time and resources which partially characterize the working conditions. Left to her own sense-seeking devices, the worker undertakes to surround her activities with meaning. This quest for meaning takes the form of finding a type of accomplishment which is worthy of her. She undertakes to assimilate these commitments within a general strategy of conduct. I have referred to the general strategies of conduct based upon three distinct "accomplishment-seeking" quests as "dispositions." It is as a consequence of these dispositions that judgments about clients are elicited. Like Muir, and unlike Lipsky, this analysis finds there to be a variety of modes employed by street-level bureaucrats in the moral and intellectual understanding and grounding of the work. However, the structure of the work situation truncates the abilities of the workers to reach the stage of moral and intellectual equanimity which some of Muir's police eventually gained.

There are persistent situational factors which condition the moral and intellectual quests of the workers. One is the limited horizon of the workers, a function of the office-bound nature of the work. This is in marked contrast to the police in Muir's study who had freer access
to the city in whose collective life they intervened. The workers interviewed in the course of this study were not able to overcome these horizons unless they either rejected the reform-oriented Helping pre-occupation (which is highly conditioned by the moral images of recipients) or rejected the compulsive attention to all agency and client demands (typified by the Recoilers), effectively freeing them to reflect more on their impact on the recipients and to more intimately get to know their recipients. The Situationalists typified the latter dispositions. The narrowness of horizons prevented workers from maturing and refining their images of the recipients and the job itself. This narrowness in horizons however does not cause the operative to abandon an intellectual quest.

The narrowness of the horizons of work caused the search for the accommodation to the multiple pressures and the seeking of a reasonable type of commitment to be carried out in the absence of clear knowledge of the results of one's work. By contrast, in Muir's study of police, the proximity of the policeman to the impacts of his work permitted him to learn, to mature, and to ground his actions in a considered and thoughtful rationale.

Another difference between the police and the income maintenance context is the absence of authority among the operatives in the latter. While the Oakland police are at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy, they have considerable authority as a result of the widely recognized ambiguity and importance of the tasks they undertake. By contrast, the workers in the DSSH are not merely on the bottom but are totally without authority. While they are forced by circumstances to
interpret the welfare manual (like their counterparts in the Forestry Service), they have no authority to make such judgments. Income maintenance workers have no legitimate ability to exercise judgment or to defend their interpretations. The organization simply does not recognize the need to interpret. The delegitimation of judgment has the result of truncating experimentation and of causing workers to hide their judgments from their superiors and each other.

The dispositions of the workers are a result of this quest to derive a sense of accomplishment. Each of these dispositions structures the workers' conduct in the job and each construes recipients differently. For instance, the Helper's disposition is oriented around the attempt to accomplish changes in the situation of the recipients. It is the accomplishment of personal reforms which occur to the worker as the respectable thing for her to accomplish. What the clients represent to her are the result of the meaning she endows in the job. To state it another way, the question of who and what the recipients are depends upon what the worker needs from them in order to implement her personality-selected goals. She, the Helper, needs to change the recipient. The commitments of the worker dictate how the recipient is perceived and treated. Seen from this perspective, the recipient becomes a cognitive artifact of the worker's commitments.

Three different types of dispositions, which stem from three distinct objects of accomplishment, have been suggested. By far the most typical is the group we have labelled "Recoiler." For this group, the project and disposition of the worker are highly confused. An absence of a focus for commitment characterizes this group. The major
preoccupation of the group is simply to finish everything asked of them by the agency and the recipients. In tandem with this practical imperative is an on-going attempt to find a stable commitment in which she has some kind of control of her activities. This group, obeying all agency dicta and deadlines, elicits a view of the recipients which is an artifact of the operation of case processing. It views recipients as either barriers to or cooperators with the worker herself. At the same time, these workers attempt to acquaint themselves with the recipients in order to seek, through the recipients, knowledge which might inform a more focused and purposive strategy of work which affords greater control over her expenditures of time and effort. Without such a focus of commitment the worker finds herself unable to answer the question: What am I doing in this job? She also finds herself unable to control the flow of work since she is responding to any and all demands for punctuality and attention. Such a worker may eventually give up the quest, thereby becoming a Detacher, or she may develop the rationale and strategy of the Situationalist worker.

The Situationalist worker tries to accomplish what she knows to be "important" case actions, leaving others undone unless she can spare the time. This pattern of accommodation jettisons obligations which are felt to be unimportant. The priority of the case actions depends largely upon her perceptions as to the potential impact on the recipient. Not trying to create lasting, dramatic accomplishment like the Helper, the Situationalist "does what she can" with the limited energies available.

