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Decision-making in public welfare bureaucracies

Quint, Janet C., Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1988

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DECISION-MAKING IN PUBLIC WELFARE BUREAUCRACIES

by

JANET C. QUINT

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1988

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

DECISION-MAKING IN PUBLIC WELFARE BUREAUCRACIES

by

Janet Quint

Adviser: Professor Gerald Handel

This dissertation examines decision-making in "street-level bureaucracies"--organizations that deal with poor and disenfranchised clienteles and whose functions include both the provision of service and the exercise of social control. The dissertation is based on case studies of two programs aimed at increasing employability, job-seeking, and work effort among AFDC welfare recipients in Baltimore and Chicago. These programs served similar clienteles and engaged enrollees in similar activities, but they differed markedly in other key respects. While the thesis discusses the policy origins and guidelines of the two programs, its major focus is on forces molding and constraining the behavior of line staff members who interacted directly with clients.

The dissertation tests the proposition, advanced by Michael Lipsky, that street-level bureaucracies are inevitably characterized by a high degree of discretionary decision-making on the part of lower-level staff. Evidence from the case studies both confirms and contradicts this hypothesis, suggesting that discretion is an inevitable feature of

such organizations but that it is not necessarily an important one. Rather, decisions taken by upper-level staff can effectively preempt the large-scale exercise of discretion at the lower echelons. In particular, the reward structure can serve as an important technique for securing staff compliance with and realizing organizational objectives.

More critical in defining the operations of organizations dealing with the poor are two factors: the principal goals they pursue and the resources they command. Goals and resources are both established through the political process and are subject to modification through it; in addition, goals reflect the personal and political ideologies of program planners and high-level administrators. These two factors are the primary determinants of other aspects of organizational life, such as whether service or social control elements are more pronounced and what means are pursued to achieve desired ends.

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Trina Grillo, Robert Muccigrosso, Bob Kruger, and David Quint all buoyed me up at critical moments.

Finally, I should like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother and to the memory of my father.

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CHAPTER I

BUREAUCRACY AGAINST POVERTY

This study brings together two themes, each of which has a long tradition and important place in sociological inquiry: the issue of poverty, its causes and cures, and the nature of organizational behavior. Its focus is on the factors that shape administrative decision-making in programs for poor people. Previous sociological investigations have postulated that, owing primarily to resource limitations, certain structural conditions characterize these programs, and that these conditions make for a high degree of discretionary authority wielded by lower-level bureaucrats. This dissertation argues, in contrast, that there is nothing inevitable about the structural features of programs that serve the poor, and that while the exercise of discretion by program personnel cannot be eliminated altogether, neither can its importance be assumed. It contends, instead, that political choices about goals and means are of equal weight with resource considerations in affecting both the overall configuration of such programs and the ways in which lower-level personnel associated with them reach decisions. In so doing, it affirms the importance of human agency and choice against overly narrow and deterministic models of the forces molding organizational behavior.

These conclusions stem from an intensive examination of two programs for certain recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children welfare assistance. These programs, both located in major urban centers, targeted a similar population, required enrollees to participate in activities related to employment, and had the same ultimate objective--reducing the size of the welfare caseload. However, they sought to accomplish this objective in quite different ways. An investigation of the origins of these two programs, their critical features, and the relationship between officially prescribed goals and the way these were translated into practice by program staff in their routine interactions with participants illuminates the factors that underlie and constrain efforts to modify and regulate the conduct of the poor.

The ecology of poverty and the behavior of poor people have played an especially important part in the history of sociology as a discipline in the United States. The large immigrant communities of Chicago (and the city itself) constituted a ready laboratory for the sociological investigations of a number of the discipline's "founding fathers" and their immediate followers (Park, 1967, Park et al., 1967; Thomas and Znaniecki, 1958; Wirth, 1928). In a series of community surveys sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation, sociologists at the University of Chicago, with the objective of guiding social policy, developed a body of statistics on the spatial distribution of the poor and on the relationships between poverty and other aspects of social life, such as family functioning, crime, and delinquency. The work of these Chicago School sociologists thus paralleled, in a systematic and scholarly way,

the inquiries into the condition of the poor that had characterized the efforts of social reformers and socially conscious journalists in the late 1800s and early 1900s and that paved the way for the social legislation of the Progressive Era (Bremner, 1956; Janowitz, 1976).

Since then, American sociologists, along with other social scientists, have exhibited a continuing concern with poverty. Their investigations have largely proceeded along three tracks. First, some have looked at poverty in the context of broader studies of income receipt and the patterns and determinants of occupational and income mobility over time (Lipset and Bendix, 1967; Duncan et al., 1984; Wright, 1979). Such studies have been quantitative in nature and have depended on the collection of large masses of data from population or sample surveys. Second, some have examined the behavior of the poor, largely through qualitative techniques. In this regard, much of the literature in the past two decades has centered on the question of whether or not there exists a "culture of poverty"--a set of values and attitudes differentiating the poor from more affluent members of society and transmitted from one generation to the next (Lewis, 1959, 1966; Harrington, 1962; Valentine, 1968). Finally, some have focused on the "welfare state" and its implications for the distribution of economic, political, and social resources (Janowitz, 1976; Piven and Cloward, 1971; Wilensky and Lebeaux, 1965).

The study of organizational behavior has also occupied an important place in American sociology, one that antedates the "discovery" of Max Weber's seminal works on bureaucracy in the 1940s (Perrow, 1979). Much of the early work in this area responded to the perceived need for

greater harmony in the production process and the accommodation of workers to the demands and discipline of industrial society. The "human relations" school of organizational behavior was at once descriptive and prescriptive in specifying the conditions that made employees willing to subject themselves to regulation (Barnard, 1968).

This dissertation deals with the institutional aspects of public welfare. It represents an effort to understand how welfare policy is put into practice--to grasp those factors influencing specific initiatives toward the poor and to comprehend how regulations are interpreted and communicated by individuals who are charged with carrying out these initiatives. In so doing, it also examines the ways in which organizations and institutions that deal with poor people attempt to regulate their behavior.

One especially useful study for the present investigation is Michael Lipsky's Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services (1980), which examines such organizations as schools, law enforcement agencies, and welfare departments, whose members interact directly with the public and exercise discretion over the allocation of benefits or sanctions. In Lipsky's view, a number of conditions characterize these agencies. First, they are expected to serve multiple, ambiguous, and often conflicting goals. Second, because the clients they serve are involuntary ones, they function in part as mechanisms of social control. Finally, these organizations are constantly subject to resource constraints. All these factors inevitably lead those employees who have face-to-face contact with the organizations' clienteles to adopt certain work patterns that maximize

both efficiency and autonomy.

Lipsky's challenging and original book is discussed at greater length later in this study. The dissertation itself is in large part an effort to test and refine Lipsky's propositions, as well as those of other organizational theorists, by focusing on two programs that sought to redirect and regulate the poor.

The two programs are of interest because they exhibit both parallels and discontinuities. They are marked by similarities in their clienteles and in their ends and means, when the latter are broadly conceived, but also by differences in their immediate objectives and in the routes chosen for reaching these objectives. The two programs are of recent origin; both began operation in 1982 and represented different responses to the federal Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1981. OBRA offered states the opportunity to alter their employment programs for applicants to and recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the nation's principal public assistance program, which is primarily for female-headed single-parent households. In the WIN Demonstration Program title of OBRA, the legislation authorized states to consolidate the administration and improve the operations of the Work Incentive (WIN) Program, the chief federal/state employment program for AFDC recipients. WIN's goal is to increase the unsubsidized employment of the AFDC population and thereby reduce public assistance caseloads and costs. To achieve this end, WIN requires certain AFDC recipients (primarily those with children six years old or older) to participate in such activities as supervised job search,

vocational training, or unpaid work experience as a condition of receiving aid.

The two programs studied in this dissertation were both WIN Demonstration Programs. Both were located in major cities, Baltimore and Chicago, which were, respectively, the twelfth and third largest American cities in 1984 (United States Department of Commerce, 1987).¹ Both served AFDC populations that were over 70 percent non-white and whose lack of educational credentials and prior employment experience posed similar and serious obstacles to employment.

But the two programs differed in their scale and management, in the ways they defined their goals, and in the kinds of activities in which individuals were expected to participate. These differences are elaborated in Chapter V; here, a quick overview of the program models is sufficient. The program in Baltimore gave considerable weight to the development of longer-term economic self-sufficiency--that is, increasing the earnings capacity and job retention of welfare recipients over the longer range--sometimes at the expense of reducing the welfare rolls more quickly by placing individuals in the first available job. To achieve this, the program emphasized unpaid work experience, basic literacy and high school equivalency preparation, and vocational skills

¹For ease of nomenclature and identification, reference is made throughout this dissertation to the "Chicago" program. Technically, it would be more accurate to label it the "Cook County" program, since it operated throughout the county. Cook County's seven million inhabitants include 2,992,000 within the city of Chicago itself. However, by far the majority of the county's AFDC recipients reside within the Chicago city limits.

training, as well as job search activities. Individuals were required to participate in one of these components after an assessment process in which staff attempted to determine their individual interests and capabilities. The program was operated by the local manpower agency rather than by the welfare agency and was designed to enroll only one thousand active participants over the course of a year.

The program in Chicago, in contrast, aimed to achieve maximum welfare reductions--"cost avoidance," in the lexicon of the state welfare agency which ran the program--as quickly as possible. Accordingly, all eligible welfare recipients--some 50,000 at any given time--were required to undertake a two-month job search, in which they were expected to meet an established quota of contacts with prospective employers. If they were unsuccessful in finding jobs during this period, they could then be assigned to other activities aimed at improving employability.

This dissertation has two primary aims. The first is to understand how the programs in Baltimore and Chicago fit into the long history of efforts to modify and order the behavior and values of the poor. This involves an examination of the programs' origins and of the political, economic, administrative, and ideological considerations that shaped the program models. It also entails an analysis of the formal rules governing the actions of program staff and clients and the ways in which staff were prepared for and supervised in their roles. These rules and procedures set the context for staff decision-making.

Second, the dissertation seeks to ascertain how staff themselves defined the programs and interpreted them in interactions with clients.

For while program regulations provide general guidelines about how staff and clients are expected to behave, they cannot anticipate all the areas of uncertainty that staff confront, nor the questions of purpose and procedure that arise from the highly varied, individual, and unpredictable circumstances of welfare recipients. Program staff often need to "reconstruct" the regulations to apply them to the unforeseen conditions they face. This thesis argues that the operation of any program or policy must be understood not only in terms of its formal rules but also in terms of the amount of discretionary decision-making formally or informally vested in line staff and the areas in which that decision-making takes place. In the Baltimore and Chicago programs, this proposition will be explored with respect primarily to three specific points of staff decision-making: determining which clients should be exempted from the mandatory participation requirement; selecting which clients are appropriate for particular program activities; and deciding which clients should be sanctioned for non-compliance with program regulations. Examination of discretionary activity on the part of program staff should be especially useful in testing the validity of Lipsky's argument that organizations that deal with the disadvantaged are constrained by limited resources and other environmental factors to behave in predictable ways.

Two strands of sociological thought inform the general analysis. To understand the broader features of the organizational settings of the two programs, structural analysis is most helpful. Each of the programs can be seen as a "social system" (as the term is used by Talcott Parsons (1951), which has certain requisites for its continuity and stability.

It must secure resources from the environment and distribute them; establish priorities among goals and determine how these can be achieved; coordinate system units; and ensure that actors in the system play their parts "correctly." While structuralism has often been criticized for its tendency to assume the harmonious integration of all parts of the system, its categories provide a useful framework for describing some of what goes on in the system.

At the "micro" level--that of the individual staff members involved in decision-making--an interactionist perspective is particularly useful. This perspective inquires into the ways in which actors define the situations in which they find themselves; social action is seen as constantly evolving in response to changing external cues. In the case of the programs studied here, the external cues were provided in large part by the clients with whom program staff members interacted. In this close-up view of program operations, an effort will be made to understand how staff members received, processed, and responded to the communications of clients to arrive at both standard and revised, formal and informal, versions of agency policy.

The remainder of this dissertation is divided into six chapters. The next chapter provides an historical overview of American social policy towards the poor, in order to establish the framework into which the programs in Baltimore and Chicago can be placed. Chapter III, which reviews relevant sociological literature on organizational functioning, supplies some of the key categories for describing and understanding what goes on in the two programs under study. Chapter IV discusses the methodology of the study. Chapter V looks at the two programs from a

"macro" perspective, inquiring into their origins, aims, structures, and regulations. Chapter VI shifts to a "micro" approach, examining how staff and clients interacted to define the programs as they functioned on a day-to-day basis. The study concludes with some reflections on what the study of these two programs suggests about the forces that generally shape and constrain the ways in which bureaucracies treat their publics, especially those publics that are poor.

CHAPTER II

UNITED STATES WELFARE POLICY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The two programs under study fit into a history of efforts to impose work requirements on the able-bodied poor that dates back to the early settlement of the American colonies, although mothers of school-age children have not always been considered "employable." This chapter reviews that history to establish the evolution of the larger socio-economic context in which mandatory programs for AFDC recipients have taken shape. Thus, while it is attentive to the broader sweep of poverty policy, its primary focus is on how policies toward mothers of young children have changed over time. The period between the institution of the AFDC program as part of the Social Security Act of 1935 and the passage of amendments establishing the Work Incentive (WIN) Program in 1967 is especially important for understanding these changes. Some of the underlying motifs and concerns elucidated here recur in Chapter V, which deals with the origins of the specific programs that are the subject of this investigation.

Two themes are of overarching significance: in the public ideology, work (rather than inherited wealth or income from other sources) has always been considered to be the wellspring of the family's economic independence and moral well-being (Rodgers, 1978). Furthermore, America

has been, in the popular imagination, the land of opportunity, whose economic system could provide abundance for all who were willing to work to earn a decent living.

Those who are poor are therefore thought of as having a problematic relationship to the world of work. Some (the aged, the disabled, and, for a considerable period, some mothers of young children) have been considered legitimately exempt from labor force participation. Other poor people have been considered physically capable of working but unable to do so (or, if they did work, unable to command a decent wage) because of their educational, psychological, or moral deficits. Through most of the first two centuries of American history, poverty was attributed exclusively to these kinds of individual factors, with a consequent emphasis on reforming or rehabilitating the poor, as well as on applying compulsory work measures upon the able-bodied. Only with the economic crises of the 19th century did some individuals begin to question whether the causes of poverty lay equally, or perhaps even primarily, within the economic order (Bremner, 1956). These alternative explanations of poverty coexist in a continuing tension today; both play a role in shaping contemporary social policy.

Given the importance of the work ethic, it is not surprising that the history of American social policy towards the poor has frequently been described as the record of shifting attempts to strike the proper balance between two aims: provision of some degree of economic relief for the needy, and preservation of work incentives (Axinn and Levin, 1975; Lubove, 1972). And the dilemma of modern efforts at "welfare reform," a noted expert writes, is to achieve both these goals at a cost

deemed acceptable to policymakers and politicians (Steiner, 1971). As discussed below, a principal means of attaining these ends has been to divide the population in need into sometimes-overlapping categories--those deemed "deserving" or "undeserving," "employable" or "unemployable"--and to devise different strategies for different groups.

The New Deal and the Origins of Federal Public Assistance

Policy toward the poor in the American colonies, and through much of the early period of independence as well, primarily followed the direction established by the Elizabethan Poor Laws. These laws gave local governments responsibility for taking care of poor people who were legal residents of their jurisdictions. By the early 19th century, the laws stressed provision of aid in almshouses where the poor were segregated from the larger community--a form of assistance known as "indoor relief." The almshouse was often attached to the workhouse, where the able-bodied poor were expected to work in return for their upkeep and thus to reduce their financial burden on the community. Conditions in workhouses were often such as to deter those who might seek assistance from doing so until they had exhausted every other remedy, as well as to spur inmates to leave. As late as 1929, the almshouse remained the basic statutory measure of providing for the poor of all ages and both sexes.

The laws also provided for "outdoor relief" in the form of money payments to enable those considered "deserving"--needy through no fault of their own--to remain in their own homes. Widows and the disabled were assumed to fall into the category of deserving poor. In the 19th

century, the granting of outdoor relief by public agencies lagged, and this function was often performed by private charities. As Janowitz (1976) points out, the idea of charity in modern times (and, it might be added, in the English-speaking countries) carries with it the notion of the lesser moral worth of the recipient. The "friendly visitors," as the middle-class men and women who served as volunteer representatives of private giving were known, tried, through investigations into the moral character of potential recipients, to limit the dispensing of aid to those who were "truly needy." They also engaged in moral exhortation and efforts at "uplift." Seth Low of the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities argued against governmental interference in the matter. Such action, he told the National Conference of Charities and Correction in 1881, "tends inevitably and surely to increase pauperism Wherever society has agents enough to organize relief, it can give, through private sources, all the outdoor relief needed" (cited in Brown, 1940, p.9). Ten years later, another critic warned the same group that outdoor relief fomented social discord by leading a large class to look to government for help, thereby exciting hopes that could not be fulfilled; personal and voluntary charity, on the other hand, was granted as a favor rather than a legal obligation and could be suspended if the poor became too vocal in claiming assistance as a right (Ibid., p. 43). One prominent historian of social welfare contends, however, that the "scientific" spirit that pervaded charitable giving--its emphasis on ascertaining the exact circumstances of each case as a means both of verifying the need for aid and of assisting the recipient to achieve independence--helped produce a radical new view of poverty as the result

as well as the cause of social ills (Bremner, 1956).

When agencies or communities did provide outdoor relief, benefit levels were kept low. Scaled to provide an income less than the lowest amount that might be earned through labor (the doctrine of "less eligibility"), such grants, like the institution of the workhouse, were intended to deter potential relief-seekers and to motivate those already receiving aid to accept available employment. Relief was often granted in kind, as groceries or fuel, to prevent the poor from spending their money unwisely.

By the early years of this century, many state governments did come to acknowledge a responsibility for assisting the indigent. As with private charities, that aid was restricted to categories of "deserving" poor--the blind, the aged, and widows with young children. In 1909, Theodore Roosevelt convoked the White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children in response to the growing awareness that poor children were frequently mistreated in reformatories and other institutions. The conference went on record as favoring assistance to mothers so that they could support their children in their own homes, although it recommended that aid be provided by private charity rather than public relief. Nevertheless, the first state-funded program to assist needy mothers was enacted in Illinois in 1911, and by 1935, 45 states provided such aid. Grace Abbott, a social welfare activist and observer, explained the success of the movement on the grounds that states recognized that "the contribution of the unskilled or semi-skilled mothers in their own homes exceeded their earnings outside of the home and that it was in the public interest to conserve their child-

caring functions" (cited in Bell, 1965). A Bureau of Social Statistics report revealed that in 1928, 72 percent of all relief in 15 large cities had come from public funds, largely in the form of widows' pensions (Brown, 1940). While skepticism about whether government had a proper role in poverty policy continued through the 1920s, the debate was largely rhetorical: that role had become a matter of fact, although only the state and local levels of government were involved.

Nonetheless, mother's aid programs were limited in scale and scope. Local implementation of these programs by the counties was rarely mandatory, and programs were more common in the North than in the South, in large cities than in small towns. Limited appropriations combined with high demand made it necessary to restrict pensions to those families considered "worthy." Two criteria for receiving aid were generally written into state statutes. First, the fathers had to be absent, since it was reasoned that giving assistance to two-parent families would constitute an incentive for abandonment. (Ironically, the charge that provision of benefits spurs paternal abandonment has frequently been leveled at the AFDC program, which for the most part excludes poor intact families.¹) Second, mothers were required to be physically, mentally, and morally fit to care for their children. Moral fitness was

¹Legislation passed in 1961 authorized the extension of Aid to Families with Dependent Children to two-parent households in which one of the parents could demonstrate recent attachment to the labor force but was currently unemployed or underemployed (working fewer than 100 hours a month). States could elect whether or not to offer such benefits (known as AFDC-U) to intact families; as of 1987, 26 states had established AFDC-U programs.

often judged in terms of the woman's sexual conduct, but cases of divorce or separation were also suspect. The only families eligible for mother's aid in all states were ones in which the father was dead, incarcerated, or insane. A 1931 survey indicated that 82 percent of the mothers receiving assistance were widows, and another indicated that 96 percent were white. Moreover, although the intent of the programs was to support mothers so that they would not have to work, grants were low; recipients of assistance often worked as domestics or took in home laundry to supplement the meager allowances (Bell, 1965).

The Great Depression revealed the inadequacy of local relief, both public and private. By the spring of 1930, many private charities had spent their full year's budgets, while others had drawn on reserves or incurred deficits. Municipal agencies were similarly hard-pressed, and spiraling relief expenditures paralyzed many cities. When local governments appealed to the states for help, the latter were hardly better prepared to meet such unprecedented demands.

The crisis generated by the Depression resulted in a substantial transfer of jurisdiction over public assistance from the state and local to the federal level. The federal government seemed the only institution capable of extending relief on the massive scale required. Moreover, the traditional arguments against large-scale public relief appeared to have been vitiated by the Depression. With millions of Americans out of work, the belief that poverty was principally the consequence of personal failings was no longer tenable.

If the entry of the federal government into public welfare policymaking during the New Deal marked a departure from the tradition of

exclusive local control, the policies themselves generally incorporated pre-existing principles. Among these was the tenet that work relief should supersede cash assistance wherever possible. Roosevelt asserted the value of the work ethic in a January 1935 message to Congress:

The lessons of history, confirmed by the evidence immediately before me, show conclusively that continued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fibre. To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit. It is inimical to the dictates of sound policy. It is in violation of the traditions of America (cited in Brown, 1940, p. 165).

To this moral argument, Roosevelt aide Harry Hopkins added a pragmatic one: "We can still talk all we want to about some coming civilization in which work will be outmoded . . . but contemporary sentiment is still against 'a man who gets something for nothing'" (Hopkins, 1936). Work relief principles guided the Civil Works Administration and its successor, the Works Progress Administration.

For New Dealers, the central problem facing the economy was not poverty but unemployment. A properly functioning economy, they reasoned, would eliminate most hardship. Like New Deal relief programs, the Social Security Act of 1935 combatted economic insecurity largely through employment-related strategies. Its social insurance provisions --unemployment and old age insurance, later to be joined by disability and survivor's insurance--were tied to labor force participation. Lawmakers expected that as these social insurance programs expanded, the need for direct relief would decline.

When able-bodied workers returned to work, welfare would be reserved for the residual categories of the unemployable. The public

assistance provisions of the Social Security Act strengthened and extended the pension programs that had been developed on the state level during the previous two decades. Federal financial assistance was given the states to fund programs for the same three categories of people in need for whom state pensions had provided--the aged, the blind, and dependent children. Aid to the aged, in the form of 50-50 matching grants to state old age pension programs, was widely regarded as the most popular title of the entire Act and, according to the legislation's chief draftsman, was the hinge upon which approval of the Act turned (Witte, 1962).

A change of wording before the bill was passed restricted the definition of "dependent children" to those "deprived of parental support or care by reason of the death, continued absence from the home, or physical or mental incapacity of a parent." Aid to Dependent Children thus served to expand state Mother's Aid programs rather than to extend assistance to children whose fathers were unemployed or partially employed with insufficient earnings. The opposition to wider coverage and higher grant levels was led by Southern congressmen, who feared that such provisions would undermine the low wage scale and caste economy of the region (Leuchtenberg, 1963; Piven and Cloward, 1971).

The net effect of New Deal policies and programs was, then, to incorporate into federal law the traditional distinctions between "employables" and "unemployables," "deserving" and "undeserving" poor, although perhaps with less severity. Single mothers with children, the aged, the blind--these categories of the poor were considered to be unemployable and hence were taken under the federal aegis, although

state and local officials retained control over eligibility decisions. All others were considered employable and therefore expected to work or to rely on the "home relief" or "general assistance" programs operated by the individual states, which often imposed work requirements as a condition of receiving benefits.

Moreover, the federal government largely left administration of ADC to the states. The latter established the amount of the grants, the size of the program, and the qualifications of program personnel, although state plans had to be approved at the federal level. From its inception, therefore, the program has been characterized by wide variation, a feature that has continued to the present.

The 1956 and 1962 Amendments: Charting a New Course

Originally conceived as an income maintenance system, welfare came to be seen as a means of rehabilitating the poor. The enactment of amendments to the Social Security Act in 1956 and 1962 providing federal reimbursement to states for the delivery of social services to welfare recipients codified this approach.

While legislators and other public officials gave little attention to poverty and welfare as such from the onset of the Second World War until the mid-1950's, the expectation that the need for public assistance would ultimately disappear with the expansion of social insurance was not fulfilled. The number of families receiving Aid to Dependent Children increased by 165 percent between 1940 and 1956. ADC had no precise analogue in the social insurance system; survivors' insurance covered only those needy families in which the breadwinner was deceased.

The proportion of families receiving ADC because of the estrangement of the father grew from 35 percent in 1942 to 54 percent in 1953.

The persistence of dependency in a generally flourishing economy led to a re-evaluation of the nature and purpose of public assistance. Income maintenance had been accepted as the sole and sufficient aim of welfare during the Depression. With the return of wider prosperity, that rationale was no longer adequate.

One impetus behind the reassessment was the increasing cost burden that public assistance placed on the federal budget. In his Budget Message of January 1956, President Eisenhower asserted, "The Federal Government should also do more to assist the States to adopt preventive measures which will reduce need and increase self-help among those who depend upon public welfare" (U.S. Congress, House, Message from President Eisenhower on the Government Budget for the Fiscal Year 1957, 84th Cong., 2nd sess., 16 January 1956, Congressional Record 102: 574). Also essential, Eisenhower maintained in his State of the Union address the same month, was the training of more skilled social workers as well as research in social welfare.

Other factors also underlay the reconsideration of the objectives of welfare policy. Public officials were becoming aware of rising rates of juvenile delinquency, and child welfare services were seen as a means of attacking the problem. Increased concern was felt at the incidence of out-of-wedlock births in ADC households, as unmarried mothers and those deserted by their husbands began to replace widows as the major recipients of ADC. While the moral character of widows--and thus, their

"deservingness" to receive public assistance--was unimpeachable, that of unmarried mothers was not.

It seems probable that the increased number of unwed mothers enrolled on ADC was due in part to more lenient administration than had been the case in the mother's pension programs (especially in the North and in urban areas), although this aspect of ADC growth has been little studied. "Suitable home" provisions were not written into federal law, but states could include them at their option. Some states officially repealed such statutes but continued their use informally; others discontinued use although the laws remained on the books. Decisions about the moral worth of prospective and actual recipients largely remained at the discretion of individual caseworkers.

Perhaps most significant was the re-emergence during the 1950s of the professional ideology of social work, which provided the basis for looking at public assistance in a new light. Since the 1920s, social work principles had centered on the role of sympathetic but dispassionate therapeutic intervention, including appropriate social services, in helping the disturbed client achieve a healthy adjustment to the environment. During the Depression, when clients could be regarded as the hapless victims of economic circumstance, the end of welfare policy involved little more than the dispensing of money. In a period of general prosperity, the older ideology regained much of its force; welfare recipients could again be seen as the victims of personal inadequacies, to be cured by skilled social workers. During Congressional hearings on the Social Security Amendments of 1955, the welfare policy committee of the American Public Welfare Association issued a statement

of principles giving primacy to the social service aspects of public assistance and playing down its economic character:

Public welfare is essentially a service program. As such, it involves the rendering of personal service by workers with special skills and knowledge. To the extent that [clients'] problems involve financial need, welfare service is accompanied by economic aid (U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Finance, Social Security Amendments of 1955, Hearings before the Senate Committee on Finance on H.R. 7225, Part 3, 84th Cong., 2nd sess., 1956, p. 850).

Through such highly placed individuals as Jay L. Roney, Director of the Bureau of Public Assistance in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and Charles Schottland, Social Security Commissioner, both of whom had joined the Eisenhower administration after careers in both public and private welfare agencies, the social work ethic was incorporated into the Administration's proposals for changes in public assistance and child welfare services. These were introduced into Congress in early 1956 and passed without controversy as amendments to the Social Security Act. The public assistance provisions created a number of changes in the administration and financing of welfare programs; but most notable for this discussion is the fact that the statement of purpose of the programs was amended. Besides furnishing financial assistance, the programs were to "promote the well-being of the Nation by encouraging the States to place greater emphasis on helping to strengthen family life and helping needy families and individuals attain the maximum economic and personal independence of which they are capable." For parents or other caretaker relatives in ADC households, the aim was to "attain the maximum self-support and personal independence consistent with the maintenance of continuing parental care and

protection." The assumption that the mother (or other caretaker) would stay at home rather than go to work was not fundamentally challenged.

Services were to be aimed at the "rehabilitation" of the individual. The concept of rehabilitation had gained currency in earlier legislation providing for vocational retraining of the disabled, among whom wounded veterans numbered prominently. The American Public Welfare Association stressed that rehabilitation should be broadly construed. The APWA statement of principles noted that the term referred not merely to vocational objectives and a return to self-support, but to assistance geared toward helping individuals achieve the "maximum feasible level of personal and social well-being and usefulness" (Ibid., p. 856). Nonetheless, rehabilitative services were largely "sold" to Congress on the basis of their ability to reduce welfare costs. Thus, Mary Switzer, Director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in HEW, testified in Congressional hearings that of some 58,000 people restored to employment under her office's auspices, between 11,000 and 12,000 had received public assistance at some time during treatment (U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Finance, Social Security Amendments of 1955, Hearings before the Senate Committee on Finance on H.R. 7225, Part 2, 84th Cong., 2nd sess., 1956, p. 564). All parties, social workers and legislators alike, could support the concept of rehabilitation in theory; only as it worked out--or failed to work out--in practice would this unanimity dissolve.

It would be wrong to view welfare reform as a major concern of most lawmakers in 1956. Income adequacy received no less attention than caseload reductions on the Senate floor. Most legislators expressed a

sympathetic attitude toward the poor and accepted the views of social welfare experts as these were embodied in the amendments.

Nonetheless, the 1956 Amendments mark a watershed in thinking about the functions of public assistance. "Self-support" and "self-care" joined income maintenance as the espoused goals of welfare policy, and as time passed, the former were to gain increasing importance.

By 1961, it was apparent that the 1956 Amendments were not stemming the tide of welfare growth. State and local expenditures for public assistance rose from \$3.1 billion in 1956 to \$4.8 billion in 1961, to the distress of state legislators and other officials. Confronted by rising welfare caseloads, some communities attempted to solve the problem by imposing restrictions that would remove recipients from the welfare rolls. Two such incidents made national headlines, and the publicity they aroused helped to redefine the public image of many welfare recipients as weak in moral character and therefore undeserving of assistance.

In July, 1960, the governor of Louisiana signed a law requiring that welfare workers enforce a new "suitable home" provision. Suitability was defined primarily in terms of sexual behavior: if an ADC mother were living with a member of the opposite sex without a valid marriage, or if she became pregnant or had an out-of-wedlock child after receiving welfare, assistance was to be cut off unless and until she could produce satisfactory proof that she had ceased sexual relations. Three months later, 6235 cases containing some 23,300 children had been closed without notification of the right to a hearing.

The Louisiana law was attacked by welfare and civil rights organizations as denying equal protection and due process. In a federal hearing, the Commissioner of Social Security ruled that a state could not use the suitable home requirement as grounds for denying relief if it subsequently permitted the child to remain in the home. Louisiana quickly amended its statute, but the episode drew attention to the incidence of out-of-wedlock child-bearing among welfare mothers.

The next year, Newburgh, New York imposed an even more stringent set of regulations on its welfare applicants and recipients. All applicants for relief who were new to the city were required to show evidence that their plans in coming to Newburgh involved a concrete offer of employment; they were to be limited to two weeks of assistance. All recipients physically capable of and available for private employment who were offered a job but refused it, "regardless of the type of employment," were to be denied relief, as were women who bore children out of wedlock after receiving aid. All adult able-bodied males on relief were to be assigned to full-time maintenance work in public buildings. Aid to persons other than the aged, blind, and disabled was to be limited to three months in any one year.

Several of these points were in clear contravention of existing federal law; federally-assisted programs expressly forbade a work requirement, for instance. A New York State Supreme Court justice issued a temporary injunction against the Newburgh plan, and 12 of its 13 points were later declared unconstitutional. However, the plan received wide media coverage and drew national attention.

Soon after his confirmation as Secretary of HEW in the Kennedy

Administration, Abraham Ribicoff appointed a number of study groups, consisting primarily of representatives of public and private social welfare agencies and schools of social work, to make recommendations for changes in the welfare system. The recommendations of the different groups were notable for their uniformity, and their proposals reflected the main currents of opinion in the social work field. They emphasized the importance of rehabilitative services to combat situations involving desertion, out-of-wedlock child-bearing, emotional disturbance, and family breakdown, while downplaying income maintenance as a sole and sufficient goal. Reports of two of the advisory committees framed the issue as follows:

Money payments to the mothers . . . not only does not meet the children's needs but contributes to the popular impression that assistance is fostering or creating the very failures of social responsibility that create these needs. (Wickenden and Bell, 1961, p. 117)

Financial assistance . . . is essential, but alone is not enough. Expenditures for assistance not accompanied by rehabilitative services may actually increase dependency and eventual costs to the community (U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Ways and Means, Public Welfare Amendments of 1962, Hearings before the House Committee on Ways and Means on H.R. 10032, 87th Cong., 2nd sess., 1962, p. 78).