Lipsky suggests that the mode of street-level judgment concerning clients is the stereotype. Prottas suggests that welfare workers use
stereotypes to order the priorities of actions to be undertaken on behalf of clients. This analysis argues that such images are derived from a more complex strategy of action and configuration of meaning than these authors suggest. They suggest that stereotypes are derived from the available biases and prejudices of the workers. The expenditure of efforts depend on the extent to which the client is deemed worthy by the worker. However, in this analysis of welfare work, it is the image of the job held by the worker which underlies their images of recipients. A set of needs is generated as a consequence of the commitments invested in the job by the employees.

As mentioned above, Lipsky defines the central feature of the street-level bureaucrat's dilemma as the tension between the plethora of goals and the absence of resources. The manner in which energies are deployed and in which objects of such deployments (the recipients) are construed and given meaning are themselves the consequence of larger projects of meaning and strategy-formation by the workers. The framework I suggest proposes that the location and influence of the goal as formulated in Lipsky's analysis is somewhat displaced. The worker does not experience the goals of organizations as much as she experiences a set of demands whose meaning must be ascertained, whose worth must be judged and whose benefit she must construe. The street-level bureaucrat is the locus of goal-forming and goal-seeking. The dilemma of the street-level bureaucrat is not the conflict among goals but of the absence of anything like a goal with which to orient conduct. The conduct of the street-level bureaucrat is not contingent upon the use of prejudice and bias. It is, rather, a consequence of the seeking
of purpose and the application of a rationale in the absence of guides to action.

In the highly confined and circumscribed context of work in public assistance organizations, such as the one studied, the analysis of interaction structures reveals that a number of well-defined strategies define the operations of the street-level bureaucracy. The structure of work conduct is the product of several factors. In addition to strategies, however, the consideration of the origins and structures of these strategies must also be taken into account. In contrast to administrative politics which are characterized by greater avenues of choices in strategy building, it is appropriate here to look at the impact of the circumscribed setting of street-level bureaucratic action as influencing and generating a different order of strategies. Rather than the value-maximizing choice where strategies are self-serving, the strategies undertaken by street-level bureaucrats seem to be self-orienting. That is to state that the strategy of conduct undertaken by the street-level operative is constantly linked to self-reflexive considerations of purpose and priority in a context of limited options for choice-taking.

The implications of this analysis are important for theorizing about public policies, their implementation, and their circuitous outcomes. Formal policies which are converted into regulations, and placed in the manuals of income maintenance operatives are only one in a field of demands, capacities and constraints which operatives must consider in conducting themselves. At the level of practice, the implementation of policies emerges from the reflexive actions and
strategic considerations undertaken by the operatives themselves. Despite the authoritative manner in which they are proclaimed, policies remain one among many imperatives of the work situation.

If policies and superiors do not control the conduct of operatives, the question becomes, "What does?" Into what model of process, if not a hierarchical or mechanical one, can these processes be assimilated. Indeed, the issue of process and control becomes central to a discussion of public policy and implementation. The answer is that control in the hierarchical and mechanical understanding of the term is not possible through greater appeals to hierarchical control. The tightening of regulations, reduction of discretionary decision making, and improved surveillance of case decisions have not achieved greater control. Indeed, the ironic consequences of successive appeals to greater and greater regulation represent to some authors a central feature of bureaucratic attempts at controlling subordinates.12

A different perspective on the subject of social causation, organizational control, and policy implementation is necessary. Most models of implementation portray the implementation process in terms of hierarchical and mechanical models. Others tend to view the organizational process in terms of singular actors. The DSSH, however, is characterized by considerable fragmentation which occurs not for idiosyncratic reasons but for structural ones. These structural features stem directly from federal policies which mandate the activities of the Program Evaluation Staff and from the relations between federal and state authorities in general.
Organizational Processes in Ecological Perspective

Norton Long in a classic essay employed an ecological perspective as a basis for understanding the dynamics of local community politics. The political order is "the product of history rather than the imposed effect of any central nervous system of the community".13

... inclusive over-all organization for many general purposes is weak or non-existent. Much of what occurs seems to just happen with accidental trends becoming cumulative over time and producing results intended by nobody. A great deal of the communities' activities consist of undirected co-operation of particular social structure, each seeking particular goals and, in so doing, meshing with others.14

Long suggests that the local community be thought of as a collection of separate but interlinked "games." He seems, however, to reify the games in which their players are embedded; the players are not seen to be creators of the games or contributors to their structures.