Welfare professionals generally endorsed work relief as a rehabilitative measure for men. One committee suggested that federal funds be appropriated to establish "community work and training" programs for unemployed fathers receiving AFDC in the newly established Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Unemployed Parent category. A report prepared by George Wyman, Director-Designate of the New York State Department of Social Services, maintained that "'work for relief' will help to maintain work habits and skills, it will have therapeutic value,

and it will contribute to civic improvements" (Ibid., p. 138). However, welfare experts also held that economic independence was an unrealistic goal for most welfare recipients, who were too young or too old to work, disabled, or caring for young children. Thus, the mother's place at home was unquestioned.

The Kennedy Administration, like the Eisenhower one, embraced both the concrete proposals and the underlying ideology of social work professionals. In his State of the Union message in January 1962, Kennedy described the Administration welfare reform bill which would shortly be presented to Congress as stressing "services instead of support," "rehabilitation instead of relief," and "training for useful work instead of prolonged dependency" (U.S. Congress, House, Message from President Kennedy on Welfare, 87th Cong., 2nd sess., 2 February 1962, Congressional Record 108: pp. 1487-1489). As had been the case with the 1956 Amendments, the specific provisions of the 1962 Public Welfare Amendments appealed to social workers and politicians alike. The federal government raised its share of the costs of rehabilitative and preventive services from 50 to 75 percent, and retained the 1956 provision whereby federal grants were made to the states for training welfare personnel. The federal government agreed to participate in expenditures for Community Work and Training (CWT) programs which required able-bodied males to work off their relief checks, but safeguards for CWT employment were written into the bill: projects had to perform work useful to the community, they could not displace regular employees, they had to adhere to basic health and safety standards, and they could not undermine prevailing wages and labor conditions. Another

proposal authorized \$5 million in 1963 and \$10 million a year thereafter for day care for children under 12 whose mothers worked.

The promise of reduced welfare rolls was a prime selling point of the Public Welfare Amendments. Although social welfare professionals may have questioned the extent to which the services approach could produce sizable reductions in the ranks of assistance recipients, they expressed no such reservations when testifying before the House Ways and Means Committee. In introducing the Amendments from the Committee onto the House floor, Committee Chairman Wilbur Mills told his fellow Representatives that the proposals were intended to "improve, redirect, and tighten up" the welfare programs. The Committee, he said, was well aware of the increasing number of comments critical of the programs and recognized that the states needed increased latitude to deal with the problem, "especially as to abuses in the aid to dependent children program" (U.S. Congress, House, Representative Wilbur Mills speaking for the Public Welfare Amendments of 1962, H.R. 10606, 87th Cong., 2nd sess., 15 March 1962, Congressional Record 108: 4267-68).

The bill aroused much praise and few objections: liberals and conservatives alike applauded extension of community work and training. On signing the Amendments into law, John Kennedy called them "the most far-reaching revision of our public welfare program since it was enacted in 1935" ("President Signs Welfare Reform," New York Times, 27 July 1962, Late City Edition). Yet in terms of ends, the 1962 Amendments merely restated more emphatically the goals of the 1956 legislation; in terms of means, their major effect was to raise federal matching payments for services from 50 to 75 percent. As Gilbert Steiner, a

leading historian of welfare policy, wrote (1966, pp. 46-47), "The significance of the Public Welfare Amendments of 1962 is not in their new approach to the problem of public assistance--for the approach is really not new--but in the need of proponents of the legislation to assert that a new approach was being offered." Politicians, welfare professionals, and the general public were all dissatisfied with the state of welfare; the success or failure of the 1962 Amendments and the rehabilitative approach they embodied would be judged by their ability to deliver on their promise of reducing the number of assistance recipients.

The Enactment of the Work Incentive Program and the Talmadge Amendment

The New Frontier's social service and employment training programs did not seem to achieve their intended goals. Of some 133,000 welfare recipient enrolled in training since 1964, only 22,000 had found jobs by mid-1967. Meanwhile, the public assistance caseload soared, with growth concentrated in Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Between January 1962 and June 1967, 1.5 million AFDC recipients were added to the rolls, for a total of 5 million. Over two-thirds of the nation's AFDC recipients came on welfare because of the father's absence; in about half of these cases, the father was not married to the mother. By 1968, only five percent of the program's clientele consisted of the widows for whom the original program had been instituted (Steiner, 1971). Moreover, while blacks constituted less than 50 percent of those on welfare in 1967, their concentration in large urban centers made them far more visible than white AFDC households scattered largely in rural

areas. When Senate Finance Committee Chairman Russell Long publicly referred to the National Welfare Rights Organization, an advocacy group composed primarily of black mothers, as a "bunch of brood mares," he was expressing a commonly held view that black women on welfare kept having children out of wedlock in order to increase their assistance grants (Sampson, 1971).

AFDC growth appeared unrelated to national economic trends. Between 1962 and 1967, the overall rate of unemployment dropped from 5.5 percent to 3.8 percent, while among non-whites, it fell from 10.9 percent to 7.4 percent. Welfare thus seemed to be becoming a way of life, unresponsive to wider prosperity, unsusceptible to the efforts of social workers, and a violation of the work ethic.

The exemption of welfare mothers from a work requirement was especially questioned at a time when women were entering the labor force at increasing rates and when working mothers were gaining increased public acceptance. By 1970, the number of working mothers surpassed the 1940 figure by 600 percent (Steiner, 1971). At a time when many lower-class and middle-class women, including heads of households, were already employed, AFDC mothers could be viewed as deviant not only in terms of their marital and child-bearing status but also on the basis of their failure to support their families. Under such conditions, legislators could rebut the contention that imposing a work requirement on AFDC mothers would be discriminatory. In addition, the availability of federal funding for daycare provided a legal solution to the problem of what to do with the children of working mothers.

In 1967, as in 1956 and 1962, social work professionals employed as

HEW planners played a key role in drafting the Administration's proposals for public assistance. The bill's welfare legislation reflected a rising concern with income adequacy on the part of leaders in the social welfare field. While social welfare professionals had never held that social services represented a complete solution to problems of mass poverty, they now began to question the rehabilitative impact of demonstration projects aimed at helping individuals achieve economic independence. Although they did not go so far as to deny altogether the value of social services in reducing poverty, they began to look to more generous welfare grants, rather than services, as the primary means of achieving that end. In 1964, the National Association of Social Workers endorsed the principle of a guaranteed income for all Americans, and the report of an Advisory Council on Public Welfare urged that nationwide assistance standards be established and eligibility criteria other than need be eliminated. These positions, in implying that the traditional distinctions between deserving and undeserving poor should be eradicated, marked a distinct departure from the categorical nature of federally-subsidized public assistance established in the Social Security Act. While the Advisory Council recommended permanent federal financial participation in community work and training, in general, it was not sanguine about the employability of the majority of welfare recipients, and it assumed that mothers of school-age children could not be expected to work.

The Administration's 1967 legislative proposals did not advocate national welfare standards--perhaps the Administration believed that the guaranteed income was an idea whose time had not yet come--but otherwise

incorporated many of the Advisory Council's recommendations. It provided for 90 percent federal coverage of the costs of community work and training, and, as an incentive for going to work, allowed states to disregard up to \$50 per month of earnings in calculating the public assistance benefit. (Standard policy had been to subtract earnings dollar-for-dollar from the assistance grant.) However, the bill proposed to direct its major rehabilitative efforts not at adults but at youth, making sweeping recommendations for new and improved health and welfare services to children in order to interrupt "the cycle of poverty" at the formative stage.

The bill died in the Ways and Means Committee, where it aroused intense opposition. Given the failure of the 1962 Amendments to achieve the Committee's goal of reducing welfare caseloads, it is not surprising, at least in retrospect, that the Committee would reject Administration proposals which, rather than tightening up on welfare recipients, seemed overly generous to those whose characteristics seemed to make them the undeserving poor.

Instead, the Ways and Means Committee met sixty-four times in Executive Session and emerged four months after the hearings with its own, radically different proposal for reforming public assistance, contained in Title II of the Ways and Means Committee bill. At the outset, the title provided that in each state a Work Incentive (WIN) Program was to be established for each "appropriate relative and dependent child [over age 16] with the objective of--

(1) assuring, to the maximum extent possible, that such relative, child, and individual will enter the labor force and accept employment so that they will become self-sufficient, and

(ii) preventing or reducing the incidence of illegitimate births, and otherwise strengthening family life.

This language is noteworthy, for while the 1956 and 1962 Amendments had stressed self-support to the maximum extent commensurate with maintaining family life, the 1967 Amendments announced that they would give top priority to labor force participation, with the goal of strengthening family life defined chiefly in terms of reducing out-of-wedlock births and relegated to a distinctly secondary position.

For the purpose of this discussion, the most significant feature of the Committee Amendments is that they were the first to establish a work requirement for AFDC mothers. States were required to set up community work and training programs which, in conjunction with other such programs and with the state employment service, were to provide employment or training in the public and private sectors for all welfare recipients deemed appropriate. Mothers who refused to register or participate in work and training or to accept employment from the state employment service or a private employer were to be denied welfare benefits (although their children would continue to receive aid). Special works projects, involving low-skilled, federally-subsidized jobs in the public and private nonprofit sectors, were mandated for enrollees whose abilities were judged so limited that they could not benefit from work experience or training programs geared toward the regular economy. Thus, the Ways and Means Committee rejected the contention of the welfare professionals that many welfare recipients were too unskilled to work.

The Ways and Means Committee bill, like that advanced by the

Administration, contained incentives for welfare recipients to go to work. In recalculating the assistance grant of an employed WIN enrollee, the state was obliged to disregard the first \$30 per month, plus 1/3 of additional earned income. The legislation also exempted employment- and training-related expenses and mandated a range of supportive services, including medical examinations and child care.

The bill, like most Ways and Means Committee legislation, was reported to the House under a closed rule permitting no amendments. It was tied to a increase in Social Security benefits, a tactic that helped ensure that few legislators would vote against it. In fact, the principle of compulsory work generated relatively little controversy in the House, although some members did express concern about the way in which mandatory work programs would be implemented. Supporters of work requirements cited a number of arguments on their behalf. First, they were seen as having a rehabilitative impact on welfare recipients. Al Ullman (D., Ore.), for instance, held that welfare recipients needed the self-respect and dignity that jobs could provide, as well as "the patterns of the working world--getting up in the morning, catching the bus, arriving on time, putting in eight hours on the job" (U.S. Congress, House, Representative Al Ullman speaking for the Social Security Amendments of 1967, H.R. 12080, 90th Cong., 1st sess., 17 August 1967, Congressional Record 113: 23070). A related argument was that, in the absence of new interventions, welfare would become a way of life.

Mills and others maintained that the 1962 Amendments had proved that optional work and training programs were ineffective in curbing caseload growth and in curtailing the increase in out-of-wedlock

childbearing. John Byrnes of Wisconsin, the ranking Republican on the Committee, said that while he could not guarantee that WIN would produce dramatic results, "a continuation of present policies will perpetuate the abysmal conditions affecting families who live on welfare, and increase the growing burden on taxpayers" (U.S. Congress, House, Representative John Byrnes speaking for the Social Security Amendments of 1967, H.R. 12080, 90th Cong., 1st sess., 17 August 1967, Congressional Record 113: 23062). Some Representatives contended that unless the administration of welfare programs were changed, a taxpayer revolt would result in the complete elimination of public assistance programs.

Further, in proposing the WIN Program, the Committee asserted its ideological independence from HEW. Martha Griffiths (D., Mich.) accused HEW planners of living in a "gingerbread world," and asserted that the welfare problem would never be solved under HEW rules. She especially criticized HEW's apparent unwillingness to acknowledge the role of women in the labor force (U.S. Congress, House, Representative Martha Griffiths speaking for the Social Security Amendments of 1967, H.R. 12080, 90th Cong., 1st sess., 17 August 1967, Congressional Record 113: 23081).

HEW responded with amendments of its own when the Senate Finance Committee began hearings on the House-approved measure. These amendments were intended to de-claw the Ways and Means Committee measure by making participation in WIN voluntary rather than mandatory. HEW Secretary Gardner used three arguments to support his opposition to a work requirement for AFDC mothers. First, he maintained, it was undesirable, since the application of "rigid formulas" in determining

eligibility for work relief might thwart AFDC's goal of strengthening family life. Second, he felt it could not be administered; he predicted numerous difficulties would arise in deciding what constituted good cause for refusal to participate. Finally, he asserted, the compulsory work requirement was unnecessary. A voluntary program would be sufficient to employ all those for whom jobs could be found in the foreseeable future (U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Finance, Social Security Amendments of 1967, Hearings before the Senate Committee on Finance on H.R. 12080, Part 1, 90th Cong., 1st sess., 1967, pp. 215-388).

While the members of the Senate Finance Committee listened to Gardner, and to a parade of officials of various social welfare, minority rights, and other interest groups who testified in support of his position, they were not convinced. As Mills had exercised control over the Ways and Means committee, so the Finance Committee was dominated by its chairman, another Southern Democrat, Russell Long of Louisiana. Like Mills, Long was determined to require welfare recipients to work, on the grounds that menial tasks that no one else wanted to do would thereby get done and that those on assistance would in this way pay off their debt to society. Long repeatedly cited his acquaintance with widows who had found care for their young children and gone off to work. In this way, he attempted to deflect criticism that WIN would impose a class-based double standard on American women: while middle-class mothers could enter the labor force or not as they saw fit, welfare mothers would not be allowed to exercise such choice. Martha Griffiths won Long's approval when, in testifying in favor of the House

bill, she noted: "ADC was set up by a compassionate nation to provide for people who had no work. This idea that you could make a choice--work or the rest of us will provide for you--is, to me, incredible" (U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Finance, Social Security Amendments of 1967, Hearings before the Senate Committee on Finance on H.R. 12080, Part 3, 90th Cong., 1st sess., 1967, p. 1812). This misreading of the original intent behind the Aid to Dependent Children program, shows that legislators could "fictionalize" the past to suit their present interests.

Amendments to the legislation passed in the Senate and retained in the House-Senate Conference Committee responded to some of the criticisms about how the program would be implemented. The specific conditions under which AFDC recipients would be exempt from WIN participation were spelled out: mothers caring for preschool-age children were excused, as were those who were ill, incapacitated, caring for disabled relatives, or too far from a project to make participation feasible. Thus, the original principle underlying the Aid to Dependent Children program--that mothers should not be separated from their children--was retained in limited fashion: it applied only to children below age six. The local welfare department was required to provide daycare for children when necessary. While these amendments specified the terms and conditions under which mandatory work could be enforced, they did not undercut the basic validity of the work requirement, and may have made it more acceptable. In fact, the discussion surrounding the WIN Program makes it clear that only a minority of legislators objected to the concept of mandatory work. Not only did support of WIN

allow members of Congress to affirm the work ethic, it also permitted them to assert that they were finally doing something to untangle the welfare mess.

Despite the high hopes Congressmen and government officials had for WIN, they concluded within three years that it was a failure. During WIN's first two and a half years, 511,000 welfare recipients were deemed appropriate for referral. Nearly a quarter of these were never referred, and of those who were referred, only 229,000 were actually enrolled. Most significantly, only 20,000 WIN participants found employment at wages sufficient to permit closing their welfare cases (U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Finance, Social Security Amendments of 1971, Hearings before the Senate Committee on Finance on H.R. 1, Part 1, 92nd Cong., 1st sess., 1971, pp. 344-47).

Other operational indicators were scarcely more promising. Dropout rates were high, although of those who terminated, only a quarter lacked good cause. Moreover, waits for training or placement were often lengthy, and participants were frequently placed in an "Unassigned Recipient" category in which they remained formally enrolled while receiving no program services.

In the Congressional hearings that ensued, various explanations of WIN's failure were advanced. Some observers cited problems of organization, administration, interagency cooperation, and insufficient funding, as well as the lack of such supportive services as medical care, child care, and transportation. Others contended that administrative discretion had hampered enrollment. They argued that because WIN had required only the enrollment of "appropriate" individuals,

program staff had weakened the work requirement that was clearly the legislators' intent. Finally, some doubted that the labor market could successfully absorb individuals with limited skills and work experience.

Early in 1971, Senator Herman Talmadge (D., Georgia) introduced into the Senate a bill proposing a number of changes designed to make WIN's administration more rigorous. In the Finance Committee, the bill's provisions were hooked onto a Social Security bill which had already carried the House by unanimous consent. The House conferees accepted the Senate amendments almost verbatim, and on the whole, the Talmadge Amendment, as Public Law 92-223 came to be known, aroused virtually no controversy.

The Talmadge Amendment altered WIN in several ways. First, it specified that "every individual, as a condition of eligibility for public assistance . . . shall register for manpower services, training, and employment." The same categories of individuals remained exempt (mothers of preschool children, those ill or incapacitated, etc.), but all others were considered presumptively appropriate as mandatory enrollees.

Second, the Talmadge Amendment emphasized direct placement in employment rather than classroom skills training. Any new training program had to be certified as relevant to labor market demands. Third, work experience was stressed. The on-the-job training and public service employment specified in WIN had scarcely been utilized; under Talmadge, one third of state WIN expenditures were to be reserved for these two programs.

Finally, the Talmadge Amendment increased the federal contribution

for supportive services from 75 percent to 90 percent, and within each state welfare agency, a separate administrative unit was required to provide services for all WIN enrollees before certifying them as ready for employment. While a mother could choose among different types of childcare if more than one were available, she could no longer insist on "acceptable" childcare services.

The modifications introduced by the Talmadge Amendment were intended both to increase the number of AFDC recipients enrolled in WIN and to ensure that welfare recipients would join the labor force as quickly as possible. The strengthening of work requirements has continued to be a major thrust of welfare reform from 1971 to the present.

"Work/Welfare" Programs During the 1970s and 1980s

In retrospect, it is clear that the enactment of the WIN Program and the Talmadge Amendment signaled a decisive shift in public expectations about the nature of the AFDC program and the behavior of its beneficiaries. Congress took an emphatic stand that women receiving AFDC whose children were of school age were capable of work of some kind; the implicit assumption that had guided AFDC policy during the program's first three decades--that mothers were "unemployable" and hence deserving of assistance without the quid pro quo of work effort --was overturned. Most of the federal proposals for restructuring AFDC that have emanated from both the executive and the legislative branches during the twenty years since the passage of the 1967 Amendments have

sought to condition the receipt of benefits on participation in programs aimed at moving enrollees into jobs.

One of the most innovative of these proposals was the Family Assistance Plan (FAP) introduced by the Nixon Administration in 1969. FAP attempted to join a federally-guaranteed minimum income for families with children, including those with two parents and the working poor, with work requirements and incentives similar to those under the WIN Program. In households eligible for FAP, each member was to be required to register with the State Employment Service unless he or she met certain exempting conditions. Single mothers with children six or over were obligated to register; in two-parent households the mother was not required to register if the father had already done so. Each registrant was then to participate in activities aimed at increasing employability, including remedial education, skills training, and public service employment.

Congress rejected the Family Assistance Plan. FAP encountered opposition from liberals, who thought its income guarantee (\$1600 for a family of four) too low and its coverage too narrow (it excluded able-bodied but childless adults). It also met stiff resistance from conservatives, who believed that any plan to aid two-parent households or supplement the incomes of the working poor would deter work effort (Aaron, 1973). The principle of a guaranteed income was dealt a further blow by the results of experiments with income guarantees conducted in several locations. These indicated that while receipt of such guarantees had a modest effect on work effort at the individual level, the costs were substantial in the aggregate (Keeley, Spiegelman, and

West, 1980; Moffitt, 1979). This evidence continues to be cited as the major argument against a comprehensive minimum income approach.

The welfare reform proposals of the Carter and Reagan Administrations have involved "two-tier" strategies--efforts to distinguish "employable" individuals from whom work effort is expected from those who are judged "unemployable" (usually because their children are very young). Under these plans, the former are required to participate in employment-related activities, including job search and vocational training, or to accept jobs specifically created for them in the public and private nonprofit sectors. The proposals differ, however, in whether the jobs are "regular" (that is, whether they are full-time and pay wages, although the latter are usually low) or "workfare" positions, in which recipients are required to work part-time in return for their welfare checks rather than a salary.

The Carter welfare reform plan was not enacted into law. Instead, a large-scale multi-site demonstration project, known as the Employment Opportunity Pilot Project (EOPP), was developed to test the plan's feasibility and effectiveness. EOPP sought to link the income maintenance system with employment by requiring employable AFDC recipients to participate in a series of activities related to employment. First, enrollees took part in an intensive job search effort lasting five to eight weeks; if they were unsuccessful, they were to enter a work and training component for up to a year. Those who still did not find unsubsidized employment were then to re-enter job search. Although a full evaluation of the initiative was planned, it was considerably scaled down when the Reagan Administration took office.

Apart from federal programs and proposals, several states, under special federal waivers of the AFDC regulations, had experimented with workfare for AFDC recipients. California was one such state; during Ronald Reagan's term as governor, it had sought to require employable WIN enrollees who could not find regular employment or training opportunities to "work off" their welfare grants (with the duration of work determined by the amount of their monthly grant divided by the minimum wage) in a Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) assignment. Upon his election as President, Reagan sought to enable states to mandate workfare without going through the waiver process.

The Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, passed by Congress with Administration support, made sweeping changes in many aspects of the AFDC program, including the method of determining eligibility and the categories of eligible persons. For purposes of this discussion, the most important provisions were those relating to WIN and to CWEP. First, states could participate in a three-year WIN Demonstration Program which would give the state welfare agency sole authority for the operation of WIN. (Previously, responsibility for WIN had been divided between the state welfare agency and the employment service.) Second, states had the option of implementing mandatory Community Work Experience Programs for eligible WIN enrollees, as condition of receiving benefits.

In 1983 and 1984, the Reagan Administration proposed legislation which would have required all states to operate CWEP. The rejection of these proposals by Congress was a reflection of states' concern that mandatory CWEP would be administratively infeasible, and of their wish

to preserve diversity and flexibility in their approaches to work requirements. But the political and social value of such requirements--as well as their presumed benefits for recipients--has scarcely been questioned. It appears that welfare mothers of school-age children have been permanently recategorized among the ranks of the "employable," and the programs studied in this dissertation reflect the assumption that such women not only can but should be expected to work.

CHAPTER III

STUDYING ORGANIZATIONS: A REVIEW OF RELEVANT SOCIOLOGICAL LITERATURE

Because the two programs examined in this dissertation entail the involvement of sizable bureaucracies in efforts to deliver employment services to welfare recipients, it is useful to consider their operations in the context of how sociologists have described and analyzed complex organizations. The major thrust of this effort is to develop a set of concepts and a vocabulary for discussing the Baltimore and Chicago programs and setting them in the larger framework of organizational theory.

In their useful review of the literature on public bureaucracy, Peabody and Rourke (1965) point to three broad approaches to the study of such organizations (and, in the view of this author, to organizations more generally). The first focuses on the organization's purpose, examining how choices are made among alternatives and how decisions are implemented, as well as evaluating the progress made in reaching these alternatives. A second avenue of study centers on organizational personnel, considering recruitment, morale, productivity, and the impact of bureaucracy on personality. The third perspective is closely related to the first two and entails the analysis of organizational control structures.

This chapter, like the dissertation as a whole, is concerned primarily with the first and third of these approaches, although the second will be touched on as well. Since the literature on organizations is voluminous, the chapter will focus on those areas that are particularly germane to the programs under study and to the amalgam of structuralist and interactionist perspectives adopted here.

Initially, the chapter will examine literature on the relationship between organizational objectives and staff practices. Much of this work centers on how organizations attempt to secure the cooperation of lower-level personnel and to channel decision-making. Under this rubric, too, fall studies of how lower-level staff behave in response to both organizational guidelines and situational and other cues and of the factors that promote or constrain discretionary decision-making.

The chapter will also review several studies of social welfare institutions concerned with providing services to and/or regulating the behavior of the poor to gain insights into what has happened in other agencies and programs. Finally, it will consider some efforts to approach the study of organizations from an interactionist perspective.

Clearly, these categories are not mutually exclusive. Peter Blau's The Dynamics of Bureaucracy (1963), for instance, draws much of its illustrative material from Blau's fieldwork in a state employment agency serving many public assistance recipients and represents an effort to merge structuralist and interactionist frameworks. Nonetheless, the book receives consideration in the first section of the chapter. Conversely, Thomas' (1959) article, "Role Conceptions and Organizational Size," a study of welfare workers in different-sized units of a state

public assistance agency, is considered in the second section of the chapter, although it takes into account the ways in which certain features of the organizational setting influence staff behavior. In summary, a considerable degree of overlap among categories can be expected, and the decision about how an individual book or article should be classified is to some degree an arbitrary one.

Organizational Goals and Staff Practices

Securing Compliance with Organizational Goals

If "the problem of order" is the central issue of sociology as a discipline, perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in the study of complex organizations. In his review of the literature, Perrow (1979) suggests that few sociologists addressing this topic have seen cooperation as a natural or intrinsic characteristic of organizations. Instead, most have viewed the coordination and compliance of organizational members as uncertain and as issues deserving careful study. The theorists whose works are reviewed in this chapter differ on two principal counts: (1) the coordinative and control mechanisms they view as most important for achieving cooperation; and (2) whether the interests of all organizational members are, at base, reconcilable or in conflict.

Max Weber viewed bureaucracy as the characteristic form of social organization in modern life. In his classic essay, "Bureaucracy" (1967), he held that in bureaucratized institutions, compliance could be achieved through an elaborate system of regulations and procedures governing the behavior of subordinates. Weber delineated several

attributes of the "ideal type" of bureaucracy. Bureaucrats exercise authority according to rules that apply in fixed jurisdictions. Bureaucratic organizations entail a hierarchy of personnel, with authority to exercise command limited by regulations concerning the coercive measures that may be employed. Written documents guide the management of the organization. Knowing these rules requires technical training and expertise. Together, these characteristics help to ensure that bureaucrats carry on their business objectively, and the more fully that bureaucracy is developed, the more it eliminates discretionary decision-making grounded in personal or emotional considerations. Thus, matters are conducted abstractly, by formulating and following rules for categories of cases, rather than by treating each case individually.

Weber also maintained that while formal "equality before the law" might serve the interests of the middle class, it did not benefit the "propertyless masses" in the same way. He asserted that a different approach, one that was responsive to individual situations and based on ethical considerations rather than strictly on reason, was necessary to compensate for the lack of life opportunities of the poor.

Weber's characterization of bureaucracy is still the point of departure for much sociological inquiry into the nature of institutional behavior. Some of this work has attempted to apply Weber's heuristic model to real-life settings and thus to illuminate its strengths and deficiencies. Thus, for example, several investigators have contested the notion that in fully developed bureaucracies emotional, non-calculated elements are, or even can be, eliminated.

Talcott Parsons, who helped introduce Weber's work to the United States, was one of the first American sociologists to coin a vocabulary for describing how organizations function and to generate abstract propositions about how they are maintained. Parsons theorized (1951) that two kinds of "mechanisms" integrate the individual into the social system. Through "socialization mechanisms," values and beliefs of the wider culture become internalized in the individual. "Social control" mechanisms involve ways of making status roles clear, of rewarding conformity to those roles, and of punishing deviance or channeling it into "safe" outlets.

In other works (Parsons, 1967; Parsons and Shils, 1951), Parsons held that there are four "functional requisites" of all social systems-- problems they must resolve in order to survive. These four problems are termed "adaptation," "goal attainment," "integration," and "latency," neatly summarized by the acronym AGIL. "Adaptation" refers to the need to secure resources from the environment and distribute them through the parts of the system. "Goal attainment" involves the definition of aims and the mobilization of forces to achieve those aims. "Integration" entails the establishment of coordinated relationships among system units. Finally, "latency" concerns the maintenance of desired behavior among system actors and the problems of dealing with their internal tensions and strains.

Amitai Etzioni shared Parsons' concern with examining how various parts of a social system articulate with each other. In A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations (1961), he attempted first to develop a typology of organizations based on form of control, and then to show

how this element relates to other aspects of organizational functioning.

Etzioni posited that compliance could be obtained by manipulating rewards and sanctions of three kinds: physical (what Etzioni calls "coercive" power), material ("remunerative" power), and symbolic ("normative" power). According to Etzioni, organizations could be categorized in terms of the most characteristic way in which they exact compliance from lower participants.

Etzioni then related these sources of compliance to other organizational characteristics, among them, the kinds of involvement displayed by lower participants, the organization's goals, its sources of recruitment, and the nature and degree of consensus. For example, those organizations whose primary goal is to control deviance by segregating certain individuals from society rely most heavily on coercive power; organizations that are concerned with the production of goods and services use remunerative power; and organizations that seek to "create and preserve symbolic objects" depend primarily on normative power. Organizations that employ coercive power do not "recruit" their lower-level members at all; participants are selected for them by outside agencies, such as the courts. On the other hand, utilitarian organizations rely on the price system as a way of recruiting suitable members (employees).

It is easy to think of organizations that have mixed goals. Is a university or a symphony orchestra, for instance, primarily interested in producing services or in preserving symbolic objects? Etzioni conceded that organizations may have mixed goals, but argued that there is a strain to make goals congruent with the compliance structure to

maximize effectiveness. An alternative strategy is to involve different units of the organization, with different compliance structures, in the pursuit of different goals.

Like Etzioni's work, Herbert Simon's Administrative Behavior (1957 ed.) explored the measures that organizations adopt to regulate individual behavior--mechanisms that bring to bear both socialization and control, to use Parsons' terms. Simon's focus was on decision-making in organizations--specifically, on how an organization ensures that its members make the "right" decisions when they must choose among available alternatives. Simon's model of the decision process posited that individuals make decisions on the basis of both externally supplied premises and internal factors such as the individuals's own information and loyalty to the organization. These external and internal cues involve both facts and values. Simon contended that the organization does not necessarily try to prescribe what the individual decision should be, but rather, to narrow the options by controlling the fact and value premises which undergird that decision.

To accomplish this objective, the organization makes use of two major techniques (quite analogous to Parsons' socialization and social control mechanisms): training and socialization to the organization's goals and procedures, and the imposition of external authority. He notes that these modes of influence can substitute for each other; for example, if an organization can recruit trained members or train them itself, less authority will be needed.

Simon described a number of specific methods of exercising influence: the division of labor, the establishment of standard practices,

the transmission of decisions through formal and informal systems of authority, channels of communication, and training. He also delineated several factors that influence the degree to which participants accept the authority of the organization, including the financial and physical sanctions available to deal with noncompliant behavior and an organizational purpose with which the participant is in agreement.

March and Simon systematized and presented many of these ideas in the form of testable hypotheses in their subsequent book, Organizations (1958). The book was written as a critique of administrative management theory, which tended to see the employee as an instrument responding to stimuli presented by the organization in fixed, automatic ways. The authors, in contrast, stressed the motivational and especially the cognitive factors that enter into individual decision-making. Their emphasis on decision-making as the critical activity of organizations is suggested by their statement that "the basic features of organization structure and function derive from the characteristics of human problem-solving processes and rational human choice" (p. 169).

In their view, individuals respond to three kinds of considerations (two of them cognitive) in the course of deciding what action to take: the alternatives they perceive as possible, the consequences they perceive as resulting from each alternative, and their values and goals. These are based on past experiences and perceptions of current stimuli, both of which are partly within the control of the organization. For instance, an organization's recruitment policies can help to achieve commonality of goals, as can the interaction patterns it establishes. The latter are especially important because they give rise to reference

groups which help solidify identification with organizational values and supply access to organizational information.

March and Simon described the decision process as involving a simplified model of the problem in which there is a restricted range of alternatives and consequences which are repeatedly pursued in recurrent situations. Action alternatives are discovered through a search process in which the individual adopts the first solution that meets satisfactory standards ("satisficing," in the authors' term), rather than holding out for the optimum solution.

In his earlier work, Simon briefly addressed the question of discretionary authority exercised by lower-level decision-makers. He suggested that the scope of that discretion is determined by the number and importance of both specified and unspecified premises. This idea appears to be the point of departure for Charles Perrow, who, in an important article in the American Sociological Review (1967) and a subsequent book (1970), held that organizations are, above all, vehicles for getting work done. The organization's structure is the form of interaction that results in the course of performing work. This structure (including its division of labor and specification of rules and procedures) is primarily the function of the perceived nature of the work itself, or what Perrow called the organization's "technology."