... structured group activities can be looked at as games. These games provide the players with a set of goals that give them a sense of success or failure. They provide them determinate roles and calculable strategies and tactics.15

The games and their players meshing their particular pursuits to bring about over-all results; the territorial system is fed and ordered. Its inhabitants are rational within limited areas and pursuing the ends of these areas, accomplish socially functional ends.16

The collective consequences of the variety of games are the unintended result of the independent games. Long is attempting to dispel the necessity of proving the existence of a singular "power structure" as an explanation for urban public policy. So too, should it be possible to jettison the conception of organizations as controlled by a central cortex. However, it is not necessary that the outcomes of a confluence of "games" should be "socially functional ends." Depending
on the conditions to which strategies (games) are applied, the outcomes could conceivably be pathological, as well as functional.

The idea of ecological control denotes distinct interdependent entities coexisting within a common domain. The mechanism of control over each entity is indirect. Control is a consequence of the relationship of each entity with its surroundings. In a natural ecology, what characterizes the dynamic and structure of individual organisms are the specific conditions which surround that organism. The dynamics of ecologies are the function of the adaptations of its numerous constituent entities to each of their surroundings and to the resultant relations among the constituent elements themselves. The "mechanism" of ecological control is quite different from the mechanical or hierarchical models. Ecological systems are characterized by control which is indirect and which stems not from one source but from the interaction of a number of sources.

No unitary direction or purpose can be said to characterize ecological phenomena. The control of the organization and the constituent members of the organization "emerges." It emerges from both (a) the conditions within which each constituent element resides and (b) relations among its constituent elements. The idea of "task structure" is almost conceptually identical to the ecological adaptation of an entity to its surroundings. A task structure is derived from the operatives' relationship to situational imperatives. The conduct of the persons who accommodate and strategically adapt to the situational imperatives of their jurisdiction are "controlled" indirectly by that relationship to the range of situational imperatives, not by
hierarchically imposed dicta and sanctions. This is not to say that persons in such circumstances are not influenced by hierarchy.

Hierarchical authorities do not control so much as they partially contribute to the array of conditions to which the operatives strategically adjust.

The ecological concept of control suggests that the control of organization behavior coincides with the conditions generated both by organizations or any other source for organization members. Organization members are self-reflexive, self-selectors of strategies, not passive constituents of singular, rational, centralized loci of control. Control in the DSSH is not exercised by executive interventions as much as the consequences of those interventions, which in combination with other situational factors, structure the situations in which employees labor. Operatives are controlled, but the "means" of control are subtle. Control is indirect and circuitous, and is mediated by the operative’s self-reflexive selection of strategies.

The collective dynamics of organizations are a different matter than the control of individual members and task units. But the same model of ecological analysis can be applied to the actions of other task units and to the dynamics of the organization as a whole. In suggesting the outlines of collective organizational processes it is necessary to analyze the adaptive task structures of the groups occupying various jurisdictions within the organization. Their interactions are conditioned by formal responsibilities which in part constitute the task structure of each. The formal responsibility of each task unit at the staff levels compels each to seek the cooperation of the others. The
dependency of one task unit upon the others generally revolves around issues of resources and compliance with federal regulations.

The non-operative employees of the organization (including the personnel, administrative services, program development, and the line administrative staff), each undertakes strategies of action in response to situational imperatives and constraints derived from sources external to the organization. These strategies underlie the relations among all the staffs of the organization. The outcome of the confluence of these strategies in this case is the freezing of organizational activities surrounding the correction of the staffing and error rate problems. This is due to the fact that each such staff has limited capacities to respond to new obligations, save for the Program Evaluation staff. The inability of each staff to undertake actions on behalf of solutions to the error rate problem leads to a general pattern of mutual avoidance among these staffs.

While each staff had limited capacities to respond each depends upon the others for conditions essential to its own tasks. PEO depends upon the cooperation of line administrators in order to perform its tasks. Program Development staff depends upon the administrative services staff to help it get more staff positions. Generally, while each staff avoids the other, each is dependent upon the other. The dependency as well as the limited ability for each to "negotiate" due to tight resources and the consequent inability to assimilate new obligations (which would enable a trade or negotiation) characterizes the relations among these units. Without slack resources, expansion of the tasks of one such unit on behalf of another is not possible.
It might be suggested that the Department exists in a state of equilibrium with its disparate, interpdependent sub-units balancing one another. However, the pattern of intra-organizational interdependence seen here exhibits a different form of mutual interdependence than is suggested by equilibrium theories. Equilibrium theories attempt to explain the dynamics of organizations as unintended consequences of particular relations generated within formal organizations. Michael Crozier's "parallel system of power" is an example of this strand of theorizing. He suggests that in stable organizations, groups attempt to obtain privileges and autonomy (self-regulation) within the organization and thereby generate a system of relations which not merely overwhelm, but render the formal organization irrelevant. The use of such autonomy-seeking strategies results in a well-equilibrated set of relations which he terms the parallel system of power. It is a web of relations which is affected by formal organization but not defined by it.

Crozier cited several contextual features wherein such equilibria could emerge in organizational relations: the stability of the technical process of production, the general agreement among constituent groups upon a minimum degree of performance, and generally stable conditions. In the French case he studies, the latter are established by formal limits on hierarchical authority. In addition the groups' activities within the organization were already relatively autonomous. External organizational forces did not impinge on the organization and its internal relations.

Equilibrium theory presents some difficulties in assimilating into the American context, where the flux of federal-state relations has
destabilizing potentials for state level administration. So too does
the contingent legislative commitment to public policies portend an
unstable condition for such organizations.\textsuperscript{18} The near constant
struggle for organizational autonomy among public administrative agencies
means that few of Crozier's external and internal conditions can be met.

Equilibrium theory presents other problems as well. While the
equilibria analyzed by Crozier are the result of negotiated settlements
among task groups, the absence of control over tasks by task groups in
the DSSH argues that no such "trading" is possible. If one cannot
control one's own sphere of action, how can one bargain with "goods"
that presume such control? However, a stability of sorts is obviously
manifest in the DSSH among its task groups at the staff levels. This
stability is less a manifestation of equilibria than it is a conspiracy
of mutual resistance. Rather than sustained by trades or reciprocity
among groups (the basis of Crozier's equilibria) in order for each to
obtain more autonomy and self-control for itself, in DSSH an avoidance
of obligations is generated by the absence of a capacity to control
their own tasks. This results in the DSSH in the absence of a pre-
condition for trading and negotiation: Having something to "give up"
in order to get something someone else gives up. The overloading of
the Program Development staff and the inability of the Administrative
Service and Personnel staffs (for example) to acquire anything useful
for trade, has the effect of freezing the organization. No one of
them has anything to give up. Rather than a positive equilibrium
sustained by the negotiation of mutual gains among groups, a negative
equilibrium sustained by the avoidance of mutual loss marks the dynamics
of the DSSH.
The inability of the Program Development staff to undertake assessments of the Division's operational programs is a key reason for the persistence of ambiguities in the program manual. The inability of the agency, particularly the Administrative Services and the Personnel staffs, to compel the state government to provide more resources was a major source of the overall dynamics of the organization. This pattern of mutual avoidance has mitigated against the solution of the error rate problems and has exaggerated the operational ambiguity and stress of the income maintenance workers.

Each of the major generate elements of the DSSH's organizational dynamics can be traced to the strategies undertaken by task groups in response to external pressures and mandates. The environment of the organization possesses a multiple characteristic. Each of several different environments penetrates the organization at a different location. The decisive manner in which the external agencies occupy the attentions and preoccupy the conduct of the Program Development Office, the Personnel Office, the Administrative Service Office, the Program Evaluation Office strongly influence the overall priorities and strategies of each office. These strategies condition the relations with the other offices. At the level of the collective dynamics of the organization we can say with little doubt that the external environment of the organization penetrates its internal functioning in a dramatic manner with the decisive results in terms of the organizational incapacity to engage in problem-solving.

Crozier's equilibrium model, in addition to the hierarchical and mechanical models, assumes that there exists in organizations an
internal element which controls of such relations. The internal control element in equilibrium theory is a pattern of mutual gains-seeking. DSSH however, is characterized by internal dynamics which not only originate outside the agency but also exist independently of each other. The demands made by each are not stable; they change over time. An ecological concept of control is preferable in explaining organization behavior such as those in the DSSH because ecological analysis suggests no internal control need exist. Rather, it suggests that entities function largely as a consequence of their relationship to their immediate environments. As conditions control conduct, this perspective is particularly useful in that it does not assume the existence of controlling or regulation processes beyond the entity/environment relationship.