By "technology," Perrow meant the work that the organization does on "raw materials" to change them. These raw materials may be animate (including people) or inanimate, concrete or symbolic. Two aspects of the raw material are paramount for understanding organizational structure: (1) the degree to which it is seen as uniform, and (2) the

extent to which the nature of the raw materials and of the process necessary to transform them are understood. Perrow used this dichotomy to derive a fourfold typology of organizational structure which, he contended, allows for more fruitful comparative analyses than typologies based on such other organizational features as compliance structure or function. Where the raw material is seen as relatively uniform and the means of transformation is clear, a routine, or bureaucratic, structure involving staff specialization and a thoroughly elaborated system of rules and regulations is likely to obtain. In the opposite case, where the raw material is seen as highly varied and there is uncertainty about what transformation procedures will work, individual actors must rely on their experience, judgment, and intuition, and a nonroutine structure will result. There are also two intermediate cases. Craft organizations deal with raw material that is relatively uniform, but where the transformation process is not well understood; engineering organizations act on variable raw material, but with clear and established transformation procedures.

Perrow went on to describe each of these four types of organizations in terms of a number of structural variables related to the functioning of technical and supervisory staff: the amount of discretion they exercise, their power, the means of internal coordination, and the interdependence of the groups. In bureaucratic organizations, for example, both technical and supervisory staffs exercise little discretion, and coordination is achieved through advance planning. In nonroutine organizations, in contrast, both staff levels have considerable discretion, and coordination is the result of feedback.

Perrow was more circumspect in attempting to relate technology and structure to organizational goals. He suggested, for instance, that routine organizations emphasize stability and economic efficiency as system goals, while stressing quantity over quality and superficial change over basic transformation as product goals. Engineering organizations, on the other hand, are willing to take more economic risks and to reap more modest profits while producing a reliable, moderately innovative product. However, he acknowledged that the personality of top executives, the organization's history, its environment, and the organizations with which it deals may play no less important a role than technology and structure in goal definition.

Perrow advanced the hypothesis that congruence between technology and structure is essential to maximize organizational efficiency. Most organizations adopt a bureaucratic structure because it permits greater control and predictability of results at a lower cost than do other structures. Organizations that treat cases as unique and undertake a thorough investigation of the best means of transforming each one require far more resources than do those that sort cases into categories for action and thus avoid the need for ongoing decision-making.

Hage and Aiken (1969) tested Perrow's hypotheses through an examination of ten private and six public social welfare and health organizations that provided rehabilitative services, psychiatric services, and services for the mentally retarded in a midwestern city. Degree of routineness was ascertained through interviews with a stratified random sample of agency staff. They found that the social structures of organizations with more routine work processes were in fact characterized by

more centralization in terms of decision-making, fewer professionally-trained staff, greater emphasis on regulations, and goals emphasizing efficiency and quantity of clients served rather than innovation. There was only a weak negative relationship between routineness and quality of service, however, and none between degree of routine and stratification. The authors concluded that other variables besides technology, including organizational size, autonomy, and level of financing, are probably equally important determinants of organizational structure.

Mohr (1971) supported this assessment even more strongly. In his survey of 144 work groups from thirteen randomly selected health departments, he found no relationship between social structure (operationalized as the degree of participation of subordinates in organizational decision-making) and the nature of the work performed. Nor did he find any confirmation of the hypothesis that organizational effectiveness results from the consonance of technology and structure. Rather, he argued that both technology and social structure are both multi-dimensional concepts and cannot be related in simple ways. In part, however, Mohr's analysis would appear to be undercut by the fact that he explored only one dimension of social structure.

I would suggest that the major weakness of Perrow's argument (one that he himself conceded) is its failure to recognize that the way the raw material and transformation mechanisms are perceived are themselves products of environmental factors, resources, personality and values, and so on. This should become clear in the last chapter, where the way in which two organizations chose to deal with objectively quite similar "raw material" is discussed. Nonetheless, Perrow's analysis provides a

useful framework and vocabulary for thinking about how organizations conceptualize the work they perform.

The Behavior of Lower Organization Members

Along with the literature describing the ways in which organizations seek to mold and constrain the behavior of their members, there are many efforts to understand how members respond to these attempts.

While the work of Robert K. Merton fits squarely into the structuralist framework, much of it has tried to inject a more dynamic element into this kind of analysis by exploring how social structures give rise to dysfunctional behavior as well as to behavior that conforms to socially desired goals and means. With respect to bureaucracy, Merton was particularly concerned with the importance of institutional discipline; he noted that "the efficacy of social structure depends ultimately upon infusing group participants with appropriate attitudes and sentiments" (1968 ed., p. 253). But certain structural features that promote discipline may also lead to goal displacement, marked by bureaucratic adherence to the rules as an end in itself rather than as a means of attaining some larger organizational end. Examples of such features include seniority rules, which reduce competition among staff and may lead to defense of vested interests, and what Merton termed "pride of craft," which may engender resistance to change in established routines. The resulting rigidities and formalism may reach the point where conformity to the rules may interfere with the larger purposes of the organization.

Merton also argued that a stress on depersonalization in bureaucracy tends to produce conflict in relations with the public. Clients believe that their cases are unique and deserving of individualized consideration; bureaucrats, in contrast, are trained to treat clients impersonally and to see their problems as falling into appropriate categories for action. Merton notes that this is especially a problem in government agencies, whose personnel are, in theory, the servants of the people but in fact behave as their superiors.

One of the best-known works by Merton's student Peter Blau, The Dynamics of Bureaucracy (1963), also tried to unite structuralism with a more dynamic approach to organizational behavior, in this case by merging the structuralist and interactionist perspectives. Blau noted that understanding social structures requires understanding the patterns of social interaction within them: "Bureaucracies are complex systems of coordinated human activities" (p. v). At greater length and in more detail than Merton, Blau moved beyond the Weberian view of bureaucracy, with its emphasis on official regulations and requirements, to examine the unofficial norms and informal relations that give organizations a dynamic character.

Blau's work is based on case studies he conducted of two government agencies, one a state employment service, the other a law enforcement agency. In both settings, he focused on the kinds of adaptations of procedures in which bureaucrats engaged to meet the demands of the situation and to make their work experience more satisfying. Several types of adaptations are described. First, workers may deviate from established procedure in the interest of fulfilling larger objectives

efficiently when they judge that strict adherence to the regulations would be inefficient. Second, they may jettison the original objective in order to achieve another one. Third, they may add to established procedures to help ensure the attainment of intended goals.

Like Merton, Blau was concerned to refute the Weberian notion that emotions do not enter into bureaucratic decision-making. Blau observed that in the state employment service, interaction with clients and appreciation expressed by them were major sources of job gratification, and he argued that the ability of lower-level staff to exercise discretion in doing more for clients is a condition for job satisfaction of this kind. However, because of general concern with productivity, only certain clients could receive special treatment, and these tended to be clients whom workers liked and preferred to deal with.

In the state employment service, the requirement that workers act as enforcement agents (by checking that clients accepted suitable job offers) conflicted with their orientation toward providing services.

Workers adopted mechanisms for dealing with this role conflict.

Informal discussions with fellow members of employee workgroups relieved tensions and provided reassurance about the fairness of the treatment meted out to clients, and jokes about clients created staff cohesion, occasionally at the cost of legitimizing brusque treatment of clients.

Blau considered a number of other features of institutional life, among them how statistical records, by their very existence, function as a mechanism to control behavior, and why innovation, contrary to expectation, is often welcomed by bureaucrats. He acknowledged that the external conditions and pressures of the surrounding community must be

taken into account to understand the kinds of adjustments that bureaucrats make. But his micro-level focus on the organization, and particularly on the workgroup, does not permit a detailed analysis of how factors external to the organization influence the decisions made by its members.

In a later, more general work, Blau and Scott (1962) were again attentive to the informal social structures and unofficial norms that, in their view, characterize all organizations. They argued that these structures and norms are as important for understanding the behavior of organizational members as are official rules, procedures, hierarchies, and lines of communication.

Blau and Scott also proposed a basis for categorizing organizations that differs markedly from those of Etzioni and Perrow. Instead of type of compliance structure or technology, their classification rests on the type of group that is the prime beneficiary of the organization's activity. They suggested four potential groups of beneficiaries: the organization's rank-and-file membership; its owners or managers; the clients with whom the organization is in regular, direct contact (client-centered organizations are called "service" organizations by Blau and Scott); and the public at large ("commonweal" organizations).

The central problem in service organizations is the conflict between competing goals of service to clients and adherence to bureaucratic procedures. This dilemma is especially important because a general assumption of such organizations is that the client does not know what is in his best interest and is therefore dependent on the judgment of service agency staff. Staff must therefore avoid two

pitfalls: losing sight of clients' welfare because of concern with their own status or preoccupation with procedures, and allowing clients to dictate the nature of services rendered.

Like Blau, David Mechanic (1962) was concerned with the power exercised by lower participants in complex organizations. Mechanic suggested that such personnel as secretaries, hospital orderlies, and prison inmates hold power not because of their positions in the organizational hierarchy but because of their special access to control over people, information about procedures and norms, and resources. The power conferred by this access is reinforced both by personal attributes (e.g., commitment, interest, expertise, willingness to use power, and attractiveness) and by such characteristics of their position as tenure, replaceability, and so on. Very much in the vein of Herbert Simon, Mechanic asserted that lower participants can exercise power without conflict with larger organizational goals "when power is integrated with a legitimate order, when sentiments are held in common, and when there are adequate mechanisms for introducing persons into the system and training them to recognize, accept, and value the legitimacy of control within the organization" (p. 355).

In contrast, Jeffrey Prottas (1979) and Michael Lipsky (1980) posited the likelihood of fundamental conflict between the upper and lower levels in what Lipsky calls "street-level bureaucracies." The latter are organizations such as public schools, police departments, public welfare agencies, and legal services offices whose workers interact directly with the public and exercise considerable discretionary control over the allocation of benefits or sanctions. These

interactions usually involve on-the-spot decision-making, and workers must deal with clients' emotional responses to their decisions--a marked departure from the lack of personal involvement that Weber thought characteristic of highly developed bureaucracies. Because Lipsky's book Street-Level Bureaucracy is so important to the argument of this dissertation, it is discussed at some length here.

Lipsky noted that most organizational theorists (like Mechanic) attributed noncompliance with agency directives on the part of lower-level staff either to poor communication or to workers' disagreement with the larger goals. While he did not deny that these factors are important, he gave primary emphasis to three basic structural factors imposed on street-level bureaucracies by the larger political and social order that make the interests of lower-level workers different from those of upper-level staff. First, resources granted to such organizations are chronically inadequate: workers lack sufficient time and must deal with large caseloads. Moreover, this situation is never eased, because the demand for services is always greater than the supply. Second, street-level bureaucracies are expected simultaneously to meet numerous goals that are ambiguous and conflicting and whose achievement is difficult to measure. Finally, the clients of these agencies are involuntary.

In the face of these intrinsic features, street-level bureaucrats adopt work routines that serve their own interests. As Lipsky puts it, "Street-level bureaucrats are interested in processing work consistent with their own preferences and only those agency policies so salient as to be backed up by significant sanctions" (p. 19). Two interests are

paramount: processing caseloads expeditiously, in a way that frequently leads to shortcuts and simplifications, and maintaining a high degree of autonomy.

Lipsky writes: "The fundamental service dilemma of street-level bureaucrats is how to provide individual responses or treatment on a mass basis" (p. 44). He thus appeared to assume that new employees in street-level bureaucracies, including those in lower-level positions, subscribe to an ideal of individualized service to clients. Confronted by structural constraints on the realization of this ideal, they adjust their work habits to reflect their lowered expectations for themselves and their clients and develop rationalizations that enable them to sustain the belief that they are doing the best they can under the circumstances. Like Merton, Lipsky maintained that street-level bureaucrats tend to see clients' individual problems as falling into categories of action, and they frame their ideas about treatment on the basis of what contributes to the optimal processing of all cases rather than the best solution for any specific case.

Lipsky described three broad "patterns of practice" adopted by street-level bureaucrats. First, they allocate services differentially, both by seeking to limit the demand (for example, by withholding information) and by rationing the supply through such techniques as "creaming" (i.e., selecting clients deemed likely to succeed). Second, they modify their conceptions of the job to reduce the gap between aims and resources available to meet those aims. Finally, they may modify their conceptions of the clients, for instance, by subscribing to the conviction prevalent in the larger culture that the poor are responsible

for their own condition and thereby reducing their own responsibility for providing assistance.

Finally, Lipsky argued that the conditions for manipulating organizational incentives and sanctions to achieve bureaucratic accountability do not apply to street-level bureaucracies. Because the objectives of such organizations are necessarily multiple and conflicting, it is difficult to set priorities among them, to develop performance measures, and to establish meaningful incentives and sanctions. In Lipsky's view, the street-level bureaucrat "must irreducibly be accountable to the client" (p. 161), and the special circumstances of individuals cannot be translated into rigid guidelines.

Jeffrey Prottas, Lipsky's student, adopted a somewhat different perspective in his book on street-level bureaucrats. Like Lipsky, Prottas was concerned with the way in which the organizational structure shapes the street-level bureaucrat's behavior. Prottas focused on the bureaucrat's role as a "boundary actor" who occupies the front line between organization and clientele and controls the information that each possesses about the other.

Categorization is a principal activity of street-level bureaucrats, according to Prottas. The latter apply standard procedures to new problems, doing so by discovering the appropriate categories into which individuals who present themselves for service can be classified and thus what the appropriate treatments are. The major source of the street-level bureaucrat's discretionary power is that only he has access both to the organizational rules defining categories and treatments and to the individual client whose characteristics fit these categories more

or less closely. As a consequence, he can both manipulate the rules to alter the way the client is classified and control the information provided by the client to affect the way the client is categorized. In general, Prottas contended, street-level bureaucrats try to categorize clients in ways that minimize potential tensions and that also minimize the resources that must be expended.

Bureaucrats also gain in discretion because of the sheer number and complexity of the rules that govern organizational activities. Both street-level bureaucrats and their supervisors know that enforcement of all the regulations is infeasible; hence, supervisors will frequently waive their expectations of enforcement in areas of little importance in return for greater cooperation in those areas deemed critical to organizational functioning.

Prottas, like Lipsky, discussed the limited ability of the organization to control the exercise of discretion by street-level personnel. Organizational incentives and sanctions tend to be inadequate because they are lacking in range and power, unlikely to be applied, and of limited relevance to lower-order members. Of much greater importance are the street-level bureaucrat's own goals: the drive for autonomy on the job, personal interest in reducing client demands, and conformity to the values of a professional or semi-professional external reference group. Prottas concluded, however, that, because discretion increases with the number and complexity of client categories, "insofar as street-level discretion represents a problem in public service bureaucracy, a reduction of the number and

complexity of client categories is the most certain and general tool for bringing that discretion under control" (p. 167).

The Operation of Public Assistance Agencies and Programs

A notable contribution to the literature dealing with the administration of public assistance programs and policies is that of Winifred Bell. Her (1965) monograph on the history and use of the "suitable home" requirement in the Aid to Dependent Children program was informed by the sociological concepts of Robert Merton. For example, she distinguished between the manifest function of this requirement--protection of child welfare--and its latent functions--limitation of overall caseloads and exclusion of non-white children and children born out of wedlock. She also noted the difference between formal policies and actual practices of public assistance staff.

Joel Handler and Ellen Jane Hollingsworth (1971) studied the administration of AFDC in six Wisconsin counties, including Milwaukee and a number of rural counties. Their research was based not only on program documents and reports and on interviews with program staff but also on a survey of 766 recipients in the six counties. The authors concluded that the administration of welfare was "benign" in that the state was relatively generous in its payments, the system was free of corruption, and workers did not harass clients. On the other hand, they also found that it was "lawless" in that line workers exercised wide discretion. Several factors accounted for this high degree of field-level "decentralization" and discretion which, for the authors, constitutes the chief feature of the administration of public assistance. These

include: the jurisdictional division of authority (with each county responsible for separate administration of the program); the highly abstract and vague nature of the rules governing public aid (what, for instance, constitutes "adequate daycare" or a bona fide offer of employment?); the nature of the work itself, which calls for individualized responses to clients' situations; and lack of systematic control over workers' activities.

Handler and Hollingsworth also reported that worker-client contacts were infrequent and brief, offering little opportunity for workers either to regulate clients or to provide services. To maintain good relations with clients, workers tended to avoid sensitive issues (men, home care) and to stick to general and innocuous topics in their conversations with clients. Workers also tried to steer clear of subjects that might generate requests costing the agency money. Workers adopted this "strategy of withdrawal" for a number of reasons: the pressures of the workplace; their lack of commitment to their jobs (their positions were characterized by high tenure, and few were trained social workers); the low expectations and unquestioning attitudes of clients; and the paucity of resources they could bring to bear on behalf of recipients.

This "strategy of withdrawal" might have played a part in generating positive sentiments on the part of clients toward staff: 80 percent of the recipients surveyed stated that their worker was someone they could trust, talk to, and discuss problems with. On the other hand, only 22.5 percent believed that their workers could do more to assist them if they had more time or freedom--evidence, in the authors' view, of clients' low expectations of additional assistance from the system.

While Handler and Hollingsworth perceived similar forces at play in all six Wisconsin counties they studied, whether urban or rural, Thomas (1959) examined the role of organizational size in his study based on a survey of 109 ADC workers in small, medium, and large units of the Michigan welfare department. He found that the smaller the organizational unit, the greater the degree of consensus between worker and supervisor about role responsibilities, the broader the worker's conception of his or her role, the higher the commitment to the social work ethic, and the greater the effectiveness in providing services to clients. Thomas concluded, however, that the size of the unit per se was less important than the community settings in which units of various sizes were lodged. Thus, units with fewer workers were generally located in smaller communities offering fewer social services. Because workers in these offices had few resources to which they could refer welfare recipients, they necessarily adopted a broader conception of their roles. Moreover, workers in smaller areas experienced closer relations with and less social distance from clients, making for stronger commitment to a service orientation.

There have been a number of studies of the Work Incentive Program and of other programs aimed at moving AFDC recipients into employment. The most important evaluation of WIN's overall effectiveness was undertaken by Pacific Consultants together with Camil Associates and Ketrion, Incorporated under a contract with the Office of Policy, Evaluation and Research of the U.S. Department of Labor (1976). The study was based on WIN and welfare records, on-site assessments of program structure and performance, and longitudinal interviews conducted

over an 18-month period with 6,555 WIN participants and comparison-group members at 78 sites. The researchers discovered extreme heterogeneity in structure, staffing, and service provision among the sites. The levels of service received by registrants also varied widely. Despite this diversity, there was a general emphasis on immediate job placement and concomitantly on providing assistance to participants whom staff judged to be most readily employable. Average annual earnings of female program participants ranged from \$327 to \$471 over those of comparison-group members, but reductions in the average welfare grants of participants were much smaller (\$106 per year), and there was no decrease in the average amount of time on welfare. The evaluators also concluded that WIN's performance was seriously constrained by the economic recession of 1973-75.

A second evaluation sponsored by the Department of Labor was carried out by the Urban Institute (Mitchell, Chadwin, and Nightingale, 1979). The aim of this study was to identify the factors, especially those related to organization, management, and service delivery, that led some sites to perform especially well, and in this way to suggest ways of improving performance throughout the system. This objective dictated close attention to staff behavior, and field research was conducted in forty-three local sites.

The researchers found that in high-performance sites, state-level managers imparted to local staff a clearer understanding of the overall goals. High performance was also associated with more extensive staff training, an accurate reporting system, more intensive monitoring of and technical assistance to local operators by staff of the central office,

more lateral communication among local offices, and a greater degree of upward communication from local offices to the central one. Some of the factors at the state level that predicted high performance were also influential at the local one: effective reporting systems, more frequent monitoring, and more systematic distribution of information and more frequent internal discussions. In high-performing localities, managers delegated more responsibility to subordinates and permitted more flexibility with regard to work rules and procedures.

High-performing offices also delivered services differently than the poorer performers. They were more likely to counsel uncooperative clients rather than resort immediately to sanctions, they placed greater emphasis on teaching job search skills, and they offered extensive supportive services.

The Urban Institute study also investigated the effects of labor market conditions and the demographic environment and found that these were considerable. Such factors as the presence of low-wage industries, average employer size, the size of the poverty population, and the extent of local employment growth accounted for one third to one half of the variation in performance among sites.

One non-evaluation study that has looked in depth at the behavior of program staff and the factors influencing staff decision-making is Levy's The Workings of WIN (1981), an effort to provide a qualitatively rich description and analysis of how WIN counselors make decisions about the ability of clients to work and about which services they should receive. The study employed three ethnographers, who, over a nine-month period, conducted observations in three local WIN offices that varied in

location, number of clients served, local unemployment rate, and other critical factors.

A significant finding was that, while staff collected similar data on clients at all three sites, they "processed" these data differently to make different decisions. Staff attitudes and expectations about clients were influenced by a local "WIN culture, a shared system of knowledge which staff members use to adapt information gathered about clients and the WIN program requirements to the realities of the local social, economic, and political conditions" (p. xiii). Two major sets of factors shaped this culture. First, the general socioeconomic environment of the local office--its caseload and the job market conditions and political climate in which it was lodged--established a context for assessing the job-readiness of individual clients. Second, the priorities and guidelines of the national program, which established immediate job placement as the major criterion of success and set formulas for resource distribution, also played a crucial part in determining how clients would be dealt with. Thus, where WIN resources (staff and available slots in activities) and jobs were few and clients were many, they were likely to be judged unsuitable for active job search and placed in a holding status instead. As resources and/or jobs became more plentiful, clients were more likely to be assigned to active job search.

The Levy study is an effort to show how structural factors influence decision-making. It should be pointed out, however, that since the time the study was conducted (1979-1980), the WIN Program has been altered in a number of ways, as the two WIN Demonstration Programs

discussed in this dissertation suggest. Thus, while the present investigation draws on the lessons of the earlier study, its focus and findings differ from those of the earlier work.

Other studies of WIN illuminate certain aspects of program design and staff behavior in the programs under consideration. For example, evaluations by Goldman (1981) and others of the effects of providing immediate job search assistance to new WIN registrants help to explain the popularity of this approach to increasing the movement of women from welfare to regular employment. In a special demonstration operated in Louisville, Kentucky, new WIN enrollees who volunteered for the project were provided with up to six weeks of counselor-supported individual job search, along with support services and welfare payments, before being allowed to participate in the regular WIN program. Using an experimental design to test the impacts of an immediate intervention of this type, Goldman found that, compared to the control group (who received regular WIN services after the usual delay), those offered the treatment were more likely to be employed (5 percent) and earned more (\$275) over the fifteen-month follow-up. The women did not, however, find better-paying or longer-lasting jobs. Although they received less welfare assistance than the controls, they were no more likely to exit the welfare rolls entirely, probably because their earnings were so low that they could receive welfare supplementation. However, immediate job search assistance was inexpensive to operate and therefore highly cost-effective.

Goldman's work further suggests that it is difficult to construct a predictive model of who will participate in a voluntary program because

so many non-quantifiable factors enter into play. Such conditions as having a sick child, looking for new housing, and experiencing marital difficulties affected willingness to participate in the experiment.

The importance of these situational factors as determinants of participation and of success in finding jobs was confirmed by Gould-Stuart (1982) in an evaluation of a voluntary group job search program for WIN registrants, also operated in Louisville. The evaluation reported that about a third of the women assigned to the program never attended at all, almost a quarter dropped out prior to completion, just under a fifth completed the program but did not find jobs, and about a quarter found jobs while in the program. Both the socioeconomic characteristics of the women and ratings by program staff of their job readiness were inadequate predictors of their experiences and outcomes in the program. Interviews with program participants and drop-outs suggested that immediate problems in the women's lives--problems that were relatively unpredictable, subject to change over time, and often not apparent at the outset of participation--led women to give up their job search efforts. Poverty made the problems more intractable for program participants than they might otherwise be for women with more resources. In addition, the women's goals and aspirations and their actual experience in the program influenced their behavior. The evaluation concluded that because it is so difficult to forecast accurately women's ability to take part in job search and find a job, the job search experience itself may be the most practical way to distinguish those welfare recipients who can find jobs by themselves from those who need greater assistance.

Goodwin's (1971) study is more psychosocial in orientation. He compared the life aspirations of WIN enrollees with those of WIN staff and a sample of middle-class respondents, as well as with staff members' perceptions of clients' aspirations. Staff were found to underestimate participants' life aspirations, willingness to work for reasons other than financial need, and belief in the work ethic and to overrate their acceptance of illegal activities. Staff members' perceptions were fairly accurate regarding clients' lower self-confidence and their willingness to accept welfare. What this suggests is that if staff misperceive recipients' attitudes, they may themselves adopt negative views of the recipients and may treat them with unwarranted suspicion and disrespect. Rainwater (1982) hypothesized that as a consequence of such treatment by the staff of income-tested programs and by society at large, recipients may incorporate a negative self-concept and may engage in behavior responsive to their stigmatized status, although Allen (1982) argued that the empirical data do not support this conclusion.

Within the last several years, there have also been studies of efforts to impose work requirements on AFDC recipients. Feild et al. (1981) examined the implementation of work requirements in the Employment Opportunities Pilot Project (EOPP), a multi-site demonstration initiated by the U.S. Department of Labor during the Carter administration. The large majority of clients enrolled in EOPP were WIN-mandatory AFDC recipients; EOPP registrants were required, as a condition of continued benefit receipt, to attend classes in job-seeking skills and, if they did not find jobs, to participate in subsidized employment or training. The demonstration was funded at a level to

ensure that more people could take part in program activities, unlike previous programs (including WIN) in which staff tended to reserve scarce slots for clients who appeared most eager to make use of program services. It was expected, therefore, that the incidence of sanctioning for noncompliance would increase in EOPP from previous levels.

Interviews with program staff (the principal data source for the study) suggested that in general, this did not occur, for several reasons. First, the sanctioning procedures themselves were time-consuming, and staff often preferred to use that time to work with individuals who wanted help. Second, interagency coordination problems hampered the sanctioning effort. Finally, start-up problems in providing support services to clients impaired the program's ability to require them to work.

Rodgers (1981) reported similar findings in his study of the administration of the work and training requirement in the Work Equity Project, a demonstration employment and training program operating in the city of St. Paul and in seven Minnesota counties from July 1978 through March 1981. The project replaced the WIN Program in those jurisdictions in which it was implemented and, like EOPP, required WIN-mandatory AFDC recipients to accept a subsidized job or training position if they were unable to secure employment on their own. As with EOPP, the guarantee of a job after the conclusion of job search was intended to strengthen the work requirement.

Program staff, however, resisted sanctioning noncompliant clients, and few clients were ever penalized. Rodgers found somewhat different reasons than Feild et al. for staff members' unwillingness to impose

sanctions. The number of job placements was an important indicator of program success, and staff were reluctant to refer recalcitrant clients to prospective employers, who might respond by refusing to list their jobs with the agency. Furthermore, some staff members may have been unwilling to penalize dependent children for their parents' failure to comply with program regulations.

Interactionist Approaches to the Study of Organizations

Numerous studies have examined particular organizations from an interactionist perspective. This discussion is more limited in scope: it focuses on efforts to incorporate interactionist approaches into the general literature on organizations.

In his review of structural theories of interpersonal behavior, Zaleznik maintained that a grasp of how individuals define the situations in which they find themselves is critical to understanding the process of interaction (1965, p. 588). Zaleznik borrowed from Thomas and Znaniecki their formulation of the "definition of the situation":

Every concrete activity is the solution of a situation. The situation involves three kinds of data: (1) The objective conditions under which the individual or society has to act, that is, the totality of values--economic, social, religious, intellectual, etc.--which at any given moment affect directly or indirectly the conscious state of the individual or group. (2) The pre-existing attitudes of the individual or the group, which at the given moment have an actual influence upon his behavior. (3) The definition of the situation, that is, the more or less clear conception of the conditions and consciousness of the attitudes. (1958, Vol. I, p. 68)

Zaleznik went on to describe what Thomas and Znaniecki called the "conception of conditions" as the norms and expectations governing role performance and noted that routinized behavior results when these norms

are clear and when actors share a common orientation. Role conflicts and ambiguities, as well as the fact that individuals occupy multiple roles both inside and outside the organization, introduce complexities into that role performance, however, as do the responses of other parties in the interaction.

Strauss (1978) shared the interactionist assumption that individuals are active shapers of the environment and of their own destinies and emphasized the importance of negotiation for understanding social order. According to Strauss, all social orders are negotiated to some degree, in that all must leave room for flexibility and change. Strauss contended that this aspect of social life has largely been ignored by social scientists, who have instead focused on other mechanisms for getting tasks accomplished (e.g., persuasion, manipulation, appeals to authority, and the threat or actual use of coercion). In his book, he presented a paradigm for conducting micro-analysis of individual negotiations, but also noted that these need to be linked with larger structural conditions which may affect the aims, tactics, and outcomes of bargaining.

In an essay entitled "Talking and Becoming" (1977a), Peter Manning advocated a linguistic approach to studying organizations. Through ethnographic studies, Manning held, investigators can learn the "natural language" spoken by organizational staff members, the features of which provide insights into the organization's inner workings. Prominent features of this language include: the terms members use to designate roles, how they describe to each other the scenes in which they find themselves, and how they refer to their own actions and those of others.

Manning urged particular attention to the "naming functions" of those who have different power statuses within the organization.

Elsewhere (1977b), Manning discussed the nature of organizational rules. He posited that different types of rules lead to different kinds of relationships of dependency and exchange among colleagues. At times, rules serve to clarify particular procedures, but they can also set the context for discussion, negotiation, and uncertainty.

In a recent essay, Van Maanen and Barley (1985) outlined four "domains of analysis" for accounting for the origins, maintenance, and transmission of culture. First, each culture exists in an ecological context, the components of which are spatial, temporal/historical, and social. This surrounding environment is the primary catalyst of a new culture's development. Secondly, the members of a culture interact frequently with each other and differently than with outsiders. This differential interaction gives rise to the third key element of culture, the fact that its members share a common frame of reference and interpret situations in the same way. Finally, it is at the level of individual members that culture is transmitted.

The authors then considered how this theoretical schema could be applied in considering cultures and subcultures in the workplace. For example, a subculture may develop among individuals who perform a certain task when they interact frequently around that task and develop collective understandings not only about task-related problems but also about the nature of the organization and their own position within it. A principal conclusion is that in studying organizations, it is necessary to look at the groups in which people create and use culture,

not just at the "high culture" of the organization as a whole.

The essay is notable for its attempt to integrate both structuralist and interactionist perspectives and to show how these interpenetrate each other in a continuous dynamic. While structural factors can create differential interaction and shared assumptions, the reverse process can also occur: subcultures within the organization can modify the work processes of the organization as a whole.

Thompson and McEwen (1977) focused on the process of establishing organizational goals, as opposed to the goals themselves. Goal-setting is, in their view, a necessary and recurring problem for all organizations. The solution of that problem requires consideration, conciliation, and compromise both among factors within the organization and between the organization and its environment. Changes in either the organization or the environment require at least review, and possibly revision, of the goals themselves. These insights are pertinent to the programs under consideration and will be discussed further in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

CHAPTER IV

STUDYING WELFARE BUREAUCRACY: THE METHODOLOGY OF THIS DISSERTATION

The MDRC Demonstration of State Work/Welfare Initiatives

This study employs a case study methodology. It brings together data from a variety of sources--principally, observations, interviews, and documents--to yield as complete a picture as possible of the past history and current operations of the programs in Baltimore and Chicago.

These data were obtained as part of a larger investigation undertaken by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), a private nonprofit organization based in New York City that manages and evaluates social programs. That larger effort, known as the Demonstration of State Work/Welfare Initiatives, began in 1982. Despite the increasing popularity of mandatory work programs for AFDC recipients, as evidenced by the passage of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act the preceding year, there was little solid information about the feasibility of operating these programs on a large scale or about their effectiveness in increasing employment and reducing welfare receipt. Accordingly, the MDRC demonstration examines eight state programs that are designed to move AFDC recipients into employment and thereby reduce public assistance costs. A book synthesizing the findings of these separate state analyses is slated for publication in 1988.

The MDRC research agenda as a whole includes three major components: process, impact, and benefit-cost analyses. The research is intended to answer four basic questions:

Is it feasible to impose obligations--or participation requirements--as a condition of welfare receipt?

What do mandatory employment programs look like in practice, and how do welfare recipients themselves judge the fairness of mandatory requirements?

Do the state initiatives reduce the welfare rolls and costs and/or increase employment and earnings?

How do program benefits compare to program costs? (Gueron, 1986, pp. 8-9)

MDRC selected the eight states according to a number of criteria, among which funding potential and responsiveness to research requirements were especially important. At the outset, MDRC's undertaking received no federal funding; the effort was financed under a challenge grant from The Ford Foundation, which required that the organization raise half the total funding from other sources. As a result, only those states whose public assistance agencies were willing to pay part of the cost of the evaluation or were willing to join with MDRC in seeking monies from other sources (e.g., local foundations) were included.¹

In addition, MDRC was firmly committed to the use of an experimental methodology to measure program impacts in the areas of employment

¹As the demonstration progressed, the Office of Family Assistance in the United States Department of Health and Human Services contributed funding for special studies of the relationship between in-program performance and program impacts and of the differential effects of program participation on various subgroups of AFDC recipients.

and welfare receipt. Some states that were originally approached refused to entertain the possibility of random assignment, since this would have meant that individuals assigned to the control group would have been exempted from program participation or would have received limited services. Along with the opposition of program administrators and operators, a second constraint was associated with the use of experimental research. Because fairly large samples were considered necessary to detect impacts that could reasonably be expected at the requisite level of statistical significance, some programs (for example, ones located in states or areas of states with low welfare population densities) were excluded on grounds of scale. Finally, because MDRC drew much of the data used to measure program impacts from state sources (primarily, large, automated data files) rather than from surveys of program enrollees and control-group members, states were evaluated on the basis of the accuracy and coverage of these data.