Organization theory generally regards the entire organization as interacting (as one unitary entity) with the organizational environment. The mechanical and hierarchical models are particularly committed to conceiving organizations as unitary entities. Thus Rourke suggests that the survival of a public administrative agency depends upon its relation to its external constituencies.19 Cyert and March discuss the pragmatic means through which organizations adapt to their respective environments.20 Selznick suggests that organizations embed themselves into society through a process of cooptation.21 Finally, Thompson suggests that an organization rationally adapts to its environment by buffering its technology from its environment.22

These theories have in common a conception of the organization as possessing a separate existence from environmental factors. Thus
in Thompson's formulation, the "institutional" function of the organization is to buffer the "technological" function. What is important to note about the ecological perspective on organizational dynamics is that the environment may well penetrate the various tasks structures of an organization, from staff to operational task structures. Derived from the study of private commercial organization, Thompson's theory when applied to the public organization misses an appreciation for the manifold manner in which mandates are externally imposed on organizations. How many autonomous, unfettered, self-regulating organizations can there be in the public realm? It would seem that there are very few. There is even less likelihood that a service or street-level organization will not be extremely fettered by regulations from a variety of state and federal sources. Public organizations' mandates are undertaken at a variety of organizational levels. By penetrating the task structures of so many organizational entities within the DSSH, the organization's environment, taken as a whole, seems to offer more in the ways of control than the organization can mobilize internally. The organization to a remarkable, but understandable extent has lost the ability to regulate and control itself. One might better understand the DSSH and the Public Welfare Division as a series of organizations each propelled by different environments, rather than one organization.

The relationship between authoritative pronouncements of public policy and street-level practices is a circuitous and complex one, of which the latter are derived only partially from the former. The process is characterized by a far different dynamic than the hierarchical or mechanical models suggest. To term the process as irrational is, however,
to name the process according to what it is not. The question is what is it?

Organizational practices surrounding the implementation of public assistance are themselves circuitous and paradoxical. The implementation process encompassed by this study is characterized by an indirect but persistent process of control over activities and relations in the Department of Social Services and Housing. This process of ecological control underlies the dynamics of the organization. The model of ecological control suggests that the constituent organizational entities within the organization adapt themselves practically and dispositionally to the range of situational imperatives surrounding each of them. The interaction of the constituent elements are bound by the specialized strategies of each in responding to its situational imperative. They are hence inattentive to the more general organizational mission of policy implementation as they each can ill afford to enter that domain of action while continuing to satisfy their specialized imperatives. The implementation of policy is thus conditioned by strategies of which policy is only one among several competing imperatives.

"Management by default" characterizes the problem-solving activities of the organization as a whole. Fragmented by specialized attentions and diverse strategies, policy implementation emerges largely from the uncoordinated and undirected practices of the street-level bureaucrats who labor under conditions of ambiguity, subordinancy, and stress generated by the absence of organizational capacities to alleviate these problems. Left to themselves, income maintenance workers attempt to infuse their practices with rationale and purpose. The disposition of
workers to act and be attentive to recipients is structured by the commitments which workers invent so as to ground their actions in such purposes.

Ironically the absence of organizational control is a result of the concerted attempt by members of Congress and the Department of Health and Human Services to more precisely control the decision making of income maintenance workers at the state levels. This attempt was the rationale for the expansion of regulations in the federal grant and for the monitoring of workers' decisions through the Quality Control Program. The organizational consequence of these policies in Hawaii, the pattern of "mutual avoidance," has been discussed at length. This pattern of avoidance has increased the burden of the welfare workers. Income maintenance workers thus find themselves managing more of the details of their recipients' lives while being less able to afford attention to recipients and the consequences of their decisions.

Mechanical and hierarchical perspectives do not adequately capture the social interaction structures which characterize the organizational policy processes. An ecological perspective through which conduct is viewed as the consequence of self-reflexive strategies of individual and group action illuminates organization dynamics and policy implementation more adequately.
CHAPTER VIII--NOTES


5. Thompson, op. cit.; March and Simon, op. cit.

6. See Chapter II above.


15. Ibid., p. 252.

16. Ibid., p. 254.


18. See the discussion in Chapter I above.


22. Thompson, op. cit. See the discussion in Chapter I.

23. Ibid.
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