Along with these standards for the selection of participating states, MDRC sought to ensure a reasonable degree of geographic diversity as well as variation in the kinds of programs being mounted. In addition to Maryland and Illinois, other states participating in the Demonstration of State Work/Welfare Initiatives include Arkansas, California, Maine, New Jersey, Virginia, and West Virginia. Table 1 summarizes the program and the research design in each of these states. Like the ones in Baltimore and Chicago, most of the other programs have imposed a broad participation or work obligation on new applicants to AFDC and/or a segment of the population already on the AFDC rolls. Those eligible are required to take part in group or individual job

Table 1--Key Characteristics of State Work/Welfare Initiatives Studied by MDRC

Item	Arkansas	San Diego, California		Chicago, Illinois		Maine
Program Model(s) Tested	Job search workshop followed by individual job search and 12 weeks of work experience in public and private non-profit agencies.	Job search workshop.	Job search workshop followed by 13 weeks of CWEP in public and private non-profit agencies.	Individual job search and other activities excluding work experience.	Individual job search followed by 13 weeks of work experience and other activities (including education, training and job search).	Pre-vocational training, work experience and on-the-job training funded by grant diversion.
Nature of Requirement to Participate in the Experimental Program	Mandatory	Mandatory		Mandatory		Voluntary
Study Area ^a	Pulaski South and Jefferson Counties	County-Wide		Cook County		Statewide
Target Group	WIN-mandatory AFDC applicants and recipients including women with children aged 3 to 5.	WIN-mandatory AFDC and AFDC-U applicants.		WIN-mandatory AFDC applicants and recipients (including recently approved cases).		AFDC recipients on welfare for at least six consecutive months.
Research Method	Random assignment. Controls get no services.	Random assignment to either of two experimental groups. Controls get WIN services.		Random assignment to either of two experimental groups. Controls get limited services.		Random assignment. Controls get WIN services.
Sample Enrollment Program	June 1983 - March 1984	October 1982 - August 1983		July 1984 - November 1985		October 1983 - December 1984
Final Sample Sizes	1,153	AFDC: 3,591 AFDC-U: 3,406		11,912		456

(continued)

Table 1--(continued)

Item	Baltimore, Maryland	New Jersey	Virginia		West Virginia	
Program Model(s) Tested	Multi-component, including job search, education, training, on-the-job training and 13 weeks of work experience.	On-the-job training funded by grant diversion.	Job search followed by 13 weeks of CWEP.	Job search followed by 13 weeks of CWEP, education or training.	CWEP -- unlimited duration -- in public and private non-profit agencies.	
Nature of Requirement to Participate in the Experimental Program	Mandatory	Voluntary	Mandatory		Mandatory	
Study Area ^a	10 out of the 18 Income Maintenance Centers.	9 of 21 counties	11 of 124 agencies (4 urban, 7 rural)		9 of 27 administrative areas	
Target Group	WIN-mandatory AFDC and AFDC-U applicants and recipients.	WIN-mandatory and voluntary AFDC recipients.	WIN-mandatory AFDC applicants and recipients.		WIN-mandatory AFDC and AFDC-U applicants and recipients.	
Research Method	Random assignment. Controls get WIN services.	Random assignment. Controls get WIN services other than on-the-job training.	Random assignment to either of two experimental groups. Controls get no services.		For AFDC's, random assignment. Controls get WIN services.	For AFDC-U's, matched-county comparison design.
Sample Enrollment Period	November 1982 - December 1983	October 1984 - September 1986	August 1983 - September 1984		July 1983 - April 1984	March 1983 - May 1984
Final Sample Sizes	AFDC: 2,823 AFDC-U: 349	2,000 (estimated)	3,184		AFDC: 3694	AFDC-U: 5630

Source: Gueron, 1986, pp. 6-7.

^aIn addition to the study areas, Virginia and West Virginia implemented the program statewide and Arkansas, Maryland, and Illinois in selected other areas.

search, education and vocational training programs, or unpaid "work experience" (commonly referred to as "workfare"). The last may be full-time or part-time for up to thirteen weeks. Alternatively, under the Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) provisions, for as long as the participant remains on welfare, she² may be required to work the number of hours calculated by dividing the amount of the monthly welfare grant by the minimum wage.

The jurisdictions included in the Work/Welfare Demonstration together contain about 10 percent of all AFDC recipients in the United States. There is reason to believe that the programs under study in the demonstration are representative in a programmatic as well as a numerical sense--that is, they reflect the range of mandatory work requirements attached to AFDC receipt that states have adopted since the passage of OBRA (Nightingale and Burbidge, 1987; United States General Accounting Office, 1987). However, the fact that top-level administrators in the 11 states were willing to have their programs subjected to rigorous evaluation suggests that these states may be atypical with

²Most, but not all, adult AFDC recipients are women, as are the large majority of participants in work/welfare programs are women. For this reason, individual participants are referred to using the female pronouns in preference to the more accurate, but more awkward, "he or she," "his or her," etc.

It should be noted that the programs in both Baltimore and Chicago also enrolled the mostly male heads of two-parent AFDC-U households. However, in Chicago, AFDC-U recipients were excluded from the MDRC evaluation. For the most part, this dissertation focuses on the experiences of the primarily female single heads of households receiving AFDC.

respect to staff capacity. Presumably, these administrators must have had sufficient confidence that the initiatives under study would be put into place smoothly and would produce the desired results to have entered the demonstration in the first place. (This is especially so if, as was sometimes the case, administrators planned to use the findings of the evaluation to justify retention or expansion of the program to the state legislatures.) While it is impossible to ascertain whether the eight programs were more capably administered than those elsewhere, one can assume that agency officials were confident that at least they would not be poorly run.

MDRC eagerly sought the participation of Illinois in its demonstration because of the importance of studying program operations in one of the country's largest cities. The Chicago program model was also of particular interest because it sought to enforce a job search obligation on a sizable part of the welfare population, thus highlighting issues of feasibility. Initial meetings with middle-level officials in the Department of Public Aid (the public assistance agency in Illinois) were not promising: the latter were resistant both to paying any part of the evaluation's cost and to implementing random assignment. Thereupon, MDRC's president made personal contact with the agency director, who was interested in seeing Illinois become part of a multi-state evaluation and was able to secure the cooperation of his subordinates.

Because MDRC had had previous experience in designing and managing employment programs for AFDC recipients, officials in the Maryland Department of Human Resources turned to the organization for technical assistance in formulating guidelines for its new initiative. This

proved beneficial for two reasons. First, it established MDRC's credibility with the agency and paved the way for MDRC to evaluate the program. Second, it ensured that research considerations would inform program operations from the very beginning.

Sources of Information for the Process Analysis

This dissertation rests for the most part on data gathered as part of the process analysis conducted in both states. These data are of several types:

1. Information on clients' background characteristics

In Maryland, information on clients' characteristics upon intake into the research came from a form, the Client Information Sheet, designed by MDRC. This form was implemented in all states participating in the national demonstration to allow for the collection of comparable data across sites and to permit more refined analyses of both participation and outcomes. It ascertained standard demographic variables (age, sex, ethnicity, family composition, and educational attainment), and supplied information on the welfare and employment histories of the individuals under study, with particular emphasis on their experiences during the two years prior to enrollment in the research. In Baltimore, the form was completed by program staff during the course of an intake interview conducted individually with each new client.

Some problems were associated with the Baltimore Client Information Sheet data. First, because it proved difficult to establish an orderly and efficient procedure for collecting the forms and sending them to MDRC, a relatively small but not negligible number of individuals in the

research sample (8.8 percent) were missing the necessary data. Second, some data items on the sheets MDRC did receive were incomplete or inconsistent with other answers. Some but not all of these errors could be corrected by checking the data against information from other sources. A third problem centered on the quality of some of the data. Clients may have underreported employment and earnings for fear that their assistance benefits would be affected, and a few questions were difficult for them to answer. Finally, the need for brevity resulted in the loss of some information.

In Chicago, the Client Information Sheet was also employed. There, it was administered as a group activity, with clients themselves filling out the forms at a program orientation session under the supervision and guidance of program staff. Data on the demographic characteristics of early program entrants who attended orientation was presented in an interim report on the program's implementation (Quint and Guy, 1985). However, subsequently, MDRC staff determined that, in order to preserve the integrity of the experimental design, it would be necessary to include in the impact analysis both those individuals who had attended the orientation session and those who had not. For this reason, the Client Information Sheet data could not be used in the impact analysis, which relied instead on limited information on recipients maintained by the Department of Public Aid.

2. Information on clients' participation in the programs

Large state automated files were the principal source of data on clients' patterns of participation in both programs. Forms feeding into these files were completed by program staff in Baltimore when a client

initially entered the program and each time thereafter she participated in a different program activity or was assigned to a "holding" status. The form was also completed when the client entered a job (as long as that employment was known to staff) or when she left the program. Chicago staff filled out similar forms to mark changes in clients' status.

3. Information on the programs' historical context

In most states, including Maryland and Illinois, a political scientist serving as a consultant to MDRC conducted a study of the political and organizational context in which the state's new initiative took form. This study was based on interviews with key figures in the public welfare agency (including individuals responsible for the initial planning of the programs and top-level administrators), other important political and administrative actors (e.g., state legislators, gubernatorial staff), and other parties as necessary. These interviews were supplemented by examination of documents related to the program's development (memoranda and proposals, for instance). In Illinois, I also conducted interviews with two key figures responsible for developing the program.

4. Information on program operations and staff behavior

Critical to the analysis of program implementation and operations is a set of data derived through qualitative research methods, the collection of which was largely the responsibility of on-site researchers employed by MDRC. As Principal Investigator with responsibility for the process analysis in Baltimore and Chicago, I hired and subsequently

supervised the activities of the on-site researchers in these two locations.

The qualitative data were intended to help explain how and why certain patterns of participation arose as a consequence of both formal program guidelines and discretionary decisions by staff and clients and to illuminate the ways in which these guidelines and decisions responded to administrative structures, norms and priorities, as well as to personal preferences and ideologies. Further, they documented the workings of the programs themselves, describing how program services were organized and delivered to clients and how participation in these activities was monitored.

Each field researcher prepared a series of reports designed to provide detailed in-depth documentation of program operations at the local office level. These reports responded to protocols designed by senior research staff at MDRC, including myself. The protocols asked the on-site researchers to address certain topics deemed important to the process analysis in each state: how clients were assessed and determined appropriate for specific program activities; how critical activities--job search, unpaid work experience, and education and training--were conducted; and how clients' participation in these activities was monitored. While the use of a uniform protocol was intended to ensure that information on these topics would be available from all sites, field researchers were urged to supplement their reports with information they thought important that was not solicited by central-office staff.

Each report relied on data gathered using several different research techniques, which were intended to complement and cross-check each other. Those included formal and informal interviews with program staff (and when possible with clients), observation of program activities, examination of written materials (e.g., procedures manuals), and searches of case files. The raw data were appended to the structured reports, which distilled and integrated the data from the various sources to present a coherent discussion of the topic.

In addition to the structured reports, several other sources of qualitative data were used. Other MDRC staff visited the Baltimore and Chicago programs. I myself made a number of visits to Baltimore to view program operations and interview staff; I also made three such visits to Chicago. My first-hand observations and conversations assisted me in evaluating the reports filed by the on-site researchers under my supervision; I was able, particularly in Baltimore, to compare my own experiences with hers, and where these differed, to request further clarification.

Because this dissertation rests in large part on the perceptions and opinions of the on-site researchers, checked against my own views and those of others, it may be helpful to discuss the researchers' experience in the field at greater length. The nature of that experience differed markedly between the two sites.

As the next chapter discusses in detail, the WIN Demonstration Program in Cook County was initially operated by fifteen units, each consisting of seven or eight staff members plus a clerical aide and a supervisor, in ten different offices across the city. (Two or three

units were sometimes located in one office; an eleventh office was added over the course of the research period.) It clearly would have been infeasible to examine program operations in all of these units, but it was also considered important not to concentrate on just one or two units, the typicality of which might have been open to question. The decision was made to focus on eleven units in six offices, selected with the assistance of Department of Public Aid staff. The units were chosen with two main factors in mind: the nature of the clients and neighborhoods they served, and the quality of office supervision. Some offices served heavily Hispanic or white clientele; others were located in the heart of the ghetto. Some neighborhoods consisted of primarily working-class households living in single-family residences, while others encompassed blocks of burnt-out tenements. Some units were known to have strong supervisors, while other supervisors were seen as notoriously weak. (Incidentally, the Department of Public Aid official who assisted in this choice of units did not seem at all reluctant to have those she considered poorly administered scrutinized along with those she thought better managed.) In this way, the process research was intended to present a representative picture of program operations.

However, the decision to study a number of units affected the role of the field researcher. (Actually, two people filled this position, which was planned to be of twelve months' duration. The first, a recent Ph.D. in sociology, began work in March 1984 but left after four months to accept a job as a college administrator. A replacement, a new Ph.D. in anthropology, was found during the summer and began work in September, continuing through May 1985.) The researcher estimated that

she spent about 50 percent of her time in the field collecting data for the reports (the remainder of the time was spent in conducting a series of structured interviews on the unpaid work experience component and in writing up her findings), but the fact that she had to divide this time among so many units meant that her presence in any given unit did not become a matter of routine. She was not able to establish casual relationships or to engage in "water-cooler conversation" with staff members; instead, her visits were planned with a specific purpose in mind and involved setting up appointments to speak to informants. She was expected to schedule visits to a unit in advance with the unit supervisor, although she was only rarely told that such a visit would be inconvenient.

The degree of receptivity to the field researcher varied by unit; in one case, a supervisor who was hostile to the research effort as a whole was able to communicate to her staff that she considered the field researcher's presence a waste of time. As we shall see, the question of time utilization loomed large throughout the various dimensions of the Chicago program, and the field researcher reported that even where she had established good rapport, her respondents frequently made her feel that she was depriving them of time for work or for other, more valued socializing. Nonetheless, she estimated that she had established good rapport with about half the staff members across the units, individuals who appeared to enjoy telling her in detail about their work, to relish their role as "teachers," and to find her questions interesting. With the remaining half, she was able to obtain answers to close-ended questions, but rarely to elicit details on the "whys and wherefores" of

how they did their jobs. She suspected that, despite her protestations to the contrary, these staff members saw her as a "spy" from the Department of Public Aid, although she believed that this view abated as time passed, and as respondents recognized that her questions were not threatening. She did not think that the respondents' ethnicity affected the quality of their relationship with her. (She was white, while many of them were black.)

Despite these constraints on the degree of rapport that was developed, she did not feel that her presence had any real effect on the way in which staff interacted with clients. For one thing, most of these interactions took place in group settings, so that she was not as conspicuous as might have been the case if meetings were one-on-one. For another, most staff members had developed routines for interacting with clients long before she arrived on the scene.

In Baltimore, in contrast, all program functions except intake of enrollees into the program were carried out in one office. The researcher, who was employed for a twelve-month period beginning in June 1983, estimated that she spent 70 to 75 percent of her time at that office. She was given a desk and file cabinet for her own use and felt that program staff became used to her presence. In this way, her role was much more akin to that of the traditional "participant observer" than was that of her Chicago counterpart. However, the researcher believed that she should maintain some degree of social distance from program staff. She rarely socialized with them, although she was frequently invited to do so.

The Baltimore researcher felt that she had been extremely well received by program staff. She attributed her favorable initial reception to the cordial relationships that had already been established by the Principal Investigator and other MDRC staff with program personnel, as well as to the understanding shared by staff from the outset that they were expected to cooperate with her data collection efforts.

The researcher felt that staff members were unstinting in their willingness to share information. She experienced no resentment that her inquiries were taking up valuable time (she tried to accommodate staff schedules and allow respondents to choose their own times to be interviewed) and believed, on the contrary, that staff enjoyed the opportunity to express their views on the program, the participants, and the agency as a whole. While she did not think that many staff members understood the full scope of the research, she did not think that they viewed her as a "spy." She opined that staff were cooperative and open in large part because they felt comfortable and accomplished in their roles and therefore had little to hide.

The researcher was aware of only one instance in which her presence may have influenced a staff member's behavior. In this case, the researcher noted that when the staff member was initially being observed, he took pains to go into detail and to cover all the aspects of the task at hand. Over time, perhaps because he was less self-conscious about being watched, his performance became much more streamlined. However, the researcher cited an equally plausible explanation

for the staff member's behavior: that at the outset, he was new to his job but gradually gained confidence and authority.

Advantages and Limitations of the Methodology

The advantages and limitations of the case study method employed here have been widely described in the sociological and anthropological literature (Campbell, 1979; Edgerton and Langness, 1974; Hardyck and Petrinovich, 1975; Zito, 1975). Perhaps the method's chief strength is that it permits the gathering of detailed data on naturally occurring phenomena. The Baltimore and Chicago offices in which the fieldwork was done can be viewed as "natural laboratories," in which the researchers interfered minimally with the normal range of interactions among staff members and between staff and clients. The behavior the researchers recorded reflects a full array of individual staff members' responses to the situations they confronted.

Moreover, during the course of the year that the researchers spent in the field, they observed a large number of scheduled and unscheduled activities and obtained information in both structured interviews and informal conversations with a variety of informants. This enabled them to develop a detailed knowledge of behavioral norms and to recognize deviations from these norms. They could not only observe behavior at first hand but also inquire into its meaning to the actors involved and thereby clarify areas of uncertainty. In this way, hypotheses and tentative conclusions could be checked and rechecked against the new information acquired.

If the triangulation of data acquired through various methods was important to the field researchers, it was also vital to me in my supervisory role, removed as I was from the sphere of program operations. When the researchers' field reports indicated that a number of different techniques had been employed to address the issues at hand, I could feel more confident about the validity of the conclusions drawn. From time to time, I would return draft reports with such marginal notes as, "Do your observations support this statement?" or otherwise request additional information.

There are, however, limitations to the case study methodology, related both to the way it is carried out and the conclusions that are reached. The first is that the quality of the research varies greatly with the quality of the researcher. This problem is, of course, shared by all research methodologies but may be particularly exaggerated in this case because the data collected are so susceptible to observer biases. Because the MDRC fieldworkers were responsible for individual sites and did not have an opportunity to visit other programs, there is no way of ascertaining the extent to which they would have viewed and described the same event differently.

There were three efforts to compensate for this potential weakness. The first, of course, was to hire individuals with some experience and training in field techniques. Experience on a resume is not, however, an altogether certain commodity. It is notable that the anthropologist, who had conducted fieldwork but was inexperienced in evaluating social programs, produced reports that were consistently of a higher caliber--more richly detailed, more tightly argued--than those of her

counterpart, who had participated in several program evaluations. Second, standard research protocols were introduced in order to focus and discipline data collection efforts. Finally, the reports were subject to close reading and critique by an informed outsider (myself).

A charge frequently leveled at the case study method--but more properly applies to any research, whatever the methodology employed, that examines a single treatment in a single setting--is that it is impossible to determine which of a long list of potential explanatory factors accounts for the patterns of behavior and outcomes observed. As Campbell has argued (1979), comparison and contrast are essential to scientific evidence. Through these processes, it is possible to hold some factors constant, so that the relative weight of other factors can be tested more rigorously.

The comparative approach is adopted in this dissertation. The fact that there are certain similarities between the Baltimore and Chicago programs throws their differences into high relief and narrows the range of possible explanations for these differences. Even so, some of the arguments and conclusions advanced in this dissertation must be regarded as based on evidence that is suggestive but far from definitive. Findings from additional case studies would be needed to bolster or refute the generalizability of these propositions.

If multiple tests are needed to confirm new propositions, however, a single case study may be adequate to refute, or at least to point to the limitations of, a hypothesis that has already been proposed. The fact that the Chicago program studied in this dissertation diverges considerably from the model of street-level bureaucracy Lipsky has

advanced suggests that that model is not universally applicable. Thus, single-case studies can teach through negative, if not through positive, example.

Note should be taken of another liability associated with the methodology adopted in this dissertation and in the MDRC demonstration as a whole. This is that it fails to take the perspective of the client into account in a systematic or thorough way. In its account of organizational decision-making, it focuses on decisions made by staff. Yet in both programs, these decisions are in large part a response to the actions and reactions of the AFDC recipients at whom the programs are aimed. Moreover, while it is possible to understand how staff use regulations and guidelines to "construct" the program for clients, it is not at all clear that clients understand the program in the same way.

In part, this focus on the organizational perspective reflects what might be termed MDRC's "administrative bias" as an organization. The immediate constituency for its evaluations and reports consists of policymakers and program operators, not poor people, and given resource limitations, a study of organizational functioning won out over a study of clients' responses. However, it is also probable that, given these resource constraints, it would not have been possible to examine both staff behavior and client attitudes and actions in sufficient depth to be of much use.

CHAPTER V

PROFILES OF TWO WELFARE BUREAUCRACIES: VARIATIONS IN ENDS AND MEANS

As Chapter II has argued, efforts to deal with the poor have traditionally had two purposes: the dispensing of cash and services and the exercise of social control. The two programs considered in this dissertation were targeted toward quite similar individuals, as Table 2 shows.¹ In both programs, almost 90 percent of the enrollees were female, and about 70 percent were black. (The Chicago program, unlike its Baltimore counterpart, also enrolled a substantial proportion of Hispanics.) More than half lacked a high school diploma or its equivalent, and under 60 percent had ever married. On average, they had spent fourteen of the twenty-four months prior to enrollment on welfare.

¹It should be noted that the data shown in Table 1 were collected at different points in the flow of clients through the two programs. Information on individuals in the Baltimore program was collected at the point of random assignment to Options or to the control group. In Chicago, in contrast, detailed data were obtained only for those randomly assigned individuals--63.6 percent of the total--who attended the program orientation. (See the discussion in the preceding chapter.) The limited demographic and socioeconomic information available on the 36.4 percent who did not attend suggests that, in comparison to those who did come to orientation, those who did not were more likely to be male, white, and under 25 years old; they were also more likely to have been employed during the two years prior to random assignment and had spent less time on welfare. Thus, it appears that if more complete information had been available on all individuals randomly assigned in Chicago, the similarities between them and their Baltimore counterparts would have been even stronger.

Table 2--Selected Characteristics at Random Assignment or Program Orientation of Baltimore and Chicago AFDC Recipients

Characteristic	Baltimore	Chicago
Welfare Status (%)		
Applicant	49.8	0.0
Recipient ^a	50.2	100.0
Percent Female	89.9	87.0
Ethnicity (%)		
White, Non-Hispanic	29.5	13.0
Black, Non-Hispanic	69.2	71.4
Hispanic	0.3	14.4
Other	1.0	1.2
Degree Received (%)		
None	56.4	55.4
General Equivalency Diploma	6.8	8.7
High School Diploma	36.9	35.9
Marital Status (%)		
Never Married	40.5	47.4
Married, Living with Spouse	8.8	6.4
Married, Not Living with Spouse	33.5	23.7
Divorced or Widowed	17.2	22.5
Average Number of Children Under 19 years	1.8	1.9
Prior AFDC Dependency (%)		
Never on AFDC	13.9	12.1
Two Years of Less	31.5	35.5
More Than Two Years	54.7	52.5
Average Months on AFDC During Prior Two Years (%)	13.7	13.5
Held a Job at Any Time During Prior Two Years (%) ^b	44.3	27.6
Average Months Employed During Prior Two Years	5.5	3.1

(continued)

Table 2--(continued)

Source: Gueron, 1986, p. 12.

For individuals in Baltimore, data were collected by welfare personnel at the point of random assignment. Chicago data were collected for individuals attending WDP orientation; this is not the same group of welfare recipients studied in the analysis of program impacts. Distributions may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

^aIn Chicago, includes former applicants newly approved for assistance.

^bIn Baltimore, this covers one year prior to random assignment.

Fewer than half had worked during this period (although the proportion of previously employed registrants was considerably higher in Baltimore than in Chicago).

Despite the similar demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the populations they served, the programs adopted quite different approaches toward their clientele. An examination of early planning documents and other written materials prepared by program administrators makes this point clear and also confirms that the programs were both intended to fulfill multiple objectives.

The Baltimore program, known as "Options," was one of two special pilot projects, referred to collectively as the Employment Initiatives (EI), implemented by the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) in the fall of 1982 under the WIN Demonstration program provisions. (The second program was established in Wicomico County, on Maryland's Eastern Shore.) The goal of the two projects is stated in the first paragraph of a summary document prepared by DHR for public distribution (Maryland Department of Human Resources, October 1982): "to help AFDC applicants and recipients find unsubsidized employment. Such efforts will help welfare clients achieve self-sufficiency, and enable taxpayers to realize reductions in public assistance costs." After asserting that three agencies "will combine their resources and expertise" in managing the programs, the document states that "the primary emphases of the Employment Initiatives will be on: training in both substantive job skills and in the process of looking for a job; financial incentives to clients to participate in the program, and to employers to hire clients; [and] supportive services , such as child care, to enable clients look

for [sic] and take jobs" [emphasis in the original].

The section dealing with participation requirements notes that:

Federal law requires that the participation requirements applicable to the WIN program under existing rules apply to EI. Thus, clients who would be exempt from WIN . . . would be exempt from the Employment Initiatives. Other clients will not be required to participate if they can show good cause for not participating, such as lack of child care. Every effort will be made by project staff to provide counseling and support to enable clients to overcome barriers to participation

Each client will have the opportunity through a formal adjudication process, to show that good cause for non-participation exists. If good cause has been determined not to exist . . . the same sanctions that now apply under the WIN program will be imposed.

The discussion of participation requirements thus appears to "soft-pedal" the mandatory nature of the programs by stressing the similarity between the Employment Initiatives and the traditional WIN program (which, as noted in Chapter II, required welfare recipients with school-age children to register for and participate in employment services upon penalty of a sanction)² as well as by highlighting the availability of "good cause" reasons for not participating.

In one respect, the EI participation requirement was more stringent than that under WIN: new applicants for AFDC who met the WIN-mandatory requirements could be required to participate in EI before their eligibility for assistance was determined (and as a condition for having their applications approved). The program summary states that, "The

²The WIN regulations stipulate that the first time a client is sanctioned, the welfare benefit will be reduced for a three-month period. Subsequent instances of sanctioning entail a reduction of the benefit for six months.

purpose of this change is to help applicants avoid the need for welfare before they begin to receive it" and assures that a decision on the grant application will not be delayed while the applicant participates in the program.

Overall, then, the version of the EI programs available for public consumption is one that gives primacy to the provision of services to welfare recipients and the safeguarding of their rights. The implicit concept of the client suggested by the document is of an individual who requires both concrete job skills and other services (such as daycare) to participate successfully in the labor market; the function of the program is to provide these services.

The Cook County WIN Demonstration Program (WDP) was part of a statewide initiative implemented by the Illinois Department of Public Aid in 1982. In submitting the state's proposal to operate a WIN Demonstration Program to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Governor James Thompson described the application as one that was "innovative, aggressive, and will make a major contribution to our cost containment efforts and to the enhancement of employment opportunities for AFDC recipients" (Illinois Department of Public Aid, 1981). In this characterization, the goal of reducing welfare costs has primacy over that of increasing employment among public assistance recipients.

The proposal emphasized two modalities for achieving these aims-- client initiative in job seeking and careful staff monitoring of clients' efforts:

A major change planned for the WIN Demonstration Program will be a shift in responsibility for seeking and accepting employment from program staff to the program participant Program participants must be viewed as adults who have a wide range of abilities and a vested interest in their own self-support. Any other view of the recipient is inaccurate and at best patronizing, if not demeaning

A thorough and effective follow-up and monitoring system of client job seeking efforts also must be developed and maintained.

The proposal to HHS anticipated that WDP would yield welfare savings because the program would both increase employment and increase "eligibility-related case actions"--that is, speed up departures from the rolls because of sanctioning. The proposal explained:

The second area of welfare savings will be clients who forego their assistance or are penalized because they choose not to cooperate with the work requirement . . . the program design described above provides for more frequent contact, with the most intensive application of the work requirement occurring early in the process. The result will be improved ability to identify and sanction clients who choose not to actively participate in the program as required.

Thus, from the program's inception, its planners envisioned the application of sanctions as an intrinsic part of the cost reduction strategy.

While the Options program description emphasizes the obligation of the agencies involved to assist public assistance recipients, the Illinois proposal stresses instead the obligation of clients to help themselves. Welfare recipients are viewed as largely capable of undertaking job-seeking efforts on their own, with minimal assistance but concerted monitoring on the part of program staff. Failure to engage in such efforts is treated as clear grounds for a sanction.

Despite the differences that emerge in these descriptions of the goals and methods of the two programs, the documents also give evidence

of broad similarities between the programs' goals and intentions. While the Chicago program gave weight to the participation requirement and the Baltimore program downplayed it, the fact is that in both programs, failure to participate could at least in theory result in loss or reduction of the welfare grant. Thus, in both programs, social control was a potentially important element. Moreover, while the immediate aim may have been to channel the behavior of welfare recipients in socially desired ways, the ultimate objective of both programs was to reduce the number of people receiving welfare altogether.

This multiplicity of means and ends, at least on paper, makes it difficult to apply the kinds of organizational taxonomies described in Chapter III in any neat way based on an examination of program documents. For example, if the organizational boundaries are considered to include welfare recipients themselves (and not just program staff) among those "lower participants" whose compliance must be achieved, then it will be seen that the programs employed all three types of power described by Etzioni--coercive, remunerative, and normative--to induce compliance. The first two types of power are associated with the mandatory nature of the programs and the fact that those who lacked "good cause" for their failure to take part in program activities could be penalized by having their welfare grants reduced or (for new applicants) by being denied assistance altogether. While the form of the sanction was financial, it might be argued that, in the absence of alternative income sources, a material deprivation of this sort in reality constituted a deprivation of food, shelter, and other physical necessities. At the same time, however, the programs sought to

induce compliance through an appeal to both calculative and moral considerations. In both programs, observations indicate that staff told participants that the programs were designed to help them get off public aid, and they described the advantages of this in two ways. First, they emphasized that in most cases, even a low-paying job would provide more income than the welfare grant. Second, they stressed the psychological advantages both of working and of freedom from the regulation of the public assistance system.

The organizational typology proposed by Blau and Scott, based on which group may be considered the prime beneficiary of the organization's activity, is also problematic when applied to the welfare agencies under study. To the extent that the programs provided needed services to welfare recipients, they might be described as "service organizations." However, to the extent that they were concerned with enforcement of the participation requirement and with removing non-compliant recipients from the rolls, the beneficiary would be the public at large, and the agencies would more accurately be classified as "commonweal organizations."

This is not to say that the taxonomies proposed by Etzioni and by Blau and Scott are of no use in describing the programs in question. But if they are to have any value, they must be applied to the programs as they actually operated in the field, rather than to the rules and regulations that governed them. It is through the day-to-day actions and decisions of program staff that multiple objectives are actualized and an implicit priority is assigned among them.

The limitations of Perrow's classificatory schema are discussed in the concluding chapter.

The two programs both represented responses to a perception shared by welfare administrators in both states that the traditional WIN program was ineffective in moving people into employment and reducing welfare caseloads and costs. But the two program models that emerged differed markedly, for reasons related largely to the economic climates in which they took shape and to the philosophies of those individuals who played a key role in program design. Moreover, broad guidelines were translated into very different regulations and practices that governed the behavior of program staff. In the remainder of this chapter, the Chicago WIN Demonstration Program is first discussed as an example of a highly bureaucratized program with an emphasis on client processing. The second part of the chapter turns to the Baltimore Options Program which, within the limits of a mandatory program, attempted to give priority to service to clients. Table 3 summarizes the salient features of the two programs.

The WIN Demonstration Program in Chicago

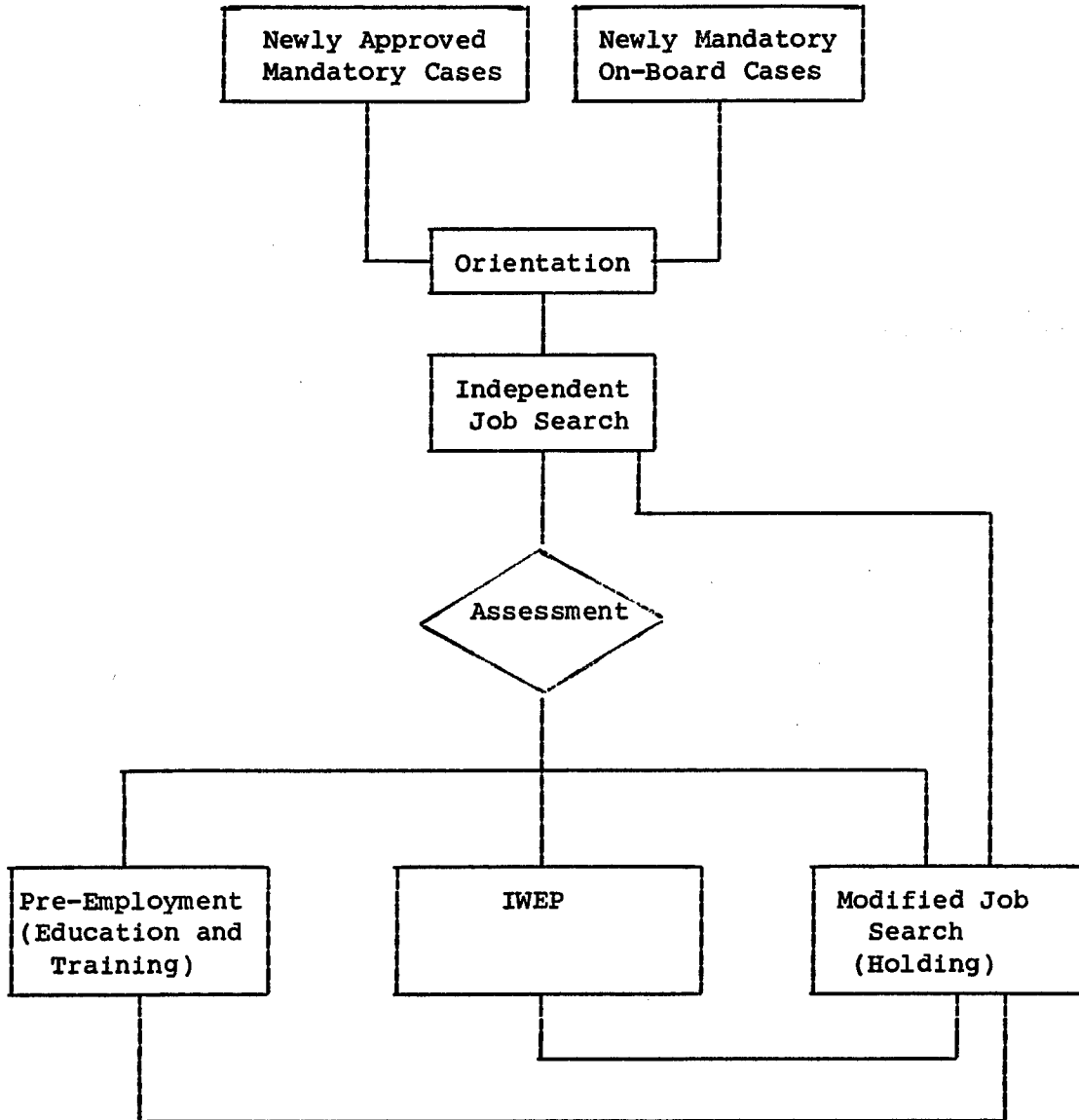
The Program Model

Initiated in October 1981, when the Illinois Department of Public Aid submitted a plan to run a WIN Demonstration Program to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the program was actually implemented in July 1982. As Figure 1 suggests, it centered on an activity known as Independent Job Search (IJS).

Table 3--Salient Features of the Baltimore and Chicago Programs

Item	Baltimore	Chicago
Principal Objective	Long-term economic self-sufficiency for recipients	Immediate welfare savings for for agency
Program Operator	Mayor's Office of Manpower Resources (manpower agency)	Department of Public Aid (welfare agency)
Model	Variable, individualized sequence of activities including individual and group job search, unpaid work experience, education, job training	Uniform sequence of independent job search followed by work experience, occasional education or training
Scale	1000 active participants per year (one-thirteenth of WIN-mandatory caseload)	50,000+ individuals (entire WIN-mandatory caseload)
Approximate Cost per Client (\$)	957	90 - 130
Staff Functions	Assessment, assignment to activities operated by other MOMR personnel and by outside agencies, performance monitoring	Direct operation of group sessions in individual job search, assessment, assignment to work experience and other activities, performance monitoring
Staff Caseload	120 - 170	258 - 296
Staff Performance Criteria	Performance gauged by number of clients placed in jobs and by assignment of clients to "appropriate" activities	Strongly emphasized quota system stressing welfare cost reductions partly achieved by placements

Figure 1--Flow of Clients Through the WIN Demonstration Program in Cook County



All new mandatory recipients were required to participate in this two-month component, which combined individual job-hunting with biweekly staff-led group sessions. While in IJS, clients had to attend an orientation and four additional group meetings, and, in the intervals between the sessions, fulfill a quota of twenty job contacts with prospective employers each month. As discussed below, staff also were expected to meet quotas related to job placement and other forms of "cost avoidance." Clients could be "recycled" through IJS periodically for as long as they remained on welfare and WIN-mandatory.

Those who completed Independent Job Search without finding jobs were then reassigned by staff to another component. While entry into IJS was largely automatic, assignment to one of the other activities entailed some degree of discretion on the part of program personnel as well as choice on the part of participants. That choice, however, was limited. After January 1984, one option was a three-month-long workfare component, known as the Illinois Work Experience Program (IWEP), in which participants worked between forty and eighty hours a month, with the exact number of hours determined by dividing the client's grant by the federal minimum wage and rounding down to the nearest eight hours. This work could be scheduled on either a full-time (for two weeks) or part-time basis; individuals in this activity received a transportation allowance in addition to their welfare grant. If clients could identify educational or vocational training programs in which they wanted to enroll and which met agency guidelines, they could also be placed in this component. A final possibility was Modified Job Search (MJS), which, despite its name, functioned as a holding status in which

clients' job-seeking efforts, if any, went largely unmonitored by staff.

Although the flow chart depicts the program as a closed system, participants could, in fact, exit that system in several ways. They could of course, find employment at any point in the sequence of activities. They could fail to comply with program regulations and be sanctioned. They could lose AFDC eligibility for other reasons (e.g., marriage). Or they could retain AFDC eligibility but no longer be WIN-mandatory (if, for example, they had another child).

Program Origins

WDP's focus on Independent Job Search and IWEP arose from the policy preferences and priorities of leadership of the Bureau of Social Services, the office within DPA that prior to WDP was responsible for the provision of social services in the WIN Program. The plans for the WIN Demonstration prepared by the Bureau were accepted by the DPA Director, other high-level DPA administrators, and state officials with minimal changes.

To learn about the origins and inception of the WIN Demonstration Program, the author interviewed the individual who was then Chief of the Bureau of Social Services, as well as one of his key staff members, the state WIN Demonstration Manager.³ According to the Bureau Chief, the new program design was intended to generate large and immediate caseload

³A more detailed study of WDP's history was also conducted by a political scientist serving as a consultant to MDRC. (See Ballis, 1985.)

reductions and cost savings, a goal given high priority by the Department of Public Aid administration. Achieving this objective was deemed especially important in light of the very large size of Illinois' AFDC caseload, the third largest in the country in Fiscal Year 1986. (During the same time period, Illinois ranked sixth among the states in population.) As of September 1985, that caseload numbered 243,000 households, with almost exactly two-thirds of them (161,000) in Cook County. A third of the Cook County AFDC households contained WIN-mandatory recipients required to participate in WDP; over 50,000 such recipients were on the rolls at any one time.

The Bureau Chief also cited a change in the philosophical climate surrounding the administration of welfare programs. He noted that many welfare administrators, including himself, had become increasingly convinced of both the necessity and the propriety of enforcing a work requirement in AFDC. He also saw this as part of a broader trend toward recognizing that welfare receipt involved a contract, not merely a right. This contractual view of public assistance, he contended, was not necessarily conservative or anti-welfare but indicative of a recognition that the country's resources are limited and that the right of government to redistribute wealth has been called into question. He also asserted that welfare administrators have come to realize that "giving money to people without a conceptual basis" is damaging, and that programs should give clients the possibility of self-support.

Third, the Bureau Chief sounded a familiar argument: that it is essential to distinguish between the deserving and undeserving poor. Failure to administer the work test stringently, he maintained, would

damage the agency's ability to provide services and income to those truly incapable of work; if those who could work did so, then the same limited resources could be distributed to those most in need.

Finally, interdepartmental politics were at issue. Authority over the WIN Program in Illinois, as in other states, had been divided between the public assistance agency (DPA) and the state employment service (the Illinois Department of Labor). BSS planners wanted to secure full DPA operating responsibility for the program, arguing that Department of Labor WIN staff had been less effective than their DPA counterparts.

This political objective was not fully realized. The Department of Labor resisted complete exclusion from a role in WIN, and the question had to be resolved at the gubernatorial level. In the compromise that resulted, DPA gained overall program authority, but DOL retained operating responsibility in some areas. The MDRC evaluation, and this dissertation as well, focuses only on the program operated by DPA. In Cook County, DPA offices covered about three-quarters of all mandatory welfare recipients and were located throughout the county.

To attain its goal of effecting cost savings, the program model called for staff to assume that almost all recipients were capable of looking for work and should be assigned to Independent Job Search. This model grew out of the perception of Bureau of Social Services staff that the WIN Program was serving too few individuals to realize its goal of reducing the welfare caseload. Central to WIN's mode of operation was an initial assessment interview to ascertain each new registrant's prior employment and education, as well as her current situation. WIN staff

had used this assessment process to screen out large numbers of people they judged unlikely to be helped by the program, while undertaking one-to-one counseling, job development, and job referral efforts on behalf of those they deemed employable. BSS officials questioned the validity of the largely subjective criteria WIN personnel had employed in making these assessments, and the model they proposed as an alternative assumed that everyone could participate in the new program unless there was some compelling reason (e.g., illness) to the contrary. The decision to eliminate assessment in WDP facilitated the implementation of a participation requirement that applied to many more individuals than under WIN.

It is not surprising that WDP planners opted to deliver a uniform treatment, job search, to all enrollees upon their entry into the program. Since the late 1970s, an initial job search requirement for as large a part of the caseload as possible has been viewed as the best and most economical means of achieving immediate caseload reductions. Program planners have offered several explanations for making upfront job search mandatory for everyone: they argue that the labor market itself (rather than staff opinion) is the best test of employability and the best means of identifying who will or will not be successful in securing employment; that job search provides a ready way of identifying individuals to whom more expensive services such as job training should be provided (those who complete the program--thereby proving their willingness to follow through on a commitment--but are unable to find jobs); that the requirement can be a means of detecting recipients who hold jobs not reported to program staff; and that it is reasonable to

ask anyone who is able-bodied to look for work as a condition of receiving aid. The latter two reasons clearly speak to the concept that welfare should be reserved for poor people who can be demonstrated to be honest (that is, who do not try to secure benefits to which they are not entitled) and deserving (as evidenced by their willingness to seek employment).

It was evident, however, that if the new program were to try to place more people in job search, the nature of that component would have to be less labor-intensive than under WIN. Federal funding cutbacks in the fall of 1981 further necessitated a revision of staff roles. In order to spread staff resources among the greatest number of clients, the WDP model shifted job search responsibility from staff to enrollees, who were required to look for jobs on their own without staff assistance except that provided in the supervised biweekly group sessions. This strategy enabled DPA to operate the program at a relatively low cost of \$90-\$130 per person assigned to the program, depending on the specific sequence of activities.⁴

Bureau of Social Services personnel gave less emphasis to one of the long-standing aims of the WIN Program and of other programs for the poor: the direct provision by program staff of social services (in this case, help in locating jobs). As seen below, this responsibility was largely, although not exclusively, supplanted by the task of monitoring clients' own job search activities. In fact, the shifting of

⁴This cost actually represents the net cost of enrolling clients in the full sequence of WDP activities, above and beyond the cost of simply requiring them to appear for the initial orientation and sanctioning them if they did not do so.

responsibility from staff to clients does not appear to be an ex post facto rationalization of a decision taken on grounds of economic necessity. The interview with the state WIN Demonstration Manager and the language of the proposal to the Department of Health and Human Services suggest, rather, that this was a matter of deep personal and philosophical conviction.

Several factors at both the national and state levels prompted the decision to add a workfare component to Independent Job Search once the latter was well established. First, passage by Congress of the Emergency Jobs Bill in 1983 made available federal funds for projects where commitments could be made quickly. Second, anticipating that the Reagan Administration might well mandate a workfare program nationally, planners reasoned that Illinois would do well to pilot-test the workfare approach. Lastly, DPA staff responded to what they perceived as widespread interest in work experience at the national level.

At the state level, DPA's recent experience with a workfare program for General Assistance recipients spurred IWEP's development on two counts. First, the virtually unanimous passage of the authorizing legislation for that program by the Illinois state legislature was taken as evidence of lawmakers' support for the concept. Second, DPA's experience in operating the GA Jobs Program suggested that a work component could be implemented relatively smoothly and might well produce savings--as it seemed to have done in the case of GA Jobs, largely because of sanctions.

The Bureau of Social Services Chief predicted that some AFDC recipients would choose not to participate in IWEP and would be cut from

the rolls; thus, IWEP would serve as a vehicle for cost containment. He and his staff did not envision the component as purely punitive, however. They expected that it would provide work experience, albeit unpaid (except for the welfare grant), to individuals who needed it, and emphasized that IWEP work assignments should be "real jobs" and not "make-work." They also noted that it would provide a free labor force to nonprofit agencies experiencing severe staff cutbacks.

The desire to confer employability skills was one factor that led planners to decide on a three-month work program rather than a shorter one. At the same time, IWEP planners had little interest in an ongoing work requirement, believing enrollees might then begin to regard their work assignments as regular jobs and stop looking for unsubsidized positions. Furthermore, they doubted that sufficient worksites could be developed for clients to occupy workfare positions indefinitely. The expectation was that, except under exceptional circumstances (the prospect of a permanent position at the agency to which a client was assigned, for instance), clients would participate in IWEP only once.

When IWEP began in 1984, constraints on funding and hence staff size dictated that it be implemented on a fairly small scale; unlike IJS, which operates throughout the state, IWEP is run in only sixteen of the 102 Illinois counties. In addition, while offices staffed by personnel of both the DPA and the Department of Labor operated IJS, only DPA offices ran IWEP. State DPA officials did not issue guidelines on IWEP eligibility except in Cook County.⁵ Elsewhere, the decision was

⁵The Cook County guidelines were a direct consequence of the MDRC evaluation. See the discussion in Chapter VI, pp. 190-191.

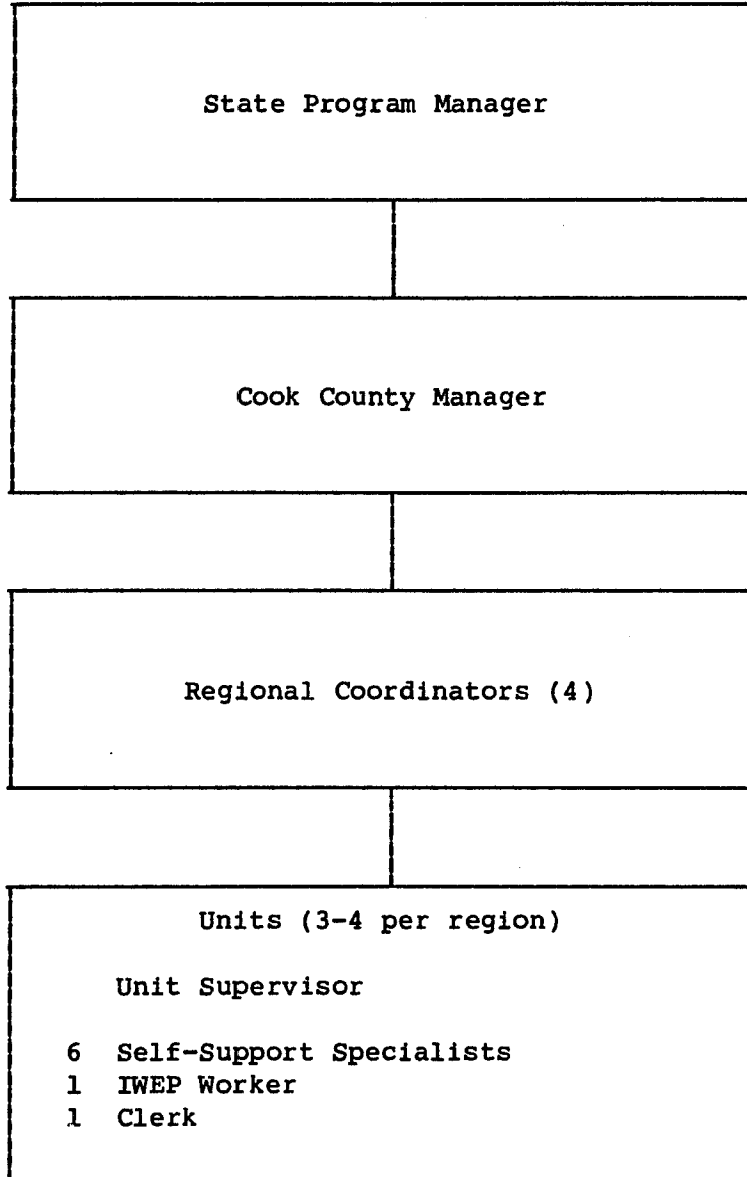
left to local staff, who decided whether to assign IJS completers to work experience or to another WDP component. Thus, while WDP was an important addition to the WDP model, it was not a mandatory activity for all enrollees, and it in no way challenged the primacy of Independent Job Search, in which all people were still initially required to participate and to which they could be reassigned at various points in their program tenure.

Staff Structure and Responsibilities

All WDP staff in the units under study were employees of the Illinois Department of Public Aid. (As noted above, offices staffed by the Illinois Department of Labor were excluded from the investigation.) As such, they were relatively untouched by the political dimensions of public employment in Cook County or the city of Chicago.

Figure 2 depicts the WDP organizational structure during the study period. In the central office, the Cook County WDP manager, who reported to the state program manager in Springfield, was aided by two staff members who developed IWEP worksites in nonprofit organizations. Within each of the four WDP regions into which Cook County is divided, a regional coordinator, directly responsible to the county WDP manager, was in charge of the three or four units comprising the region. The staff in each unit, in turn, numbered eight or nine: a supervisor, six or seven "self-support specialists," and one IWEP worker. The total number of front-line staff members--those interacting directly with clients--averaged ninety-five during the MDRC study period.

Figure 2--Organizational Structure of WDP in Cook County



Unit supervisors, interviewed about their job responsibilities, reported that a large part of their time was spent monitoring job performance statistics of staff and compiling aggregate performance figures for the unit. Each supervisor also conducted unit meetings once per calendar quarter, held individual conferences with staff members, produced quarterly and yearly personnel evaluations, and wrote up corrective action plans for workers failing to meet performance quotas. Four times a year, the supervisor sat in on a group session led by a staff member, and he or she was also responsible for mediating between workers and recipients in cases of contested sanctions.

The self-support specialists (or SSSs, as they were sometimes called, with apparent obliviousness to any other implications of that acronym) had full responsibility for three of the four major WDP components: Independent Job Search, Pre-Employment (as education and training were known) and Modified Job Search. They also had a role in assigning clients to IWEP. Most of their tasks could be described as bureaucratic, involving the monitoring of clients' compliance with WDP regulations as well as completion of the considerable paperwork associated with these responsibilities. To a limited extent, however, they did provide concrete assistance in job search techniques as well as some support services, such as help in making childcare arrangements. Their caseloads were large--averaging from 258 to 296 each month during much of 1985--and their duties time-consuming.

As might be expected given the centrality of job search in the program model, self-support specialists devoted most of their time to IJS. They scheduled and ran an initial orientation session followed by

four biweekly group sessions. During these meetings, which averaged ninety minutes in length, they checked compliance with the job search quotas, encouraged clients to share their job-hunting experiences as a way of building peer support, and discussed topics stipulated in the training manual that had been devised by central office personnel in Springfield, such as how to fill out a job application or take an interview.

As discussed below, self-support specialists had little say in the basic structure or content of IJS. BSS staff gave considerable attention to this component and worked out highly detailed procedures for how it should be conducted. Greater discretion was afforded in the operation of the other WDP activities.

Pre-Employment and Modified Job Search consumed less of the self-support specialists' time and energy. In their IJS sessions, specialists typically urged all high school dropouts to sign up for GED classes and encouraged Spanish-speaking registrants to enroll in English classes. However, specialists' responsibilities did not include seeking out or making referrals to specific education and training courses. Rather, specialists relied on enrollees to take the initiative and then approved or rejected their suggestions based on DPA regulations. The latter specified that acceptable programs could offer no more than two years of adult basic education for an elementary school equivalency and/or a preparation course for a high school equivalency degree, or two years or less of post-secondary or vocational training if that training was in an area that offered a reasonable opportunity for future employment. The rules further stated that client activities in this

component must "make the client employable in the shortest amount of time and at the least cost to the Department." Attendance at a four-year college was not considered to qualify, the argument being that welfare grants were never intended to support individuals while they got a college education.

Although recipients in Modified Job Search were officially required to make five employer contacts per month, enforcement of this rule was not strictly monitored. However, self-support specialists, who were required to contact clients in this component at six-month intervals by phone, mail or in person, exercised considerable discretion in determining whether the job search was sufficiently active. Specialists usually asked when, where, and how often recipients had last looked for jobs; although they did not initiate sanctions against individuals whose replies seemed unsatisfactory or suspicious, the latter could be required to return to IJS, where job-hunting was monitored more vigorously.

Self-support specialists assigned clients considered suitable for IWEP to a pool of people awaiting a worksite position. As suitable worksites were identified, IWEP workers were then responsible for conducting IWEP orientation sessions intended to convey the nature, purposes, and requirements of the component. IWEP workers assigned recipients to worksites and monitored both their worksite attendance and the fulfillment of the job search quota (in this case, eight employer contacts per month) imposed on IWEP enrollees along with their work obligations.

Although self-support specialists and IWEP workers shared the same DPA ranking, the two jobs were structured very differently, and workers' caseloads were also different. Fifteen IWEP workers were responsible for orienting an average of twenty-five to thirty new enrollees per month and maintaining an average of ninety-two persons in active IWEP assignments as of November 1985. In contrast, eighty-eight specialists were responsible for an average of 280 recipients distributed over three components. Moreover, the self-support specialists' objective was the "saturation" coverage of the large WDP caseload. IWEP workers, on the other hand, were responsible for the intensive involvement of a fraction of that caseload in a small-scale program.

Staff Background and Training

Various authors have noted that recruitment and training can partially substitute for close supervision, since they help to ensure that workers will be socialized for the roles they are expected to fill and that they will already have adopted the definition of the situation fostered by the organization.

The position of self-support specialist, assigned the rank of Caseworker IV in the DPA hierarchy, was largely staffed by veteran agency employees who were familiar with DPA policies and procedures. Only one-fourth had worked in the old WIN Program, although given agency officials' intention to operate a program that differed radically from WIN, this may not have been viewed as a handicap. Most self-support specialists had worked at the Caseworker III level in some other part of

DPA and came to WDP when they were promoted on the basis of seniority, as specified in the union contract.

In contrast, IWEP workers were hired during a hiatus when the union contract was not in effect. With selection not restricted to the pool of Caseworker IIIs eligible for promotion, supervisors were able to choose from among candidates both within and outside DPA and consequently, they tended to believe that higher-quality workers were filling the IWEP positions. Thus, the staffing of WDP by experienced personnel was not necessarily regarded as an asset to the program, since, owing to the seniority system, supervisors tended to equate experience with a lesser degree of merit.

Self-support specialists and IWEP workers received limited training for their jobs from staff of the central office in Springfield. For example, the IWEP workers' training, which was observed in full by the author, lasted two days and largely centered on correct completion of the numerous forms associated with entering clients into the component and monitoring their attendance. Service-oriented issues (such as how to convey IWEP's purpose to enrollees or how to mediate disputes between employers and employees) received scant attention during the training.

Performance Measures

Blau alludes to the importance of performance measures--quantifiable indicators of staff behavior--as a mechanism for controlling staff activity that is less directly intrusive, but no less powerful, than close supervision by upper-level personnel. This was very much the case in the Illinois WIN Demonstration Program.

To evaluate staff performance, the WDP central office in Springfield established standard quotas to be achieved in set time periods. The workload of staff members and their orientation toward work tasks were in many ways products of these quotas. The attention of the self-support specialists was largely focused on meeting the requirement that they assign sixty clients each month to IJS orientation. (These could be new mandatory recipients or individuals who had already been in IJS and had subsequently been assigned to Modified Job Search.) Poor attendance at early orientations motivated specialists to assign more enrollees per session or schedule additional sessions toward the end of the month.

For IWEP workers, another quota set the workload: each unit had to maintain a minimum of 150 persons on worksites at all times. No IWEP worker was ever able to attain more than two-thirds of this quota. Yet, the struggle to assign and keep the absolute maximum number of workers on site at all times ordered their priorities for orientation, assignment, and sanctioning.

The most important quotas related to desired outcomes rather than procedures. For both self-support specialists and IWEP workers, the overall program goal of reducing welfare costs was set forth in the monthly quotas for "actual positive terminations." These occurred when welfare office personnel acted on WDP staff requests to reduce or eliminate recipients' benefits. Benefits could be adjusted for reasons unrelated to the program--because recipients married, received income from other sources, or otherwise lost eligibility. Reductions could also occur for program-related ones: recipients could lose all or part

of their grants if they found jobs or failed to cooperate with the WDP requirements. Self-support specialists had to produce thirteen actual positive terminations every month, eight of which were to result from entry into unsubsidized employment. IWEP workers had a quota of seven positive terminations per month, of which four had to be "hires."

The quotas gave staff an incentive to initiate sanctions against recipients who failed to attend required activities rather than to extend clients the benefit of the doubt. In this way, they could make up the positive terminations resulting from causes other than employment.

Statistics for positive terminations were recorded in each staff member's record--the "Monthly Summary of Activity"--which was submitted to the unit supervisor, the regional coordinator, and Cook County WDP management. These statistics were reviewed each quarter as part of the formal job performance evaluation, and whether an employee had attained the quota for positive terminations was the first item on a prioritized list considered in the evaluation. Supervisors, too, were evaluated on the quantitative measures of their staffs' performance, so they were concerned with the quotas as well.

Through the use of performance quotas, DPA administrators sought (in Simon's terms) to control the "decision premises" governing staff actions, and, by aligning the self-interest of lower-level staff with the aims of the program they were most concerned to fulfill, to ensure that staff would regulate their activities accordingly. In this respect, agency officials were largely successful. However, because staff were made fully responsible for outcomes that were only partly

under their control--clients' ability to find jobs--the quotas did engender a degree of hostility, and especially in Cook County, both lower-level staff and their supervisors tended to believe that they were unrealistic. Although many supervisors regretted this almost exclusive reliance on quantitative measures to evaluate staff performance in both components, they nonetheless acted in accord with them. For example, most supervisors considered IWEF workers to be capable and industrious but rated their performance as inadequate on most quarterly evaluations because the workers failed to meet state quotas for worksite assignments.

It is also telling that certain potential performance measures were excluded from the roster. For example, staff were not credited with assisting clients in making arrangements to enter education or training programs. Nor were they rewarded if clients under their supervision found jobs at wages above the minimum. The performance goals and quotas that staff struggled to achieve were, instead, those that related most directly to the agency's goal of immediate caseload reductions and cost savings.

Staff Attitudes Toward WDP's Goals and Mandatory Nature

The overall staff attention to WDP quotas was one important influence on the program's character. Another was the emphasis on institutional procedures. In describing their duties, line staff always mentioned completion of paperwork as their most time-consuming responsibility. Some spoke of being "bogged down" to the extent that one-to-one counseling and other service-oriented activities had to be

either curtailed or virtually abandoned in order to keep up with the press of record-keeping. These staff members experienced conflict between the demands of service provision and bureaucratic oversight, both of which they saw as part of their roles, and they regretted WDP's de-emphasis on service, as illustrated in the comments of two self-support specialists: "With all this paperwork, how can you successfully work with clients?" and "We need less paperwork and more private counseling."

Large caseloads were also perceived as an especially difficult impediment to effective relationships with clients. Common complaints about caseload size are exemplified in the following comments:

IJS class size is too big to deal with problems. It requires close scrutiny to work with people. You have to keep a close relationship built up over a period of months Group sessions are good, but we're dealing with too many people at one time.

Quantity shouldn't be the only consideration. Our purpose is to deal with each person, assist them. If you're only concerned with quantity, you can't get quality.

In general, unit supervisors felt that the morale of the self-support specialists was low.

To examine staff attitudes toward the goals and mandatory nature of WDP, interviews were conducted with sixty-seven staff members from eleven WDP units. The WDP goal most commonly cited by staff was the provision of technical assistance to job seekers, mentioned in 47 percent of responses. As one self-support specialist explained, "IJS sessions tell them [clients] things they were never told before--why they didn't get hired. IJS tells them why they were rejected at the front door." With almost equal frequency, WDP staff also saw the

program's goal as helping people become self-sufficient (46 percent), and getting people off public aid (44 percent). When WDP staff spoke of helping welfare recipients to become self-sufficient, they defined this in terms of the DPA-enunciated objective of immediate placement. One self-support specialist commented:

Before, the government took a long-term view of breaking the cycle of dependency. It gave long-term aid to students; but good evidence shows ex-students didn't get jobs anyway. With a bad economy, the government can't afford to support people with kids like they're middle-class on the backs of taxpayers.

Others offered the view that immediate placement benefited enrollees. As one worker expressed it, "Our whole objective is to get clients off public aid as quickly as possible . . . to get a recent work history." Moreover, welfare dependency was perceived to be harmful and to be escaped as soon as possible. As one supervisor explained, "You won't find anyone who works in Public Aid who wouldn't say public assistance isn't terrible for people."

Most of the staff favored the fact that WDP was mandatory. Two-thirds of the WDP staff members interviewed felt it was both fair and necessary to require participation. Comments of three staff members illustrate this point:

Mandatoriness is fair, although some ladies complain that it interferes with their being mothers. Well, you have to draw the line someplace. They're not independently wealthy--they're on welfare, and that's not good. In the long term, it will cut down on second or third generations on welfare, which I've seen

I think mandatoriness is fair and necessary. Lot of people haven't worked. Without a little nudge, they just won't go.

Public assistance should have rules and regulations. I've had bad experience with volunteers.

A small number of workers (12 percent) would have preferred a voluntary program but considered this option unrealistic. An even smaller group (5 percent) felt that a voluntary program would be both desirable and workable.

Since noncompliant enrollees were supposed to be sanctioned, another series of interview questions examined the role of sanctioning in a mandatory program. These interviews were conducted with the supervisor and IWEP worker from each of ten units, along with two self-support specialists from each of eleven units.

Of the ten supervisors, seven expressed the opinion that WDP would not be regarded as a serious program, nor respected by recipients, without enforcement procedures. In support of such procedures, several supervisors volunteered the explanation, offered in a slogan-like manner, that "the integrity of the program must be maintained." Two supervisors felt that sanctions had a positive function, describing them as "a way of getting people to be responsible, a way of waking them up." Only one supervisor viewed sanctions in a purely punitive light.

Lower-level staff tended to concur that sanctioning authority was necessary to carry out the program ("We'd never have any clients in here otherwise," one worker explained), and that sanctions were "a means of encouraging better efforts." However, a higher percentage, particularly among IWEP workers, took a more negative view of sanctions, seeing them as solely punitive in function.

The mandatory nature of the program and the consequences of noncooperation were precisely and emphatically explained in the WDP

orientation meetings. Nevertheless, noncompliance did occur despite the risk of losing welfare payments. WDP staff ventured three explanations: that the welfare recipients had other sources of income; that they were too disorganized to live up to WDP regulations; or that they simply did not take the mandatory character of the program seriously.

The Options Program in Baltimore

The Program Model

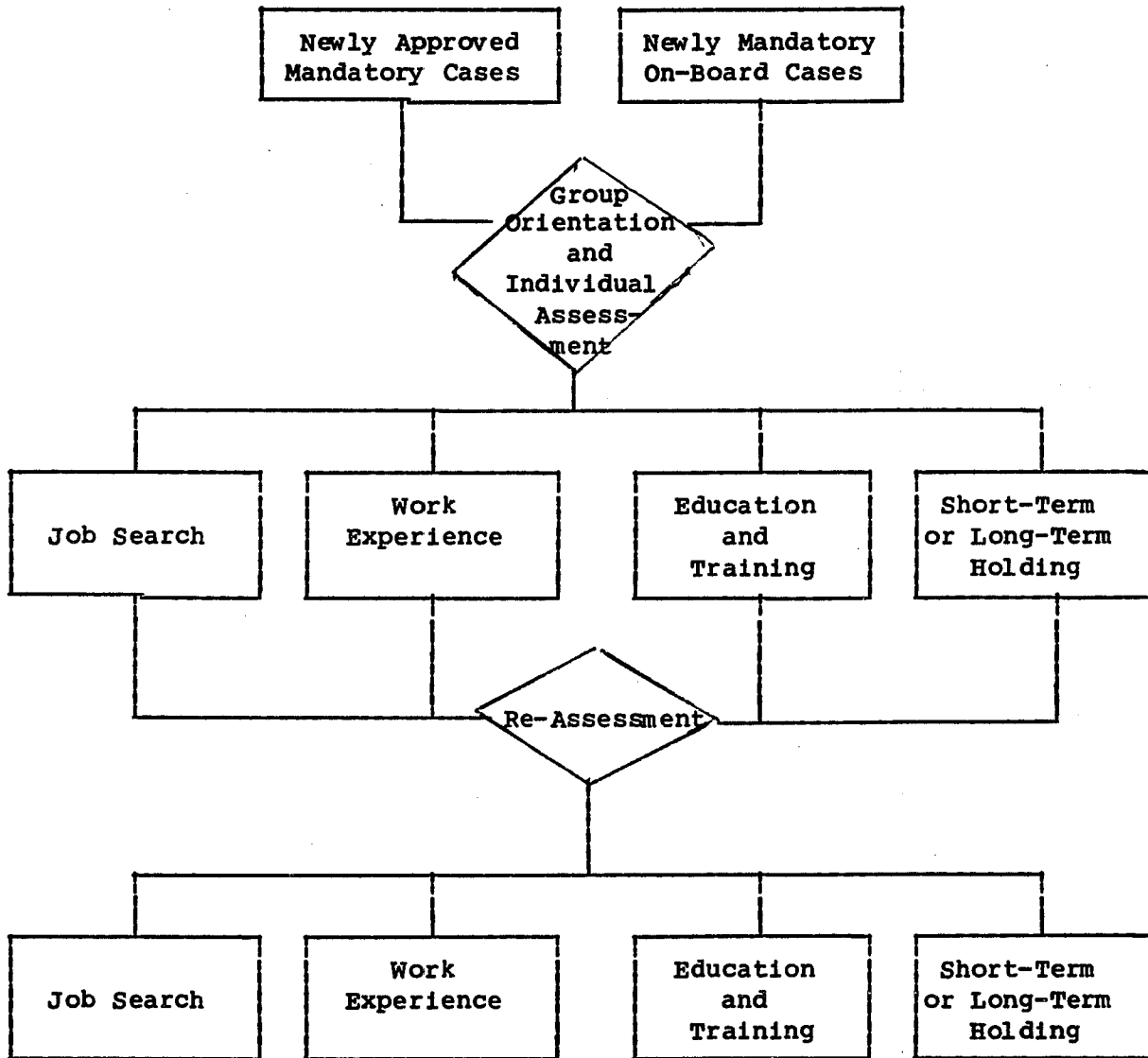
Different institutional, financial, and philosophical considerations shaped the evolution and implementation of the Options Program in Baltimore. As a consequence, Options, a special demonstration under the general provisions of the WIN Demonstration Program, differed from the WIN Demonstration Program in Cook County along three key dimensions that played a critical role in determining the quantity and types of services offered. First, unlike its Chicago counterpart, Options stressed longer-term rather than immediate welfare reductions and cost savings. Second, it was not intended to "saturate" the entire WIN-mandatory caseload; indeed, it was contractually obligated to serve only one thousand enrollees--only about one-thirteenth of Baltimore's WIN-mandatory caseload--over the course of a given year. (Other WIN-mandatory registrants were enrolled instead in the regular WIN Program, which continued to operate alongside Options). Finally, the Maryland Department of Human Resources, the state welfare agency, did not run the program directly, but instead contracted operating responsibility to the Mayor's Office of Manpower Resources (MOMR), the city's employment and

training entity under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). All of these elements, taken together, oriented the Options Program more toward service provision and less toward regulation than was the case in Chicago.

Figure 3 depicts the flow of clients through the Baltimore programs. Like the Chicago program, Options enrolled both WIN-mandatory applicants for public assistance and those already on the rolls who were redetermined to be WIN-mandatory; during the period under study, it drew its registrants, on a random basis, from approximately half of Baltimore's welfare centers. (Welfare applicants and recipients living in other parts of the city, or those excluded from Options by the random assignment procedure, were referred to WIN.) Individuals deemed eligible for Options were required to enroll with the program as a condition of continued benefit receipt.

When clients registered for the program, Options staff administered to them an hour-long standardized test to determine reading and math proficiency. This was followed by a group orientation session which explained the Options program and its purpose, including a concise description of the various program activities, services, and benefits provided to the client. The staff member conducting the orientation distributed and read the WIN rules and civil rights assurance and answered questions about the rest of the intake process, making the mandatory nature of the program clear but emphasizing the opportunities for self-development and getting off welfare that Options offered. After this procedure, lasting approximately ninety minutes, the client was seen individually by the intake counselor for assessment.

Figure 3--Flow of Clients Through the Options Program in Baltimore



The assessment process itself took between forty-five minutes and an hour and a half. Its length was determined by several factors: the multiplicity of forms; the fact that the counselor had to get to know the client well enough to make an appropriate assignment; and the queue of individuals who came in to register on a given day. In the process of filling out forms, the counselor learned a good deal about the client's educational background and employment history, attitudes, skills, goals, and barriers to employment--information that guided the assignment decision.

At the conclusion of the assessment interview, the counselor completed an Employability Development Plan which outlined the course of each client's Options career. The client also had a voice in determining the choice of activity and signed the Employability Development Plan along with the counselor, a gesture intended to indicate that both parties agreed to its contents. However, as discussed in the next chapter, the client's "vote" was highly susceptible to manipulation by the counselor. The client could be placed in a short-term or long-term holding status, if she was judged unable to benefit from program activities. Alternatively, she could be assigned to one among a variety of components: a group job search workshop, individual job search under the direction of program staff, training addressing on-the-job behavior, unpaid work experience in a public or private non-profit agency, an enriched work experience combining that activity with basic education and job search, Adult Basic Education, General Equivalency Diploma preparation, classroom training for specific occupational skills, or subsidized on-the-job training with a private-sector employer. For the

most part, although not exclusively, these activities were operated by other MOMR units; in most cases, Options staff were not engaged in direct delivery of employability services. Options functioned, rather, as a "switching station," in which eligible persons were registered and assessed and from which they were dispatched to other components, returning to Options for reassessment and counseling.

It was basically left to the intake counselor and client to decide for which component the latter was best suited. Few unequivocal rules or specific guidelines channeled decision-making, and the client also had a say in the matter. The bases for the assignment decision are considered at greater length in the next chapter.

Participants in most activities received a \$30 weekly stipend which was usually tied to program attendance and performance and was intended to defray work-related expenses. Child care subsidized under Title XX was available through the Baltimore Department of Social Services; in addition, the program had funds to pay for thirty days of in-home child care for clients if they had no other arrangements and were enrolled in job search activities or awaiting a Department of Social Services-arranged placement.

Clients were expected to remain in Options until they get off welfare or were no longer WIN-mandatory for other reasons. Upon completion of an activity to which they were assigned, they were to be reassessed and placed in another appropriate component--either another activity or a holding status.

Program Origins

The impetus behind the Employment Initiatives in Maryland antedated OBRA's passage by more than a year. In part, the Baltimore and Wicomico County programs represented the response of the state Department of Human Resources to legislative concerns. It was well known that key figures in the Maryland state legislature favored establishing a "workfare" program for AFDC recipients that would resemble the program that had required recipients of General Assistance to work for their benefits since 1977. But high-level Department officials who were interested in some of the broader issues of welfare reform decided that the agency should play an active role in designing its own program for AFDC clients rather than respond to proposals generated by the legislature or by the newly elected Reagan Administration. In particular, the leadership wanted to develop a liberal program stressing employability development as an alternative to workfare, which they viewed as narrow in scope and punitive in intent.

Like the WIN Demonstration Program in Illinois, the two Maryland Employment Initiatives grew out of dissatisfaction with the operation of the regular WIN Program, which in Maryland was seen as unimaginatively administered. It is worth noting that the job search, work experience, and education and institutional training activities taking place under Options do not differ from those prescribed in WIN (although WIN was not funded at a level to permit much more than job search). This similarity is not coincidental: program planners sought to incorporate into the program model activities which had previously been shown to be effective

in assisting AFDC clients. As one observer noted, some policymakers thought no activities other than already attempted in WIN were needed, while others felt nothing better was possible.

Options was designed to improve on WIN, however, in the quality and mix of services, in the way in which program activities were conducted and coordinated, and in the amount of resources expended on them. The Department of Human Resources allocated to the program a level of funding adequate to ensure that they could provide a sufficient number and variety of slots in program activities, supplement these with support services, and maintain caseloads low enough to allow for thorough and ongoing monitoring and supervision of clients. The average cost per person assigned to the program was \$957, although this cost varied widely from one person to another because the amounts and types of services they received also differed greatly.

Thus, Options, unlike WIN, was funded at a level that would enable it to serve all suitable candidates and thereby enforce a participation requirement. The enforcement of such a requirement per se--that is, requiring those on public assistance to "pay a price" for the receipt of benefits--was not an objective of DHR planners, however. Rather, they were convinced that a mandatory participation requirement was indispensable for two other reasons: first, to garner legislative support, and second, to bring to the program those clients who, they believed, would benefit from its activities but might lack the knowledge, initiative, or courage to enroll on their own.

The decision to delegate operating authority for Options to the Mayor's Office of Manpower Reasons was taken for several reasons.

First, JTPA staff, largely former CETA employees, were seen as more innovative and less bound by bureaucratic regulation than WIN personnel. Second, they had extensive experience serving the welfare population, both in their regular capacity and in special programs they had run previously. Further, the Mayor's Office of Manpower Resources was nationally recognized as a forward-looking, dynamically administered program, and its director, who wielded considerable political clout locally, lobbied vigorously to run the new Options Program. MOMR leadership saw the integration of the welfare and manpower systems as the direction in which employment policy was moving and wanted to be in the forefront of that movement. DHR administrators, for their part, reasoned that MOMR, with its operational knowledge of employability services, could bring its experience to bear on behalf of the Options enrollees.

Unlike WDP in Chicago or the regular WIN Program in Baltimore, Options sought to increase self-sufficiency over the long run through activities aimed at human capital development, not merely to place welfare recipients in jobs as quickly as possible. This thrust arose both from the preferences of DHR administrators and from MOMR's history as an operator of various education and training components. Leadership in both agencies wanted to improve the economic security of participants--that is, to increase their earnings and job retention--so that they would be unlikely to slip back into welfare receipt. Moreover, the liberal orientation of program administrators made for a de-emphasis on sanctioning as a means of reducing welfare costs. So did the fact that while MOMR had traditionally served a low-income population, its clients

had come forward on a voluntary basis, and the agency had little experience with enforcing a mandatory participation requirement.

Options was intended to test the efficacy of a specific (and quite costly) program model, and its total enrollment was therefore kept low. The relatively small caseloads thus afforded to staff again helped to ensure that Options would be directed toward service to clients rather than toward "people-processing."

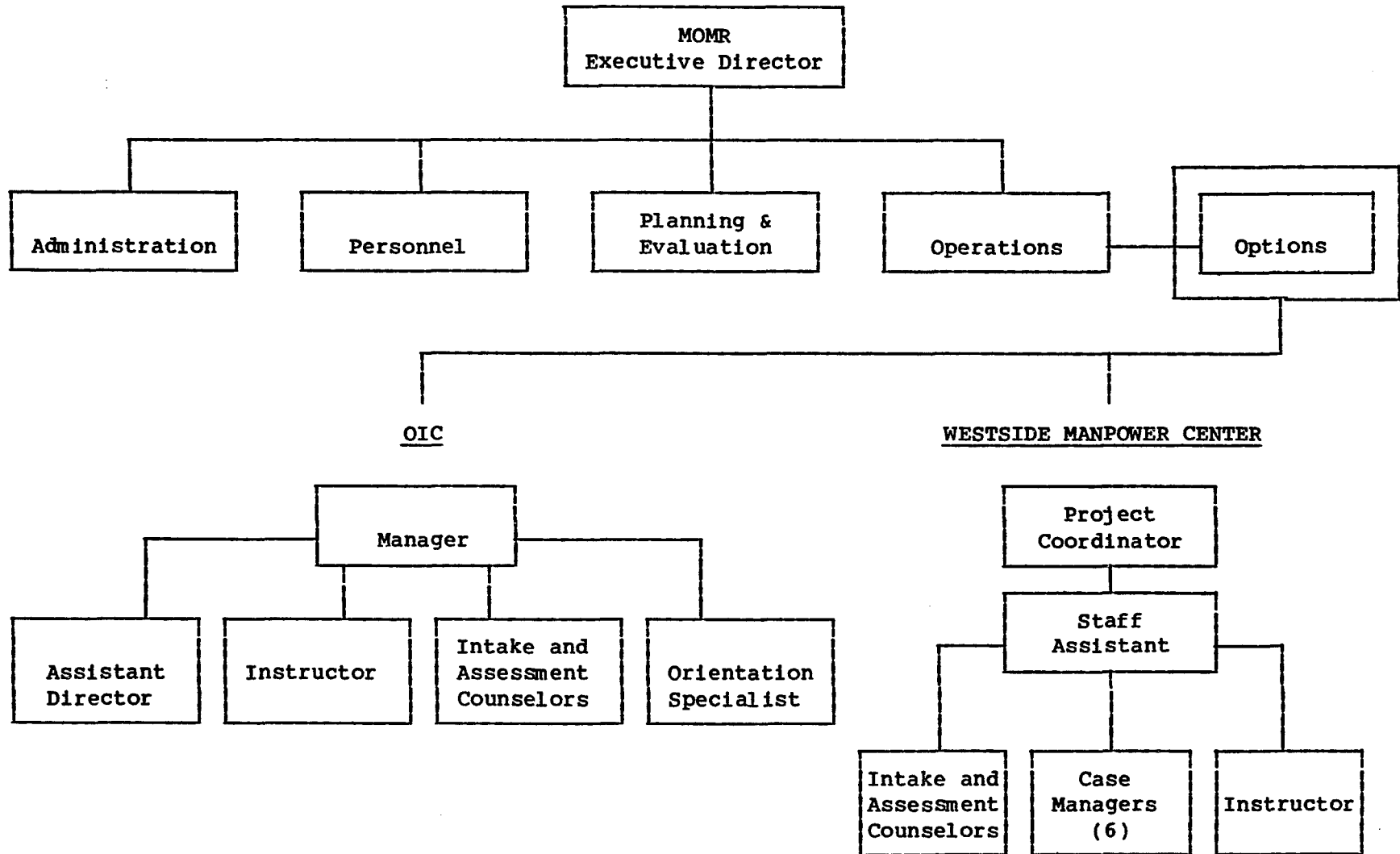
Staff Structure and Responsibilities

Options was lodged within a large, well-articulated agency which offered a wide array of manpower services to Baltimore residents. MOMR was created in 1971 as a city agency that became the CETA Grant Administrator for the City of Baltimore. Despite several funding cutbacks in CETA, the agency's fundamental stability was never in doubt, and its transition from a CETA prime sponsor to a the lead agency under the Job Training Partnership Act also proceeded smoothly.

Figure 4 shows the Options staffing plan and its fit within MOMR. While MOMR itself was a sizable agency (its budget for Fiscal Year 1983 was \$20.7 million), the Options staff complement numbered only eleven during the study period. Nonetheless, as one of the agency's new and "showpiece" programs, it received a good deal of attention from upper-level MOMR personnel during its first year of operations; indeed, only one official stood between the Options project coordinator and the head of the entire agency.

Intake and assessment of certain Options clients was also handled by nine staff members of the Opportunities Industrialization Center

Figure 4--Options' Staffing Plan and Position in MOMR in November 1982



(OIC), the local affiliate of a national nonprofit manpower organization, which held a contract with MOMR to conduct these activities.

The Options staff was headed by a project coordinator with responsibility for day-to-day management. This individual directed, coordinated, and evaluated staff both at the main office and at OIC. The coordinator participated in the selection of Options staff, reviewed cases recommended for possible sanctioning, maintained liaison with MOMR's employment service units, and coordinated the monitoring and reporting requirements of MOMR, WIN, and DHR. The coordinator's responsibilities were considerably broader than those of the Unit Supervisor, her Chicago counterpart.

The staff assistant assisted the project coordinator in the management of the program and had direct responsibility for the work of the intake counselors and case managers. The intake and assessment counselors formulated individual Employability Development Plans for each Options client, assessed supportive services needs and made referrals to service providers, and referred the client to the first program activity. At that point, the task of monitoring clients' progress and dealing with their problems was assumed by the case managers.

The Options staff also included two instructors, who administered the initial achievement tests and provided individualized instruction in basic reading and mathematics to clients whose skills were deficient, and one individual who was responsible for conducting program orientation sessions.

These job descriptions suggest a highly organized staff structure, with clear delineation of responsibility and little overlap. This was,

in fact, the case. Along with the division of labor, reporting forms were used to ensure staff accountability. Case managers were expected to complete weekly logs of client contacts and to maintain a card file on the clients participating in each activity. The staff assistant had a copy of each client's card, while the project coordinator was responsible for completing activity reports indicating the monthly and cumulative numbers of enrollees, the activities in which clients were participating, counts of clients who were "deregistered" (i.e., left the program), and job placements. Additionally, the open setting of the main Options office--all staff were housed in one large space separated by shoulder-high metal and glass dividers--made it easy for supervisory staff to observe the doings of other staff members.

Management controls were exercised through written and oral communications from supervisors (often discussing which activities had slots that needed to be filled) and through review of documents. Staff performance was reviewed regularly. In an interview conducted with the second Options project coordinator, he indicated that during the period under study, counselors had been expected to place eight to ten clients on their caseloads in jobs each month (Alvin Truesdale, telephone interview, 13 October 1987). It is notable that this target exceeds the goal of eight instances of welfare savings resulting from employment that self-support specialists in Chicago were expected to attain. However, in Baltimore, unlike Chicago, this job placement quota does not appear to have been very strongly emphasized: it received no mention in the staff handbook or in any of the reports submitted by the on-site researcher during her year in the field. Moreover, other goals counted

as well--assigning clients to designated program activities, for example--and could override job placements in importance in the staff evaluation scheme. In part because Options' aim was not to achieve immediate caseload reductions, program administrators did not expect staff members' activities to be driven principally by the placement quotas.

Caseloads in Options were about half the size of those of the self-support specialists in Chicago. They typically ranged between 120 and 170 at any time, including individuals assigned to a holding status as well as those in active components. With caseloads of this size, Options staff were expected to devote more time and attention to the assessment, monitoring, and counseling of clients, thereby translating the individualized nature of the program model and its emphasis on service provision into actual practice.

Staff Background and Training

In the Chicago program, the primary purpose of conditioning staff performance evaluations to the achievement of quotas was to help ensure that the self-interest of staff members--and therefore their behavior--would mesh with the larger goals of WDP. In Baltimore, the diminished importance of such measures meant that other mechanisms for securing staff compliance with the goals of the program were needed. The staff selection and training processes helped to guarantee that Options personnel would make decisions on the basis of the same perceptions and assumptions as those held by upper-level staff.

At the outset of the demonstration, Options recruited its staff from three agencies: MOMR, WIN (which, under the terms of MOMR's contract with the Department of Human Resources, supplied several staff positions as an in-kind program contribution), and the State Employment Service. The result was an ethnically mixed complement of men and women who, whatever their previous affiliations, came to Options with considerable prior experience with employment programs--eight years at their previous jobs, on average. Those with MOMR backgrounds were familiar with the agency and its various programs. Those coming from WIN were acquainted with the problems and needs of the AFDC population.

About half the Options staff members were there because they volunteered specifically for the position. For example, three of the five former WIN employees applied for Options because they thought it sounded interesting and nothing much was happening at WIN; the other two were drafted when there were not enough volunteers to fill the positions. Other staff members came to Options because the programs or agencies where they were employed were experiencing funding cutbacks and layoffs appeared imminent.

It would be reasonable to expect a certain amount of tension among staff members from diverse agencies who were accustomed to serving different populations and following separate operating procedures. By and large, this tension never materialized. Several explanations may be offered. First, all Options staff underwent extensive training before client intake to become familiar with the new program, personnel, clients, and forms with which they would be dealing. Second, since staff came from other bureaucratic settings, they were used to following

procedures; Options simply gave them a different set of forms and guidelines. Finally, staff members were concerned with helping people. They enjoyed being associated with a program that they believed offered more in the way of employability services than had previous programs, and they were willing to cooperate in an effort whose goals and means they supported.

Staff Attitudes Toward the Program and its Clientele

Staff members were interviewed by the researcher in November and December 1982, shortly after they had completed training for the program but before they had been exposed to actual operations for any length of time. The following discussion thus has the limitation of containing only the staff members' initial attitudes and opinions, freshly informed by the training they had received, but untested by experience. Nonetheless, the data are useful as a gauge of staff members' early expectations.

Virtually all staff members asserted that the principal aim of Options was to help clients find employment. About half of the staff believed that its additional goals were to remove people from welfare and to provide them with work experience or training. It should be noted that the staff members who mentioned "getting clients off welfare" as a program goal were concerned with assisting individuals to become employable. The objective of reducing the public assistance caseload was not apparent in their responses, and jobs, rather than sanctions or the deterrence of potential applicants, were viewed as the vehicle for exiting the welfare rolls. "Requiring people to work in order to

receive benefits" received only a couple of mentions by Options staff, and "detecting fraud and abuse among recipients with unreported earnings" was not cited at all.

In short, Options staff adhered to the same vision of a "positive," "rehabilitative," and non-punitive program that Employment Initiatives planners originally promulgated. Nonetheless, seventeen of the twenty staff members believed that mandatory participation was a sensible program strategy. Most staff justified the participation requirement on the grounds that it might provide the push necessary to achieve positive outcomes. Typical of such responses were the following:

I think it is a good idea. Some people need to be prodded into doing something for themselves. They can get into a rut and become fearful about doing anything else.

I think that requiring participation is good because a lot of people will not take the first step toward independence and this forces them to do it, often with positive outcomes.

Paradoxically, the project coordinator was one of those who was ambivalent about mandatory participation and expressed the firm conviction that a voluntary program would provide as good or better results if it were well run. However, she conceded she had no real problem with a participation requirement as long as the program was flexible enough to take care of childcare needs and situations in which the client should not be required to work.

Despite their support for mandatory programs in theory, staff members anticipated considerable discomfort in taking the action that gives mandatory programs their "bite": imposing financial sanctions. About half the staff expressed reservations on this score. Said the

project coordinator, "Personally, I don't like to be involved in reducing an already inadequate grant." A view shared by several other staff members was that: "I really wouldn't want to see their benefits reduced, but I would do it." Hesitation to impose sanctions was often associated with a concern that the client's children would suffer were her budget to be cut. However, with few exceptions, even those staff members who were reluctant to sanction believed that some means of enforcing compliance was necessary, and staff were frequently able to justify the process on the grounds that clients had been amply forewarned about the consequences of noncompliance.

The general expectation, however, was that the need to impose sanctions would be minimal because few clients would be uncooperative.

The project coordinator commented:

I would be surprised if a significant number need to be adjudicated [the process of warnings and attempts at reconciliation preceding sanctioning]. The small caseload will enable the case managers to avoid problems. They will be monitoring as they go along We need the word on the street to be that participation is mandatory and sanctions will be applied if they fail to participate. However, I don't want to emphasize the mandatory nature of the program, I want to emphasize its positive aspects. I would be surprised if more than 25 percent refuse to participate. I would like to keep it between 10 and 15 percent. If I get a lot of adjudication cases, I would look at the staff to see if they are really working with the clients.

Staff members tended to agree with the staff coordinator that their own behavior, the messages they conveyed, and the program itself would be the principal factors affecting clients' decisions to participate. Typical comments along these lines were: "If they think they will get something out of the program, they will be willing to participate" and ". . . I believe a great deal depends upon the staff attitude--if the

staff is enthusiastic and supportive, the clients will respond positively."

Poor education, few work skills and little experience, and a lack of transportation were the factors most frequently cited by staff as barriers to employment faced by Options clients. Other handicaps staff mentioned included cognitive deficits (little understanding of the work world and unrealistic expectations) or psychological handicaps (low self-esteem, discouragement, and a poor attitude). Interestingly, they did not tend to see clients as morally deficient--lazy or eager to take advantage of "the system." On the whole, staff felt that clients' failure to find jobs resulted from individual traits rather than such structural factors as discrimination or the state of the economy.

In general, staff members perceived the Options population as one needing assistance in order to find employment. In addition, two case managers suggested that the major problem faced by Options clients was not finding a job but keeping it. Staff members believed that participation in Options would provide the job-hunting skills necessary to find jobs and the work experience needed to make clients more attractive to employers.

But getting a job, any job, was not a be-all and end-all, in the view of program staff. This was evident in the fact that, while they expressed willingness to refer clients to low-paying or menial jobs, none said they would require clients to accept such jobs. Several said they would tell clients what benefits they would lose and give them the choice of whether or not to accept the position. Some staff members

said they would want to see if the jobs had the potential to improve clients' situations in the long run.

The very fact that Options was not simply a job placement program was seen as one of the program's major assets, especially in the opinion of those employees who came to it from WIN. The former WIN workers stressed the variety of activities Options made available to clients, in contrast to WIN's almost exclusive emphasis on job search and placement. They also valued the opportunity afforded by lower Options caseloads to meet with clients more frequently and to get to know them better. As one case manager commented:

We will be more directly involved with the clients. At WIN we didn't have the time to spend with the clients, and we were bringing them in just to make sure that they were doing job search. In this program, we will know whether or not a client is having problems because we will be seeing them on a regular basis.

In summary, a number of structural features of the Options Program fostered an orientation of service to clients among program staff. First, the program was funded at a relatively high level, so that a variety of employability development services was in fact available. Adequate funding also made for relatively low caseloads, so that staff could gain familiarity with the situations in which clients found themselves and respond to their employability and social service needs. Second, in the past the operating agency had served low-income clients who requested its services, rather than those required to participate, and it had no interest in enforcing a mandatory requirement in an effort to reduce caseloads and costs by sanctioning noncompliant individuals. Third, the program did not establish rigid numerical quotas for place-

ments and welfare savings, nor did it specify exactly what course of action staff members should follow in every case. Thus, staff were able to act in what they considered each individual client's best interest rather than in a standardized fashion.

* * *

Although the Chicago and Baltimore programs emphasized both increased employment among public assistance recipients and decreased welfare caseloads and expenditures as desirable outcomes, they attached varying degrees of importance to these dual objectives and pursued these ends through disparate means. It would not be surprising, therefore, if the impacts on participants in the two programs also varied.

Findings on program impacts are discussed at length in Chapter VII. Here it is sufficient to point out that the marked differences between the two programs were in fact associated with impact results that differed, and differed in the expected directions. In Chicago, where the primary emphasis was on caseload reductions, welfare savings were achieved, but not owing to participants' employment gains, which were non-existent. In Baltimore, where the well-being of participants was the chief objective, the latter indeed benefited, experiencing statistically significant increases in employment. But the goal of reduced public assistance expenditures was not attained.

The patterns of discretionary practice that helped give rise to these findings are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

WELFARE BUREAUCRACY IN ACTION: FOLLOWING AND FORGING THE RULES

The previous chapter examined the ways in which the organizational structures of the two programs, their general objectives, and the specific means they employed to achieve these objectives set the context for staff decision-making. This chapter explores the decision-making process and its outcomes. Its purpose is primarily descriptive rather than analytical; a synthesis of the findings and their relationship to the literature on bureaucracy is reserved for the final chapter. This chapter focuses especially on the degree to which lower-level staff members adhered to or departed from guidelines set by program administrators to channel staff behavior in desired directions, and on the reasons for their actions. To the extent that lower-level staff who interacted with clients--that is, street-level bureaucrats--departed purposively from these guidelines, they may be seen as having exercised discretionary decision-making.

The movement of clients through both programs can be conceptualized as involving a series of decision points involving choices made by both clients and staff members. These points include: determination of technical eligibility for and referral to the program (usually done by the welfare agency); program registration; assessment and assignment to

a program activity or holding status; determination of a specific program component; participation in program components; reassessment; and program exit for a number of reasons, including finding a job, being sanctioned for non-compliance, leaving welfare for other reasons, or remaining on welfare but no longer being required to participate.

At some points, the power of decision lay primarily with program staff (for example, determining whether or not a client should be deferred from immediate participation). At other points, it rested chiefly with the client (for instance, determining whether or not to show up for a component to which she was assigned, or to accept a job offer). And at still other points, a joint decision by both parties was involved (for example, determining that a client should participate in a particular activity).

This chapter considers three points of decision-making in which staff members were always involved: the decision that an individual client was appropriate for immediate participation; the decision as to which of several activities a client should be assigned; and the decision that a client's behavior was sufficiently out of line with program regulations to warrant efforts at reconciliation or a possible sanction. How the two programs dealt with each of these decision-points is discussed in detail, with a view toward comparing and contrasting both formal policies and informal practices.

Immediate Participation vs. Assignment to Holding

The formal rules governing entry into the Options Program and the Cook County WIN Demonstration Program were substantially identical. All

WIN-mandatory AFDC recipients (as noted in Chapter I, primarily women whose youngest child was six or older) had to register with these programs as a condition of continued welfare receipt. During the registration process, staff determined whether or not they were appropriate candidates for program participation; if so, they had to participate in those activities for which they were deemed suitable. But the different ways in which program guidelines induced the two staffs to construe "appropriateness," as well as staff responses to the "rules of the game," also made for marked differences in levels of assignment to various program components--both active components and "holding" statuses.

In Chicago, a major goal of the program was to impose a participation requirement on as large a part of the caseload as possible. The WIN Demonstration Program Training Handbook for program staff set out the conditions under which individuals on AFDC could be exempted from program registration and subsequent participation: if they were aged 16-18 and in full-time attendance in high school or an equivalent vocational/technical school program; if they were medically exempt, as determined by a physician or psychologist; if they were 65 or older; if they provided full-time care required by another household member; if they were parents or other caretaker relatives of a child under age six in the home; or if they were employed thirty or more hours a week in unsubsidized employment. Most of these conditions were federally established and thus uniform across all state WIN programs. But there were also areas in which the Department of Public Aid went beyond the federal regulations to specify additional conditions of its own, and

where it did so, the result was to draw more rather than fewer people within the program's reach. Thus, for example, DPA exempted parents of children under six only if they were "personally caring for the child, with only very brief and occasional absences." And subsidized employment (i.e., employment funded in whole or in part by federal, state, or local government) did not constitute grounds for exemption.

In its instructions about how to conduct the orientation session that preceded IJS, the handbook stated: "If the self-support specialist feels there is a need, exemption criteria could be covered at this point in case there is a client attending who has been coded in error." Discussion of exemption criteria was thus placed at the discretion of staff; observations of orientation sessions suggest that in most cases, staff did review these criteria with program clients, and not infrequently, a client was found to have been incorrectly categorized as WIN-mandatory by welfare eligibility workers. Clients were also exempted if, between the time of eligibility determination and the orientation session, they accepted a full-time, unsubsidized job.

The handbook did not set forth any conditions under which self-support specialists could defer those clients who were mandatory from immediate participation. This would, therefore, appear to be an area in which staff could exercise discretion. In practice, staff were observed to postpone clients' participation only when individuals stated that they or their families had health or other severe problems which were not, however, expected to be lasting (for example, a pending court date). In such cases, clients were rescheduled for a later IJS session.

Quantitative data confirm the accuracy of these observations. They indicate that the vast majority of clients who attended orientation--86 percent--were in fact assigned to IJS, usually within three months after program entry (Friedlander, Freedman, Hamilton, and Quint, 1987). The remaining 14 percent were usually exempted, either because they had been incorrectly categorized to begin with or because their status had changed in the interim; a few participants were also allowed to complete an educational or vocational skills training program before entering IJS.

The failure of staff to exercise discretion when it was ostensibly within their power to do so requires explanation. While staff were not queried directly about their behavior, the most likely explanation is simply that enhancing the degree of discretion they exercise would have run counter to another, more valued aim. Self-support specialists were intensely conscious of the requirement they faced to enroll sixty clients a month in IJS, a standard on whose achievement they were evaluated. This performance criterion constituted a significant disincentive to grant deferments with any degree of regularity. Thus, while discretion was seemingly conferred, program rules relating to an entirely different matter--attainment of performance criteria rather than the granting of exemptions--helped ensure that such discretion would be exercised only infrequently.

In contrast to the policy followed in Chicago, the Operating Policies and Procedures of the Options Program in Baltimore described two kinds of holding statuses to which intake counselors could assign WIN-mandatory clients, depending on the circumstances. The conditions

for placement in short-term holding were quite specific:

a. More than two weeks will elapse between scheduled activities and the client has not yet been referred to another activity with a definite start date.

b. The client has a specific, time-limited problem which is expected to be resolved within one month.¹

c. The client has completed her/his Employability Development Plan² . . . and has not obtained employment.

Those registrants citing a short-term problem as a reason why they should be deferred were officially supposed to have some kind of written document verifying their situation. Options staff were told that they should obtain such documents before assigning individuals to short-term holding. In practice, this was not monitored, and staff exercised discretion in requesting documentation. They were frequently willing to accept clients' reasons if they were of a kind that could be documented rather than to require the documentation itself.

In contrast to the carefully spelled out standards for assignment to short-term holding, the criteria for entry into long-term holding were left extremely vague, (although more documentation as to the validity of the rationale for such an assignment was required):

Clients are assigned to this status when it is not expected that they will be able to benefit from Options activities and/or obtain employment within a reasonable period of time.

¹Such problems typically involved housing, child care, the client's own illness or the illness of a family member, or upcoming court appearances.

²Completion of the Employability Development Plan signified that the client had participated in all the activities for which she was deemed appropriate.

Unlike their counterparts in Chicago, Options staff were under no imperative to assign clients to program activities rather than to long-term holding. The program was established as a special demonstration, and its planners did not intend that it "saturate" the entire eligible population. Moreover, neither the past experience of the sponsor agency nor its then-current practices promoted a more inclusive approach. As a manpower development agency, MOMR was not accustomed to serving all individuals who were technically eligible but only those who actively sought its services. The provision of services to Options enrollees far outweighed the rigorous administration of a mandatory participation requirement in the minds of key agency and program officials.

Staff were not evaluated on the basis of their ability to fulfill overall enrollment quotas and were under no obligation to meet such targets. This enhanced the probability that they would use their discretion to assign clients to holding status. Moreover, they were well aware of the small size of the program, which aimed to serve one thousand participants in active components over a year, relative to the entire Baltimore WIN-mandatory caseload. They knew that if they did not consider a particular client "able to benefit," someone whose prospects they considered more promising would be readily available to take her place.

These differences between the philosophical and programmatic orientations of the Baltimore and Chicago sponsor agencies and between the practices of their respective staffs are reflected in quantitative data on the rates at which staff assigned clients to holding vs. active statuses. In contrast to the 86 percent of Illinois WIN Demonstration

registrants initially assigned to Independent Job Search, between 60 and 70 percent of the individuals who registered with Options each month between November 1982 and March 1983 were initially placed in either long-term or short-term holding. The fact that the proportion placed in holding statuses changed little during this time suggests that the factors that governed assignment to these statuses, at least in the aggregate, remained fairly constant over the study period.

A relatively small proportion--7 percent--were assigned immediately to long-term holding. However, of those placed in short-term holding, roughly a third were reassigned to the long-term hold status. These aggregate data, along with findings from a small sample of 102 cases examined as part of a special study, suggest that between 23 and 30 percent of all individuals registering for the program were placed in a long-term holding status, either at once or after a stay in short-term holding.³

Once in long-term holding, Options clients were unlikely to enter

³ It is striking to note that in response to the interviewer's questions, program staff and management estimated that about 70 to 75 percent of those who met Options' eligibility criteria were actually appropriate for the program. They believed that the remaining 25 to 30 percent faced a variety of circumstances and conditions, including mental and physical disabilities, illiteracy, and child care or family difficulties, that made their participation problematic at best. It should be noted, however, that at the time staff were queried, data were already available on the proportion of individuals who had been placed in long-term holding. Thus, it is not certain whether these estimates reflected an assessment of the situation that was later borne out by the data, or a post hoc rationalization of the quantitative patterns that had emerged.

an active status. In the majority of cases, initial assignment to this component was tantamount to a permanent exemption from the participation requirement. Individuals in long-term holding were required to contact their case managers on a monthly basis to update their status. According to some case managers, however, clients could go for as long as six months before they were required to come to the Options office. This was because program staff focused most of their time and effort on dealing with the active clients on their caseloads. Still not all individuals whose participation was deferred were "lost" to the program; staff sometimes assigned them to active components when a change in their life circumstances warranted this move. For example, during summer vacations, students were sometimes assigned to work experience or individual job search; and case managers could require clients working part-time to apply for full-time positions in the same field. The data indicate that about one in seven people did not participate until they had been in Options for a year, and the program continued to serve previously inactive enrollees as late as eighteen months after their initial entry.

Although the name "short-term holding" suggests a transitional component, it was not used entirely in this fashion. Of those initially placed in this status, over a third remained in it three months later, either because they had not yet been assigned to another component or because they had been assigned, but had not yet participated.

Intake counselors had considerable latitude in making assignments to long-term holding, but that discretion was largely channeled in predictable ways. A special study ascertained why clients in long-term holding

at the end of June 1983 had been assigned to that status. Three major factors--full-time attendance in a school or training program, part-time employment, and medical problems (including pregnancy, substance abuse, and the long-term illness or incapacitation of a family member)--accounted for 85 percent of these assignments. Other reasons, such as child care problems, were relatively insignificant.

It is noteworthy that, of these three major reasons, only medical problems constitute grounds for exemption from mandatory participation under the WIN regulations (and would have exempted individuals from participation in the Illinois WIN Demonstration Program as well). In such cases, presumably clients or their relatives had health problems that they did not disclose to the welfare office workers who determined their eligibility for Options. One theory, suggested by welfare personnel, is that clients feared that obtaining a doctor's statement, as required by both WIN and Options, would delay processing of their applications for AFDC.

Part-time employment and attendance in school or a training program do not confer an exemption under the WIN regulations. In Illinois, otherwise WIN-mandatory welfare recipients had to be working at least thirty hours a week in unsubsidized jobs to be released from the requirement to participate in Independent Job Search. There, too, exemptions were granted only to students in school or training programs who were 16 to 18 years of age. Older enrollees, and those in college, were expected to undertake job search.

The informal policy adopted by Options staff of granting deferments to those working part-time and to those in training or college was in

keeping with the program's emphasis on long-term employability development. In general, the operating principle behind this relaxation of the rules seemed to be that as long as a client was involved in an activity that demonstrated her commitment to working, at that time or in the future, it was neither necessary nor appropriate to demand more of her. As the assistant manager put it, "It wouldn't make sense to pull clients out of school to get a job, when their schooling would hopefully result in a [better] job." Discretion in the Options program was exercised in a way that gave "the benefit of the doubt" to the client, a stance supported by the general approach of the sponsor agency and by the absence of performance standards that would induce maximum client participation.

Determining the Specific Activity

In the Illinois WIN Demonstration Program, it would appear that self-support specialists had minimal discretion in determining to which activity clients should be assigned. Program guidelines, reinforced by entry quotas, dictated that new entrants into the program initially be placed in Independent Job Search, and this was what occurred in the vast majority of instances.⁴ Discretionary decision-making was not

⁴The regulations did provide that clients enrolled in an acceptable education or training activity at the time of program registration could be placed in the Pre-Employment component. However, they cautioned that this should be done "on a limited basis" [emphasis in the original] and case by case. In fact, many self-support specialists assumed that individuals enrolled in community college programs could look for work during the hours not spent in class.

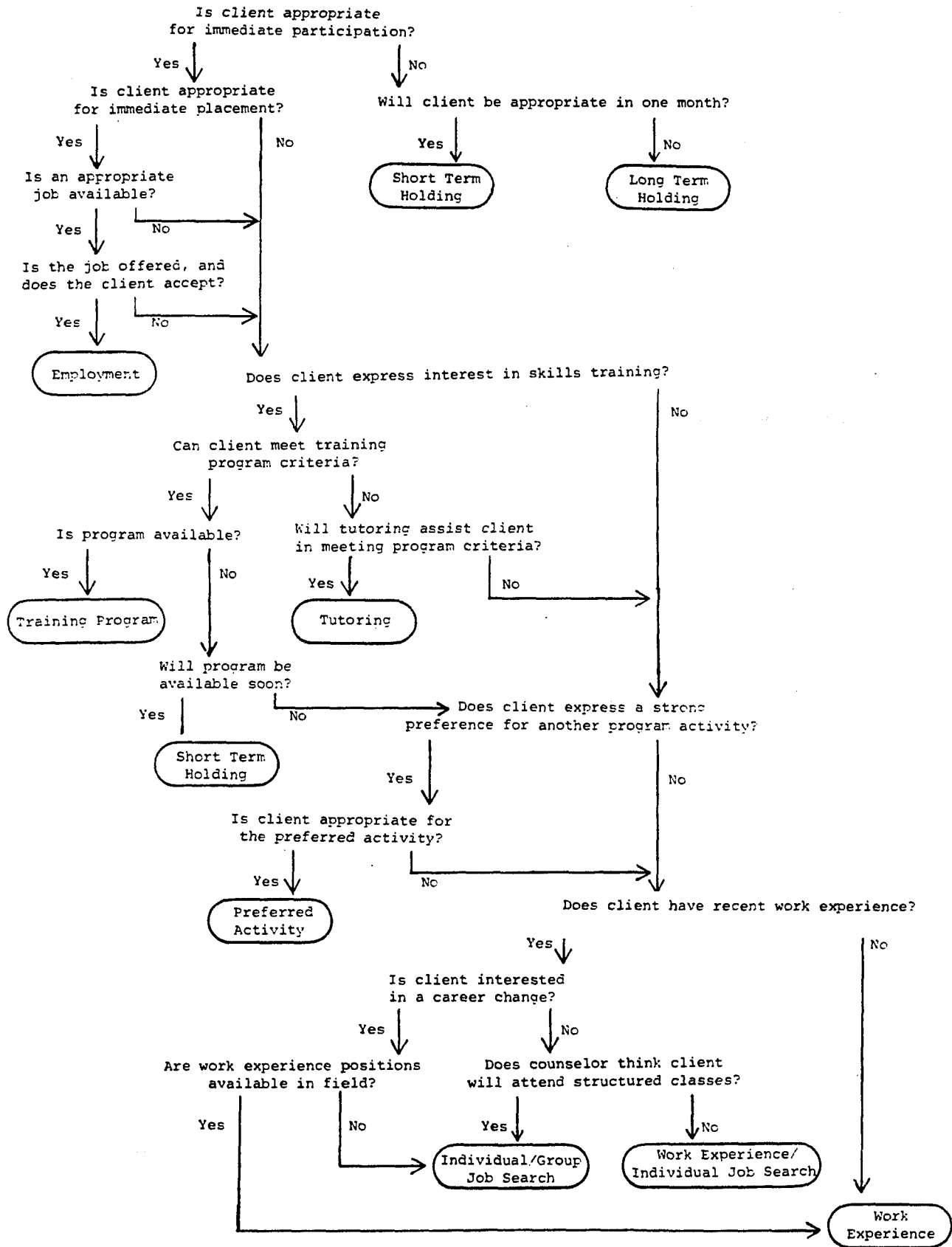
eliminated, however. Rather, it was transferred to a subsequent stage, when participants who had completed job search unsuccessfully awaited reassignment to another program component. Decision-making at the point of reassessment is discussed later in this section.

In the Baltimore Options Program, on the other hand, staff exercised considerable discretion in determining to which activity an individual should initially be assigned. Only a few guidelines existed, and, as discussed below, these were for the most part vague and lacked operational definitions.

The decision to assign an Options registrant to a specific activity occurred during the same intake interview during which the decision was made to assign her to some activity, rather than to a holding status. While a distinction between these two decision-points is analytically useful, the two tend to merge in reality. The cognitive process underlying the way in which Options staff made decisions was not strictly sequential; rather, many considerations came simultaneously into play. Nonetheless, Figure 5 attempts to describe the steps sequentially, in order to present a more coherent model of decision-making.

As the intake counselor interviewed the client about her educational attainment and prior work experience, skills, goals, and attitudes, he or she mentally sifted through the information, asking questions and getting answers that suggested some assignment possibilities while eliminating others. The objective was to formulate the Employability Development Plan, the document which set out the sequence of activities that counselor and client agreed would prepare the latter for employ-

Figure 5--Decision-Making in the Options Initial Assessment Process



ment. Although the plan was flexible and susceptible to modification, it provided a blueprint for the Options case managers, who were responsible for monitoring the behavior of Options participants and assisting them in gaining access to support services such as childcare once they had completed the intake process.

Several factors influenced the choice of a program activity:

- o the counselor's general assessment of the client (including appearance, attitude, and communication skills);
- o the client's preferences and interests;
- o the client's educational and employment history and goals;
- o the eligibility criteria for program activities;
- o the availability of the activity; and
- o the institutional priorities of the sponsor agency.

The view that the client should be involved in making the assignment decision pervaded the Options staff, from the program coordinator down. As one intake counselor explained:

If you assign a client to an activity he or she doesn't want, two things will happen. They will not show up and they will have to be rescheduled or reassigned, or they will show up but they won't participate. This means they will have to be reassigned to another component or adjudicated [subjected to the process of attempted reconciliation that could result in sanctioning], depending on the situation. In either case, the client is not participating in the program, so there is no benefit to them, and it makes work for us.

Thus, staff rationalized and supported this voluntaristic element within a mandatory program largely because they saw it as increasing the program's operational feasibility and maximizing the ease with which they could perform their jobs.

Although the intake counselors interviewed maintained that the

client's own preference was the most important factor they took into account, observations suggest in fact that this preference could be manipulated and the choice constrained by the information the counselor provided. By the way in which the counselor portrayed various alternatives--the depth into which he or she went, the features stressed, the benefits participation was described as conferring--the counselor could shape and guide the decision. In deciding how to present the various alternatives, the counselor was influenced by the factors cited above: the eligibility criteria imposed by each activity, the client's educational and employment background, component availability, and agency priorities, along with the client's expressed interests and aspirations.

This meant that before he began his "spiel," the counselor, on the basis of a brief acquaintance with the client and limited information about her, had to select a course of action that would best suit her needs as well as fit in with program priorities. The necessity of making a quick decision was facilitated by rules regulating entry into the components as well as by other simplifying routines, as discussed below.

The following example, based on observation of an intake interview, illuminates the process of guiding the client's choice by controlling the information supplied to her:

The client, a 37-year-old woman, who appeared neat but dowdy and much older than her years, sat alongside the intake counselor's desk. Behind the desk was a blackboard on which were posted the start-up dates of the next classes offering instruction in job search techniques and appropriate work attitudes and behavior, along with the positions currently

available in work experience: two clerical aide jobs and jobs as a guard and a warehouse worker.

Early in the interview, the counselor ascertained that the woman, who had dropped out of school after the eighth grade, had worked for several years in beauty salons. Although licensed as a beautician, she had not acquired a clientele, and in her most recent job, she had held a menial position. The experience had been embittering, and she said that she was interested in changing careers and getting into clerical work.

Because the client had a lengthy prior work history, the counselor had her complete a form recording her previous work experience. The counselor mentioned the possibility of skills training and full-time employment. The client responded that part-time employment would be okay too, since she had no income at the present. The counselor then said that work experience is a component for people making career changes and gave her a copy of the work experience rules. He noted that when you make a career change, there is a certain regimen you must follow, and that the purpose of the work rules is to help you learn it. He then mentioned that the client could get training as a clerical aide through the work experience component. When the client asked what a clerical aide did, he replied that Options would try to put her in a situation where she would learn some skills so at the end she could get a job in the field. He mentioned that she could also complete her GED by attending the MOMR Learning Center in the evenings after work.

The counselor then asked the client, "Are you interested in work experience, or would you like to consider other components --full-time employment or occupational training?" She indicated that she would be interested in work experience, and the counselor set up an appointment for her with the agency offering the work experience position. He then completed the Employability Development Plan, noting on it that after finishing work experience, she would be assigned to Jobs Plus II [a job search component]. Although the counselor had not described Jobs Plus II, the client signed the plan without asking any questions.

Discussion. In this interaction, the counselor clearly steered the client towards work experience by either not mentioning or touching briefly on other components. Although the client had expressed an interest in immediate employment, the counselor only touched on this possibility. He also presented skills training as if it were synonymous with work experience rather than a different activity.

Afterward, the counselor indicated the factors underlying his decision-making. He considered institutional training impractical because the training programs that were available

all required a high school diploma, and the client's educational level was too low. He rejected Jobs Plus II, in which the client would have looked for a job, because he saw cosmetology as a dead end for her and wanted her to try a new career. The client had expressed an interest in clerical work, and a work experience slot as a clerical aide needed to be filled.

The client's expressed interest in changing fields was certainly a consideration in the intake counselor's thinking. But her commitment was not strong; she commented to the observer, "He's sitting there typing, and I ask myself, 'Do I really want to go into clerical work?'"

Not all steering and management of consensus was so obvious, nor did it always take place. As suggested by the literature on bureaucracy, where workloads were lighter, the necessity of reaching a quick decision was less strong. At a secondary intake center for the Options program, where six counselors, rather than one, were responsible for intake and the caseloads were correspondingly smaller, more complete descriptions of Options components were given by some of the counselors.

Clients received a brief rundown of available activities during orientation, so that the intake counselor was not the sole source of information. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the intake counselor's discretion in presenting the choices far exceeded the client's discretion in making the final selection. While the client always had a choice, she might not like any of the alternatives among which she had to select. Moreover, observations suggest that clients did not fully understand the meaning of the Employability Development Plans they were required to sign.

The degree to which the client was involved and her role in selecting an activity depended, too, on the intake counselor's style of working with clients and his or her interpretation of what "giving the

client a choice" meant. In one intake interview that was observed, the client could not decide which activity she wanted. The counselor told her to go home, think about it, and return the next week to complete the initial assignment process. This effort to avoid "pressuring" the client was viewed as highly atypical, however. At the other extreme, one counselor told an indecisive client that if she could not make a choice, he would do it for her.

One factor that simplified the decision process from the counselor's perspective was the fact that several program components imposed eligibility criteria, although the stringency with which these criteria were applied varied with the particular activity. Vocational skills training and on-the-job training programs usually required at least a high school diploma or its equivalent. Counselors adhered quite strictly to this standard, since sending unqualified candidates might risk alienating training program operators and potential employers. Interested clients who did not meet the educational standards of a skills training program might be assigned to on-site tutoring if they were judged to be within "striking distance" of the requisite levels. But if their scores on the tests of reading and mathematical ability they took upon program entry were too low, they were discouraged from pursuing skills training and directed to another choice.

Because skills training programs were limited in size, and therefore constituted a scarce resource, counselors also attempted to ensure that clients they placed in these programs would be sufficiently motivated to persevere in the training and not drop out. Again, this required a judgment call on the part of the counselor, who attempted to

gauge the sincerity of the client's commitment to the occupation for which she would be trained and her willingness to stick to the routine the program imposed. In a sense, therefore, skills training was the most "elite" offering on the Options menu of services.

Completion of a GED was almost always mentioned by the intake counselors as a possible and desirable program activity. (Sometimes, as in the interview just described, it was slipped unobtrusively into the discussion.) Although enrollment in a GED program by itself satisfied the Options participation requirement, counselors tended to describe this as an activity that could be undertaken in conjunction with other components. In part, this is because counselors believed that most clients took a dimmer view of GED preparation than they did themselves. As the field researcher summarized the staff's viewpoint: motivated clients want to work rather than attend classes, while less motivated clients are likely to have such low academic skills that they will be unable to obtain the GED within a relatively brief time span and will drop out when they become discouraged. Staff saw simultaneous assignment to GED and to another program activity as the best means of forestalling this eventuality and thereby avoiding the need to impose sanctions for non-compliance. Two aspects of the work routines adopted by street-level bureaucrats as described by Lipsky are notable here. First, staff tended to rationalize their behavior by coming to see their clientele (or a substantial portion of it) in a less than favorable light. Second, they took actions that would enable them to lighten their workloads, in this case, by avoiding the time-consuming process of sanctioning. As discussed below, Options staff were loath to sanction

clients, but the headache sanctioning created was only part of the reason for this reluctance.

Options' group job search and work experience components had more flexible entry criteria. The program manual stated only that participants in job search should be "job-ready," a term loosely defined to indicate at least one year of work experience. But it was up to the counselor to determine how far back that work experience could extend, whether self-employment counted, and so on.

Work experience had two major advantages from the staff's point of view. First, while training classes and group job search activities proceeded on fixed timetables, positions in this component were always available. Thus, work experience offered a route for avoiding assignments to holding statuses.

Second, work experience was the catch-all component. Although some work experience positions required a prior employment history or job skills, many others did not, so that the entry requirements could accommodate almost all participants. The program manual noted that the activity was intended for those who had not worked in the recent past, or for those who had not been able to find a job. However, as the example cited above illustrates, the use of the component was considerably broader. Work experience was seen as suitable for clients interested in changing careers, and clients might also be assigned to this activity simply because other components seemed unsuitable, as the following two instances show:

The client, a roofer who belonged to the union, was referred for possible direct job placement. A job was located for him, but it turned out to be non-unionized, and (as was his right

under program regulations) he did not accept it. Although he had a lengthy job history, he was assigned to work experience. He had expressed great enthusiasm about working, and the work experience position involved plumbing skills. The counselor believed that the client was an active type who would be fidgety in the classroom setting of Job Search Assistance.

The client's attitude toward Options was highly negative: she felt that there was nothing the program could offer her, she resented having to work without payment other than her welfare grant, and she refused to select a program activity on her own. Although her past work history was substantial, the counselor assigned her to work experience. He reasoned that because of her negative attitude, she would disrupt the group atmosphere of Job Search Assistance and would not follow through in individual job search.

These examples suggest that objective criteria (such as length of prior job history, in the cases just described) not infrequently played a secondary role to counselors' subjective assessments of clients' willingness to participate, motivation, and overall attitude when the counselors were called upon to make quick decisions about appropriate activities for program enrollees. The fluidity of those objective criteria that existed heightened the probability that decision-making would reflect staff members' discretionary judgments.

There were salient and statistically significant differences among individuals initially assigned to the various program activities. Table 4 looks at people who initially participated in one of the three major areas of activity--job search, work experience, and education and skills training--as well as at those who were initially placed in a holding status and remained there.

The table shows that those in job search or education and training were more likely to be either high school graduates or GED holders than were those in work experience. The earnings of job search participants

Table 4--Selected Characteristics of Options Registrants at Random Assignment, by Initial Program Status

Characteristic	Job Search ^a	Work Experience ^b	Education And Training ^c	Holding Status ^d	Total
Welfare Status					
Applicant	61.6	43.0	41.8	40.9	47.2***
Recipient	38.4	57.0	58.2	59.1	52.8***
Assistance Category					
AFDC	86.2	90.3	93.8	93.2	90.9***
AFDC-U	13.8	9.7	6.2	6.8	9.1***
Average Age (Years)	32.6	31.9	30.0	31.6	31.7***
Sex (%)					
Male	25.9	15.2	6.8	13.0	15.9***
Female	74.1	84.8	93.2	87.0	84.1***
Ethnicity (%)					
White, Non-Hispanic	33.5	29.7	26.4	35.2	32.4
Black, Non-Hispanic	64.6	69.7	72.5	64.3	66.6 ^e
Hispanic	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4 ^e
Other	0.6	0.6	1.0	0.5	0.6 ^e
Degree Received (%)					
None	56.9	68.3	60.9	53.6	58.0***
General Equivalency Diploma	5.5	5.5	8.9	9.2	7.5
High School Diploma	37.6	26.2	30.2	37.2	34.5**
Marital Status (%)					
Never Married	32.2	37.0	43.2	39.6	37.7*
Married, Living With Spouse	20.7	14.5	9.4	14.0	15.2***
Married, Not Living with Spouse	30.9	33.9	31.8	27.7	30.2
Divorced, Widowed	16.2	14.5	15.6	18.8	16.9
Prior AFDC Dependency (%)					
Never on AFDC	21.0	9.7	10.9	13.4	14.6***
Two Years or Less	34.1	27.9	22.9	34.9	31.5**
More Than Two Years	44.9	62.4	66.1	51.7	53.9***
Average Months on AFDC During Two Years Prior to Random Assignment	10.7	15.0	16.3	14.3	13.7***

(continued)

TABLE 4--(continued)

Characteristic	Job Search ^a	Work Experience ^b	Education And Training ^c	Holding Status ^d	Total
Held Job at Any Time During Four Quarters Prior to Random Assignment (%)	50.6	38.2	35.1	41.8	42.6***
Held Job During Quarter Prior to Random Assignment (%)	29.9	21.8	21.1	25.3	25.4*
Average Earnings During Four Quarters Prior to Random Assignment (\$)	2060.90	1175.88	836.58	1258.38	1401.02***
Total Sample	318	165	194	443	1120

Source: Friedlander, Hoerz, Long, and Quint, 1985, pp. 75-76.

This sample includes experimentals who registered for Options within three months of random assignment and who entered holding status or participated in Job Search, Work Experience, or Education and Training within three months of random assignment. Distributions may not add exactly to 100.0 percent because of rounding. For selected characteristics, sample sizes may vary up to eighteen sample points due to missing data.

^aJob Search includes individual and group job search.

^bWork Experience includes and activity known as Jobs Plus I (which also had a job search component), Pubon-the-job training.

^cEducation and Training includes classroom skills training, world of work instruction, and general institutional training outside the program.

^dHolding Status applies to those not active within twelve months.

^eChi-square tests inappropriate due to low expected cell frequencies.

*Differences across components are statistically significant at the 10 percent level using a two-tailed t-test or chi-square test.

**Differences across components are statistically significant at the 5 percent level using a two-tailed t-test or chi-square test.

***Differences across components are statistically significant at the 1 percent level using a two-tailed t-test or chi-square test.

in the year preceding their entry into the program were about double those of participants in work experience or education and training. Job search participants were also more likely than those in other activities to be first-time recipients of AFDC, or to have been on the rolls for shorter periods of time. In contrast, two-thirds of the individuals initially placed in education or training had been on welfare for more than two years. Individuals assigned to holding status present a less distinct demographic and socioeconomic profile, probably because of the diversity of the reasons for assignment to this component.

Component availability also played an ongoing role in assignments. The problem was not one of overall slot availability but of the availability of a specific activity at a given time. Skills training classes were usually several months in duration, with entry at fixed points, and the same was true of some other program activities. Depending on the length of time between intake and the beginning of the next class, clients slated for a specific activity could be assigned to other components in the interim. If the period were short (one to three weeks), clients could be assigned to short-term holding or individual job search. If the wait were longer, they were usually placed in work experience.

In its proposal to operate the Employment Initiatives program, MOMR set goals for the number of individuals to be assigned to various activities. These plans called for the assignment of 879 clients to work experience, 587 to job search, 70 to education and skills training, and 50 to on-the-job training within the first year of operations. (These figures allowed for the same client to participate in more than

one activity during the year.) Shortly after the program actually began, staff at all levels came to regard these targets as unrealistic, because planners had severely underestimated the number of people who would be assigned to a holding status. Although these prescribed slot levels were generally ignored, staff were kept aware of the openings in various activities that needed to be filled through both formal and informal communications for program supervisors. Thus, it was well known that an early priority was to find fifty candidates who would embark on a program activity of six months' duration in January 1983, and that assignments to work experience would begin in earnest after that component was filled.

The extent to which staff responded to these agency priorities appeared to vary by individual counselor. As a generalization, it appears that counselors at the Opportunities Industrialization Center intake center, which was geographically isolated from the main office and where staff were less subject to supervisory scrutiny, behaved more independently than did their counterparts at Options headquarters.

In addition, over time increasing emphasis was placed on achieving quotas with respect to placement in particular components. In October 1983, a year after the program's inception, a memorandum from the program manager was circulated to staff specifying numbers of individuals to be assigned to specific activities during the next three months.

When asked to explain this change, the project coordinator replied that the establishment and attainment of such quotas had always been regarded as important but had tended to be overlooked as staff concerned themselves with the central task of getting the program off the ground.

Once Options had achieved a greater degree of operating stability, he said, it was possible to give fresh emphasis to assignment quotas.

While there is no reason to doubt that this response was a valid reflection of his own views, the overall importance of such quotas is unclear. Although the sponsor agency had originally set placement goals, these were widely seen as wholly unrealistic. Moreover, the staff handbook, in which instructions for assignment to various components were detailed, made no mention of any goals or quotas.

Other explanations are probably equally important, especially the fact that there was a good deal of staff turnover during the first operating year of the program. The first project coordinator was replaced by the deputy director, and five of the six case managers (who had been "on loan" to Options from the State Employment Service) were recalled to their original positions and had to be replaced. Under these circumstances, it is likely that the establishment of quotas was intended both to impress on new subordinate staff the authority of the new project coordinator and to serve as a means of bringing the behavior of new staff members into line with desired program goals. Thus, the use of quotas may to some extent have substituted for a more extensive training effort that might otherwise have been necessary.

The Options program design called for a continuous participation requirement. That is, Options entrants were expected to remain active in the program until one of three things happened: they left welfare entirely; they remained on welfare but were no longer WIN-mandatory; or they were judged inappropriate for a program activity and were placed in a holding status. Options line staff were responsible for conducting

reassessments of individuals who had completed components and reassigning them to other activities.

Just as program staff had considerable discretion in assigning clients to initial activities, so, too, they had leeway in placing clients in subsequent components or in holding statuses. In fact, quantitative data indicate that only a minority of enrollees ever participated in more than one program activity within the first year after their entry into the program. Of those who began in job search or work experience (activities usually ranging from three to thirteen weeks in duration), only about a quarter moved on to a second activity; of those whose initial activity was education or training, the proportion was somewhat higher, about 37 percent. It is impossible to determine with precision exactly how many of those who participated in only one activity were still on welfare and otherwise subject to the participation requirement, but it is clear that continuous participation was not demanded of many individuals who had completed the first component and remained on the welfare rolls as well as formally enrolled in the program.

Again, it appears that lack of experience and concern with continuous mandatory participation on the part of the sponsor agency best explains the failure to enforce such a participation requirement on Options clients; none of MOMR's non-welfare clientele were expected to participate continuously in the agency's programs. Options supervisory staff, who had previously been associated with other MOMR programs, paid little attention to client assignments after the initial one, nor was this aspect of program operations emphasized in the staff handbook.

Unless line staff could identify a second program activity that they were convinced would benefit clients, they frequently exercised discretion to assign clients who had already participated in one component to holding statuses. If not actively supported by program higher-ups, this use of discretion went largely unchallenged; the issue was simply not one that greatly concerned Options and MOMR officials.

Among individuals initially placed in job search who did move on to another activity, that activity was likely again to involve some kind of job search activity. (For instance, a person who started in group job search might subsequently be placed in individual job search). This is not surprising, since intake counselors initially placed participants in job search only if they deemed them to be employable at the outset and therefore presumably not in need of additional employability services. Other "typical" participation patterns are more difficult to discern. Those who began in work experience or education and training took part in a variety of subsequent activities, depending on their needs and performance in the first component.

Guidelines for the Illinois WIN Demonstration Program also called for a continuous participation requirement. There, however, the existence of numerical targets and goals provided staff with a more powerful incentive to ensure that this requirement was enforced.

At the outset of the WIN Demonstration Program, self-support specialists had two choices in terms of placing individuals who had completed Independent Job Search and remained unemployed. One possibility was that the client could be placed in an educational or vocational skills training course--activities referred to in program

parlance as "Pre-Employment." Specialists discussed this option at the IJS orientation session and at the third IJS meeting. They told clients that if they wanted to enter education or training programs after IJS, they should make plans on their own and come to the fourth IJS session ready to present these plans for staff approval. If the plans met program regulations with respect to content and duration, the specialists would permit the individual to enroll. However, if a client came to the fourth IJS without having formulated plans for Pre-Employment, the specialist rarely suggested this choice. In fact, about 8 percent of the clients who attended WDP orientation between February and September 1985 were assigned to Pre-Employment during the first nine months after they had entered the program.⁵

Other clients were assigned to a status known as Modified Job Search. As noted previously, the component functioned as an inactive status, since, while clients assigned to MJS were officially supposed to be looking for jobs, this requirement was never enforced. Nonetheless, Modified Job Search was not the Chicago equivalent of the long-term holding component in Baltimore. Instead, Modified Job Search served as a reservoir of welfare recipients who would be periodically recycled through Independent Job Search.

⁵ Interestingly, however, a much higher proportion--23 percent--participated in education or training programs offered by junior colleges or training providers funded through the Job Training Partnership Act. The 15 percentage point difference between the 8 percent and 23 percent figures reflects participation in educational or training activities that did not meet WDP standards for approval, as well as activities of which staff members were simply unaware.

About half of the participants in Independent Job Search in Cook County between November 1984 and September 1985 had been in that component at least once before. According to interviews with the self-support specialists, the decision to reassign recipients to this component was usually grounded in concern about filling the orientation quota of sixty registrants per months. Although the self-support specialists first assigned to IJS those registrants who were new to welfare, the number of first-time recipients never fulfilled the quota, and those who were already on the rolls and had gone through IJS previously were therefore called in to participate again.

Staff had considerable discretion in reassigning recipients to IJS, and here their individual opinions about what the component was meant to be and what it was able to do entered into their decisions about which particular clients to call in for a second (or third, or fourth) time. Recycling was not viewed simply as a way to meet the quotas. Some specialists favored recycling on the grounds that advice on grooming, interviews, and job applications would only "sink in" after repeated instruction. Others saw it as a way to impress on participants the fact that welfare receipt was contingent on meeting the job search and other program requirements and that people would not be allowed to "coast along" on their welfare grants without making a real effort to find work. As one specialist put it, "They don't take it seriously that we want them to get a job until they've been through two or three times."

No guidelines existed about how often to reschedule Independent Job Search. Staff were again free to use their own judgment, and opinions varied considerably. Some specialists saw no reason to make the

majority of enrollees repeat the component more than once every six months, although they favored frequent recycling of recipients who appeared to be making no effort to find a job. In this sense, recycling could be used as a "punitive" measure to be imposed against those whose attitudes and behavior, although not such as to warrant sanctioning, were nonetheless deemed "suspicious" by project staff. Other self-support specialists sought to recycle at the first opportunity, viewing this as the best way to keep close track of recipients not in other components.

The addition of the work experience, or IWEP, component brought a new dimension to the question of where to assign unsuccessful IJS completers. The program's initial experience in implementing IWEP provides an interesting case study of the Department of Public Aid's need to exert control over what was initially the free exercise of discretion by lower-level staff.

When the Department of Public Aid asked MDRC to evaluate the impacts of the WIN Demonstration Program, it was interested in comparing two possible program treatments. The first was the one that was familiar to Department of Public Aid officials: the Independent Job Search component, followed by either Pre-Employment or Modified Job Search. The second added the new component, work experience, as a possible follow-up to Independent Job Search. Thus, the evaluation was to measure the marginal impact of IWEP when added to IJS and other activities.

To carry out the research design, eligible enrollees were randomly assigned to two separate groups. One of these was required to

participate in Independent Job Search and other components to which they were assigned, excluding IWEP. The other was required to participate in IJS and then in any other component, including IWEP.

Initially, front-line staff were given few instructions about which particular individuals in the "any component" group should be assigned to IWEP. When IWEP was initially implemented, the Department of Public Aid arranged two days of training for the IWEP workers, staff directly responsible for the operation of the component once clients were assigned to it, as well as for their supervisors. However, no training was given to the self-support specialists, who were responsible for assigning unsuccessful IJS completers to IWEP in the first place. The self-support specialists learned something about the component from supervisory and other staff, but on the whole they were left largely to their own devices in deciding who should be placed in the component.

Interviews with sixty-seven self-support specialists indicate that these decisions were based on both objective considerations, such as skill level and prior employment experience, and on subjective criteria. But in the absence of detailed criteria, each of the objective factors could cut either of two ways. For example, some specialists preferred to send skilled workers to IWEP, on the grounds that this would ensure greater satisfaction on the part of employers, while others liked to assign unskilled clients, in the hope that the client might be able to acquire some on-the-job training at the worksite. Some specialists preferred to assign clients who had been unemployed less than a year, reasoning that IWEP would fill in gaps in the clients' resumes and allow them to present themselves to prospective employers as workers rather

than welfare recipients. Others chose to refer clients who had never been employed, in order to expose them to the world of work.

Complete lack of work experience was the reason most often given for assignment to IWEP (42 percent of the responses), as well as "a lengthy history of unemployment" (26 percent). However, another frequently cited reason was an "unmotivated, apathetic" attitude, coupled with the "suspicion of welfare fraud," cited in 24 percent of the responses.

Staff views of the purpose of IWEP mirrored their assignments to the component. Most envisioned IWEP as a component intended to provide work experience for those who needed it; this goal was mentioned in 58 percent of the responses. "The reduction of aid and exposure of welfare fraud" was brought up 17 percent of the time by staff who thought it likely that IWEP jobs would conflict with the work hours of unreported jobs. When asked about IWEP's objectives, 21 percent of the self-support specialists said they "didn't know," owing to the lack of information they had been given on the subject.

In fact, during the early months of the evaluation, only a minority of IJS completers in the "any component" group were assigned to IWEP. Only 19 percent of the sample members were assigned to IWEP within three months, compared with 29 percent placed in Modified Job Search. Left to their own discretion, staff found reasons to exempt sizable numbers of participants from IWEP.

This situation posed a threat to the research. If the objective was to detect the marginal impact of IWEP, it was essential that sufficient numbers of individuals in the sample actually participate in

the component. Alerted to the issue by MDRC, the Department of Public Aid issued instructions to self-support specialists that all those in the "any component" group who completed IJS without finding jobs be assigned to IWEP. This move appears to have been effective: among later program entrants, 41 percent of the program registrants who attended orientation were assigned to IWEP within nine months. (It is also likely that some of the difference between the 19 percent and 41 percent figures is accounted for by the longer follow-up period associated with the latter.) As a second measure to increase the probability of finding program impacts, DPA agreed to modify the research design to permit the random assignment of some eligible individuals to a third, "no-treatment" research group against which the impacts of both the IJS and the IJS/IWEP groups could be measured.⁶

In retrospect, it seems clear that Department of Public Aid officials were generally less concerned with IWEP than with IJS, the original and, in their view, more effective activity. For this reason, they did not issue clear-cut guidelines about assignment to IWEP, and staff discretion was allowed to reign. When officials were required to give greater attention to the component, they responded by tightening the regulations governing assignment, and discretionary decision-making was subjected to regulation.

⁶At the outset of the evaluation, Illinois officials had been unwilling to adopt this three-group research design because they did not want any enrollees to forgo participation in IJS, which they saw as the linchpin of the WIN Demonstration Program. For this reason, too, program registrants had to go through IJS before they could be assigned to IWEP.

Sanctioning Non-Compliant Enrollees

The federal legislation establishing the Work Incentive Program provides that public assistance recipients who fail to comply with program regulations may be sanctioned by having their welfare grants reduced in part or in toto (the latter in the case of AFDC-U recipients only) for varying lengths of time. While the precise wording of what constitutes sanctionable behavior varies from state to state, a number of actions fall under this rubric. Clients may be sanctioned if they: refuse or fail to make a bona fide application for employment; refuse to accept an offer of a reasonable job (i.e., one that pays at least the minimum wage, does not pose a risk to health and safety, is not too far from the client's residence, and is within the client's sphere of physical and mental competence); fail to attend program activities or to appear for scheduled interviews or appointments with program staff; refuse to accept employment counseling or undergo skills testing; or disrupt program activities.

Safeguards are provided to recipients. Absence from assigned activities may be excused if the individual can offer a "good cause" reason, such as illness, family crisis, a court-ordered appearance, a job interview at the same scheduled time, inclement weather, and a breakdown of transportation or child care arrangements. The imposition of a sanction can take place only after the client has been warned that her failure to comply with regulations is imperiling her grant. Furthermore, clients are entitled to and may request a "fair hearing" before an administrative officer. Nonetheless, the possibility of

sanctioning is the cornerstone of mandatory programs for welfare recipients.

Given the general differences in philosophies and practices of the Baltimore and Chicago programs, one might expect to see variation in the extent to which program staff opted to sanction clients who were out of compliance with the regulations. Differences are indeed evident, and pronounced.

The Options program followed the guidelines on sanctioning set out by the Maryland Department of Human Resources and adhered to by staff of the regular WIN program in Maryland. The sanctioning process in Maryland was quite lengthy and cumbersome, involving considerable documentation and numerous efforts to contact and meet with the recalcitrant client in an effort to gain her acquiescence with the regulations--a process known as "adjudication."

Clients could be sanctioned for either "overt" or "de facto" refusal to participate. An overt refusal took place if the client stated orally or in writing that she would not participate in program activities. Standards for determining what constituted a de facto refusal were quite hazy and left much to the discretion of the individual WIN worker. According to the Options Operating Policy, for instance, de facto refusal could be assumed if a registrant had "established a pattern of failure to participate consisting of not less than two or more than five failures to keep appointments in the most recent four-month period." Similarly, the determination of whether or not a client had "good cause" for nonparticipation was also considered a professional judgment to be made by program staff. In practice, Options

case managers exercised a great deal of discretion in deciding how to deal with clients who were not participating in the program.

A large number of Options enrollees were at some point absent from activities for which they had been scheduled. A special study of seventy individuals assigned to active components (as opposed to holding statuses) found that in forty-eight of the seventy cases, enrollees were absent from such activities at least once. Most commonly, they did not show up initially for a scheduled component or did not attend a reassessment interview; on occasion, too, attendance dropped off after individuals had initially taken part in the assigned activity.

Staff dealt differently with clients who missed appointments at the Options office than with those who failed to participate in activities to which they had been assigned, such as job search or work experience. According to the WIN regulations, clients who failed to keep two scheduled appointments with staff without good cause were to be considered out of compliance with the program and could be referred for adjudication. Interviews with the case managers and case file reviews indicate, however, that while all the case managers had had occasion to refer at least one client for adjudication, they followed highly individualistic practices in deciding how many times to attempt to contact the client before making such a referral and in determining what excuses constituted good cause.

All of the case managers rescheduled clients who had missed one appointment for a second one by mail, with or without first trying to phone the client. One case manager said she would recommend the client for adjudication if the latter failed to show up for the second

appointment, adding that she would try to make telephone contact with the client before issuing the referral. A second said she would send two letters. Three case managers said they would reschedule the client for an office appointment three times by mail before making the referral, backing up the letters with from two to five phone calls; one added that he had made home visits in attempts to contact clients and get them to comply with the program. Finally, one case manager said she didn't like to refer clients for adjudication at all, and tried to work with them as much as possible. Her procedure was usually to reschedule the clients by letter three to six times, with a phone call after each letter and a home visit on occasion.

These levels of activity were not required under the program guidelines, which specified that case managers were to contact clients only if a pattern of absenteeism was evident. Options staff went beyond this, seeing concerted follow-up efforts as consistent with their role of providing services and with their concern to identify possible barriers to participation.

What constituted good cause for missing an appointment also varied from one staff member to another. Some would accept the client's simple explanation that she had forgotten; others would not. Staff at the second Options intake center, which was geographically removed from the main office and under separate supervision, were especially likely to accept any excuse the client offered. Of the three intake counselors interviewed at this office, only one had ever referred a noncompliant client for follow-up. Personnel at this office saw themselves as manpower counselors; as such, they were simply not concerned with

enforcing Options' mandatory participation requirement. But staff at the main office, too, were willing to accept the client's excuse at face value, even if it was for a second missed appointment, without requiring documentation, so long as that excuse could be substantiated if necessary. In one case, a client called in excuses over the phone and was allowed to miss twelve office appointments. This was extreme, but it was not uncommon for clients to miss three to five appointments with no "good cause" reasons for their absences documented in the files.

Clients who failed to participate in a program activity were usually reassigned to another one. Although the Options supervisor stated that only one such reassignment was supposed to take place, individuals might be placed in three different components before adjudication was begun. The rationale for reassignment, according to staff, was that it gave the client both another opportunity to benefit from Options and another chance to comply with the program requirements.

Given the propensity of staff to give clients the benefit of the doubt, it is not surprising that most of the instances of absenteeism recorded in the special study noted above were determined to have legitimate grounds. Only six of the absent forty-eight clients in the study were judged truly "non-compliant." The "good cause" reasons most frequently cited for non-participation included the registrant's own illness or that of a family member, denial of welfare to those who were new applicants for assistance (but required to participate in Options until a decision as to their eligibility for aid had been reached), and discontinuaton of welfare.

In three of the six instances of genuine non-compliance, staff

indicated that the individuals were in fact deregistered from the program for this reason, an action which, according to program regulations, could have been accompanied by a sanction. However, there was no evidence in the case records that a financial penalty had been imposed, probably because of a breakdown in communications between Options and welfare office staff (who were responsible for actually adjusting the grants).

In fact, only a handful of Options clients were ever sanctioned--as of June 1983, there were five recommendations for sanctioning among a total of 786 clients seen. This is not to say that Options staff treated the program as if it were voluntary, as their concerted efforts to follow up absentees indicate. But financial penalties were only rarely imposed. In the opinion of the field researcher, there were four reasons why this was the case.

First, the sanctioning process was new and unfamiliar to many Options staff members. Supervisory staff in particular had no prior experience with the WIN forms that had to be filled out and the procedures that had to be followed. Some requests for sanctions were never carried out for this reason.

Second, staff regarded sanctioning as a nuisance. The adjudication process required a great deal of documentation and paperwork, and staff preferred to facilitate, not complicate, their tasks. Moreover, they believed that the likely result of initiating sanctioning would be that the client would return to the program--and to their own caseloads--anyway. They thought this outcome could be achieved equally effectively--and much more efficiently--if they were to take a conciliatory

rather than threatening stance and to spend their time inducing clients to comply rather than preparing the papers necessary for adjudication.

Third, staff tended to believe that sanctions were unlikely to be an effective punishment. Some saw the recipient's children, rather than the recipient herself, as receiving the brunt of the burden, since a reduction in the grant would mean that a lesser amount would have to be shared among the same number of people. Others thought that the recipient would scarcely feel the financial loss, since her reduced income would make her eligible for more Food Stamps benefits, and emergency funds were available to clients whose grants were reduced or whose cases were closed altogether. Moreover, clients who risked sanctioning were generally believed to have access to other sources of income.

Fourth, in conformity with the intentions of program planners, Options staff construed the mandatory participation requirement as a relatively gentle prod for inducing clients to come forward for the program in the first place, rather than as a club for punishing those who were out of compliance. Because they believed the program to be beneficial, they felt it was up to them to induce clients to participate. As one case manager put it, "Often these clients think they are too old to start working at 35 years of age." She felt it was her responsibility to convince them otherwise. Another commented:

Most of the Options clients that come here are pretty hostile. They already think you're out to get their check or punishing them for being on welfare. So it is up to me to try to explain the program and turn it into a positive. Most of the clients have an idea of the program, and they care if their checks are cut.

And a third noted:

I believe in giving the client just a little success. It think it's unrealistic to think that a client is going to change overnight. There has to be some flexibility in the program. Otherwise, there will be nothing but failures.

Things can be mandatory and still be pleasant and benefit the clients. It's important how we approach the clients with a positive attitude toward them and the program.

A fifth reason for the Options program's low rates of sanctioning may be adduced, also related to street-level bureaucratic self-interest (or, in this case, the absence of it). This is that, since the program placed little emphasis on the immediate reduction of welfare caseloads and costs and staff were not rewarded on the basis of accomplishing this objective, sanctioning was not seen as a vehicle toward this end.

In this last respect, policies in Baltimore and Chicago differed diametrically. Cost reduction was the principal aim of the Illinois WIN Demonstration Program. As noted in the preceding chapter, staff were evaluated on the basis of their ability to produce from their caseloads a monthly quota of thirteen "positive terminations"--that is, cost reductions due to cancellation or reduction of the assistance grant. Eight of these positive terminations had to result from employment; the evaluation guidelines did not specify the source of the other five terminations. But sanctioning was officially considered to be a means of positive termination, and it was the only one within the staff member's control. (Positive terminations could also result from events over which staff could exert no leverage, such as marriage or receipt of non-welfare benefits such as Social Security.) Staff members were well aware that their supervisors kept track of their monthly performance.

Their behavior with regard to sanctioning in part reflected awareness of these realities.

Sanctioning was a prominent feature of WDP. On average, 305 recipients were sanctioned for non-cooperation each month from July 1984 through August 1985, according to the reports prepared by the state manager of the program. These sanctions accounted for 31 percent of all "positive terminations" from welfare in that time period. Of the experimental-group members tracked in the MDRC evaluation, 11.7 percent were sanctioned within nine months after random assignment, with indications that this figure would increase significantly with extended follow-up. While differences in target population, program model, and other variables make comparisons difficult, rates of sanctioning in Chicago appear to be as high as, or higher than, those in any other state program studied by MDRC.

The regulations governing sanctioning in the WIN Demonstration Program were similar in some respects to those in Maryland but differed in others. As in Maryland, Illinois clients could be sanctioned immediately for overtly refusing to participate or refusing to accept a job interview and/or offer. But in contrast to the rather fuzzy Maryland guidelines about what constituted de facto refusal, the Illinois WIN Demonstration Program Training Handbook was quite specific: the client was to be sanctioned if she exhibited two instances of uncooperative behavior within a sixty-day period. Examples of such behavior specifically cited in the handbook included: failing to respond to a call-in notice for a meeting with a staff member; failing to complete the twenty employer contacts per month required in IJS (or the

eight such contacts required in IWEP); failing to participate in other prescribed activities, such as IWEP; failing to verify Pre-Employment activities; refusing to accept services such as child care or family counseling and thereby precluding or interrupting participation in WIN Demonstration Program activities; and behaving in a seriously disruptive fashion.

A computerized system introduced in early 1985 made it easy to track clients' participation in the program. The WDP Participation Record presented, in chronological order, the notices and forms issued to the client, how the client responded to each of these, and the client's resulting status in the program. Each time a staff member took an action with respect to the client, that action was entered into the system, and an updated Participation Record was generated in time for the next scheduled action. By glancing at the form, the specialist could easily tell whether the client had previously been out of compliance, and whether a subsequent instance of non-compliant behavior would justify a sanction.

The streamlining of forms and procedures also facilitated the sanctioning process. In contradistinction to the lengthy adjudication process that preceded sanctioning in Maryland, sanctioning in WDP was speedy and required little effort on the part of the self-support specialist. The latter had to complete only one form and send it to the staff at the client's welfare office, whose responsibility it was to inform her of the sanction.

The provisions defining "good cause" grounds for nonparticipation were similar in both state programs. And in Illinois as in Maryland, it

was left to the individual staff member to decide whether a particular client's excuse for being absent met the standards of "good cause." In actuality, health emergencies and family crises were the most frequently accepted reasons.

Interviews with supervisors and self-support specialists indicated that WDP staff weighed three factors in deciding whether to excuse non-compliance: the timeliness of presenting the excuse, the enrollee's WDP history, and the quality of the excuse--particularly, whether or not it could be verified by a third party. The importance of maintaining regular contact with staff was impressed on clients at the orientation session. Three of the seven program rules listed on a handout given to clients at orientation, and six of the nine requirements listed on the handout given to clients when they entered IWEP, concerned the client's obligation to contact staff (or worksite sponsors) and to keep them informed of her activities and status, including events that might impinge on her ability to participate in WDP.

Enrollees who called into the office to make their excuses before an appointment date were much more likely to be believed and to be rescheduled without a negative action. One specialist summarized the feelings of his colleagues, saying, "If they call me in time, that shows good faith." A call to the staff member after missing an appointment was seen as an attempt to avoid the consequences of non-compliance, rather than as a sincere attempt to deal with a problem and an obligation.

In considering the history of a program enrollee, staff reviewed prior program performance. For example, in an appeal hearing, one

specialist testified that, "In going back through the record, I saw that a previous worker also had trouble getting this person to keep her appointments. She didn't sanction her, but she had to keep rescheduling her." While these previous problems had no official bearing on the current proceedings, previous record was involved in the specialist's explanation of her action. A history of missed appointments often made the staff member suspicious of the client's sincerity and therefore less likely to accept even timely excuses. For example, the case file of a client who was scheduled for orientation three times was examined. On the day of each appointment, the staff member received a call offering a "good cause" reason why the client would be unable to attend. The first time, a friend called to say she was ill; on the second appointment, the client herself called to say that her child had taken the house keys; and the third time, she called to report that she had had to take a friend to the hospital. Once the client was excused; once she received a second notice; but with the third missed appointment, the persistent non-cooperation outweighed the timeliness of the excuses in the specialist's opinion, and a request for a sanction was issued.

A final consideration in these deliberations was whether the participant's excuse for an act of non-compliance could be verified by a third party. The decision to require verification belonged to the self-support specialist. Two specialists from each of the eleven units chosen for close-up study were interviewed about their personal policies on verification of excuses. These policies differed quite sharply from those of their counterparts in Maryland, who tended to accept unverified excuses if they were of a kind that could be verified. Seven of the

twenty-two Illinois staff members required written verification for every excuse. Eight required verification when the participant was in immediate danger of being sanctioned--i.e., when the instance of non-compliant behavior in question was the second of two required for a sanction. The other staff members interviewed had not set a policy; they decided on a case-by-case basis whether the participant should be trusted or verification should be required.

Specialists maintained that any good excuse could be documented, and since most excuses involved a medical problem, verification could be obtained from doctors or hospitals. A notice of eviction was an acceptable excuse for not keeping an appointment, and a teacher's note could validate a claim of an important test on the day of a meeting. A landlord could verify the excuse that an enrollee had not received an appointment notice because of a broken mailbox or stolen mail. And failure to attend an appointment because of the funeral of a close relative could be verified by a note from the funeral director. That obtaining such verification might be difficult for the client was rarely mentioned in the interviews.

MDRC examined fifty-four sanctions that took place in the spring of 1984. Two-thirds of these sanctions were issued when the client failed to attend two orientation sessions, and another 20 percent resulted from failure to attend two IJS sessions. Failure to complete the job contact quota for both months accounted for all but one of the remaining sanctions.

Two points are especially notable. First, it is clear that the act which most commonly precipitated sanctioning was failure to attend

scheduled sessions, particularly orientation. Second, none of the cases surveyed involved sanctioning of individuals while they were in the IWEP component. Both of these points merit further comment.

Clients new to the WIN Demonstration Program who missed the first orientation session for which they were scheduled were sent a second notice the first time; if they missed a second time, they were sanctioned. The relatively intensive efforts to contact participants, by mail, by phone, or even by home visit, that were made in Options were not undertaken in Illinois.

There were several reasons for this. First, efforts to win compliance from those who failed to come to orientation were neither expected nor encouraged by program officials and supervisory staff. Indeed, such efforts ran counter to the ethic of "personal responsibility" which the Illinois program sought to instill in welfare recipients. The majority of lower-level staff saw their supervisors either as having a strict, by-the-book approach to sanctioning or as not trying to influence their own decisions one way or the other. Only a minority described their supervisors as lenient in their attitudes toward sanctioning.

Second, large caseloads and numerous other responsibilities (including much paperwork) made informal follow-up of absentees infeasible, in the view of the self-support specialists. Their expectation, confirmed by experience, was that half of those they called in for orientation would not show up, at least the first time around. The difficulty of finding out why clients had missed appointments was exacerbated by the

fact that if they missed orientation, the specialist did not have their phone numbers.

Finally, staff had no prior contact with new clients, and thus, no means of judging if the time they spent in conciliatory moves would be rewarded by the client's cooperation.

Although all staff had an incentive to maximize positive terminations among those who, having attended orientation, moved on to IJS or IWEP, staff members did not respond to all instances of non-compliance in these activities with sanctions. Self-support specialists' policies for dealing with clients whom they recalled from previous stints in Independent Job Search differed. Of the twenty-two who were interviewed, nine said that they did not go beyond the formal procedures, even for clients who had been cooperative in the past. If such individuals were absent this time around, they were as likely as anyone else to be sanctioned. One explained, "That's their responsibility-- they have to call us, we don't call them."

But the thirteen others were less inclined to resort immediately to sanctioning and instead tried to contact clients who had been cooperative in the past but were exhibiting absenteeism in the current episode. As one said, "If they've made a concrete effort in the past, I want to find out what's happening with them." The same held true if clients had already attended a couple of IJS sessions before missing one. And if clients failed to meet the requirement of twenty job contacts per month--technically, an instance of non-compliance--but appeared to be making diligent efforts, the specialists were likely to tell them to make up the shortfall before the next IJS session.

This suggests that for many IJS staff, other incentives often counterbalanced and even outweighed the pro-sanctioning incentive implicit in the staff evaluation guidelines. These incentives were largely psychological in nature. Despite the largely routinized nature of much of their work, a routinization imposed by program planners and reinforced by quotas, IJS staff also wanted to see themselves, and to be seen by clients, as helping agents. As noted in the preceding chapter, they regretted that the pressures of their jobs--the large IJS classes and the extensive paperwork required of them--gave them little time to provide one-on-one counseling to recipients. These pressures made it infeasible for staff to expend time and energy counseling clients who never made it to orientation. But once the self-support specialist had established a measure of personal rapport with a client, the specialist had a greater stake in living up to his or her ideal as a social service professional with an interest in promoting the client's well-being. By choosing not to sanction such a client, the specialist was better able to think of the staff-client interaction as a helping relationship and more likely to win the client's expression of gratitude. Both of these helped the staff member to preserve a more positive self-definition. Michael Lipsky contends that this "rationing" of services by differentiating among clients--that is, doing the work as it should be done for a limited, "worthy" portion of the clientele--is a practice typical of street-level bureaucrats.

IWEP specialists, like their IJS staff counterparts, did not bother to try to contact clients who failed to come to IWEP orientation--individuals who were merely faceless names on a list. Once the client was

assigned to an IWEP worksite, however, all but two of the ten IWEP workers interviewed were willing to make informal efforts to secure cooperation. They, too, were in a situation where countervailing pressures reduced their motivation to sanction.

Every IWEP client's assignment was, to some degree, coordinated with those of other clients. For example, a client who could work four morning hours a day in a clerical position was assigned to the same work slot as another client who could work four afternoon hours in the same kind of job. Similarly, if one client could work full-time for the first two weeks of the month, she was assigned to a site where another client could work the second two weeks. Where clients lived and the distance they would have to travel to reach their worksites were also taken into account by most IWEP specialists. Under these arrangements, if one of the clients stopped showing up, the system came apart. It would take the specialist a week or two to call in, orient, and assign another client to fill the gap--if he could find one with the same job category, hours-of-work obligation, and location preferences as the drop-out. The need to coordinate work assignments, as well as sensitivity to the credibility of the IWEP component in the eyes of the work sponsor, provided the IWEP specialist with a strong rationale for attempting to reconcile non-compliant clients with the program, rather than writing them off through a sanction.

The two IWEP specialists who made virtually no attempts to secure clients' compliance were also the two who paid least attention to clients' worksite preferences. It was therefore easier for them than for their colleagues to fill vacant IWEP slots. Their lack of concern

with seeking clients' cooperation was consistent with and made possible by the fact that they were more likely to treat clients as interchangeable parts.

Like IJS workers, then, IWEP staff had a powerful incentive to avoid sanctioning. But in their case, that incentive came not merely from considerations of psychological self-image but also from the concern with simplifying their workloads. Both of these responses are typical of street-level bureaucrats. The degree to which the patterns of practice evident among staff of the Baltimore Options program and the Illinois WIN Demonstration Program conform to Lipsky's characterization of street-level bureaucracy, and the reasons for consonance or dissonance with that "ideal type," are considered in the next and final chapter.

CHAPTER VII

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS: THE DYNAMICS OF WELFARE BUREAUCRACY

The Baltimore Options Program and the Illinois WIN Demonstration Program shared many of the attributes of "street-level bureaucracies," as the term has been used by Michael Lipsky. Both programs were directed toward people who were poor and whose participation was involuntary. In both programs, line staff interacted directly with clients and exercised considerable control over the allocation of benefits and penalties. Both programs had several objectives, and if these were not always in conflict, neither were they necessarily consistent: to reduce the size of the welfare caseload, to help public assistance recipients find employment, and to put into effect a mandatory participation requirement.

Beyond these, the programs had other elements in common. They enrolled clients whose characteristics were similar--mostly black female heads of households with limited educational achievement and prior employment experience. They offered a similar array of activities, largely centered on organized job search, unpaid work experience, and education and training. Line staff in both agencies held similar views concerning the advisability of making participation in welfare employment programs mandatory rather than voluntary.

Despite these broad parallels in mission, service strategies, and clientele, the programs diverged widely in both design and implementation. This fact suggests that there is no single dynamic, no set of constraints, that propels programs for poor people in certain fixed directions. This chapter examines dimensions of uniformity in the operation of programs for poor people, but its principal aim is to elucidate the factors that account for program differences. A second goal is to see how differences in thrust and implementation are associated with differences in program impacts. A final objective is to establish both the programs and their impacts within the wider context of employment initiatives for public assistance recipients and to discuss the broad implications for public policy.

An analysis of the two programs suggests that two key factors that determine how a program will actually be put into operation are its goals and the resources devoted to it. Independently and in interaction, these two factors influence the principal features that define the program in practice.

While planners of the Baltimore and Chicago programs designed programs which shared a broad set of goals, the relative emphasis given to individual goals within this set, as well as the time frame in which these were to be accomplished, differed considerably. In Baltimore, the primary goal was to increase the employment of recipients and thus to reduce welfare costs over the long term. While short-term savings were considered desirable, staff were not under particular pressure to achieve these. It was thought preferable to boost participants' skills to the point where they would be able to get and hold jobs offering some

prospect of economic security, jobs enabling them to escape the "revolving door" of welfare recidivism.

From the outset Options was conceived as an experimental program. Thus, a secondary objective was to test its effectiveness against that of the regular WIN Program in Baltimore. The scale of Options was limited to only one thousand active participants a year until the results of this evaluation were known. At the same time, a relatively high level of resources on a per capita basis was invested in Options. MDRC's study of the program indicated that the total overall estimated cost of Options during the five-quarter period from October 1982 through December 1983 was \$1.3 million. This came to an average of \$957 per AFDC client in the research sample. As a consequence of the limited number of enrollees, staff caseloads were relatively low, ranging from 120 to 170 at any given time.

In the Illinois WIN Demonstration Program, by contrast, the push was for immediate welfare savings. Program planners felt that they were under a mandate to reduce public assistance caseloads and costs, and to do so as expeditiously as possible. Long-term employability development was distinctly secondary in their minds. WDP planners were also concerned that prior employment programs for welfare recipients had reached only a small part of the AFDC caseload. They wanted to expand the new program's scope and to bring substantial numbers of previously unserved clients within its reach, and to do so as inexpensively as possible. The MDRC study indicates that total expenditures came to \$90-130 per client assigned to WDP.

The Options and WDP examples suggest a need to reconsider the

assumption underlying Lipsky's work that street-level bureaucracies face a chronic inadequacy of resources, with staff continually having too little time to deal with too many clients and too much paperwork. Lipsky argues that this is the case because as the supply of services increases, the demand for such services will always rise to meet or exceed it. But I would contend that resource scarcity and excess demand are not inevitable. It may be true, in general, that the political process has not resulted in generous allocations for public assistance benefits or employment programs for public assistance recipients. But policy-makers can make decisions about how to expend these allocations. Department of Human Resources officials in Maryland decided to target resources narrowly, emphasizing richer treatment for a smaller part of the caseload. Officials in the Illinois Department of Public Aid made the opposite choice, opting to cover as large a part of the welfare caseload as possible with the resources at their disposal. The point is that policy-makers in both agencies had a choice regarding how narrowly or broadly to distribute the resources available. The same can be said of the goals underlying the programs. Although at the most general level the programs shared similar concerns, these were translated into very different specific objectives.

Choices about program scale and objectives in part reflected the different "political cultures" of Maryland and Illinois. Both Options and WDP arose to address the concern of the Maryland and Illinois legislatures, respectively, that not enough was being done to cement the link between welfare and work. In general, Illinois is a more conservative state than Maryland, especially in the "downstate" area

where the state capital is located, and this may account for some of WDP's relative "tough-mindedness." In this regard, it is useful to bear in mind Thompson and McEwen's remarks about organizational goal-setting: "The goal-setting problem . . . is essentially determining a relationship of the organization to the larger society, which in turn becomes a question of what the society (or elements within it) wants done or can be persuaded to support" (1977, p. 291).

But differences between the two programs also attested to the differing personal ideologies and beliefs that individuals charged with program planning held about the entitlements and responsibilities of welfare recipients. In Illinois, Department of Public Aid administrators firmly believed that every employable welfare recipient should be obligated to look for work and that those who failed to do so were presumptively undeserving of assistance. Through the imposition of a "work test," benefits could be reserved for the deserving and the "truly needy." The underlying assumption of Options program planners was that most welfare recipients wanted to work but lacked the skills or experience to find jobs. If Options participants had a responsibility to engage in activities that would foster their long-term self-sufficiency, so, too, the state had a responsibility to provide not only prodding but also support in this endeavor.

Differences in goals and in resource levels meant that the two programs under consideration could employ different means to achieve these goals. The design of the Options Program in Baltimore called for individualization of treatment, with assignment to a specific activity geared to the needs and preferences of each client. These activities

were intended to increase the employability of participants. This was most clearly true of remedial education and job training, both activities directly aimed at enhancing human capital. But it was also true of Job Search, a group activity several weeks in duration in which participants followed a structured curriculum designed to improve their ability to fill out job applications, take interviews, and otherwise "sell" themselves to prospective employers. Although to some extent work experience functioned as a catch-all component, its most obvious use (and the one specified in the program manual) was to give participants with no recent work history some evidence of job-holding that they could present to prospective employers.

Given the need to achieve maximal cost reductions with minimal expenditure of staff resources, Illinois WIN Demonstration Program planners devised a model centered on compulsory Independent Job Search as the first program activity for virtually the entire WIN-mandatory caseload. Unlike its counterpart in Baltimore, however, Independent Job Search in Chicago was not structured in such a way as to contribute significantly to participants' employability. As its name suggests, participants looked for jobs on their own, with little staff input into the process. During the mandatory bi-weekly group meetings lasting a total of six hours, staff members were largely occupied with checking compliance with the twenty-contacts-per-month requirement and conveying information about possible job openings and had little extra time to offer tips on interview techniques or self-presentation. After IJS, participants could move on to work experience or to Pre-Employment. However, the latter choice was available only to clients who identified

educational or training programs on their own; staff in Chicago, unlike their Baltimore counterparts, provided no assistance in this area.

Staff associated with both programs performed similar, essentially bureaucratic job tasks. They expedited the movement of clients through the appropriate sequences of program activities, monitored their attendance, followed up instances of noncompliance, and arranged supportive services. Nonetheless, they brought very different orientations to their work.

Differences in means, goals, and resources meant that staff of the two programs were governed by what might be termed different ethics. To adopt Herbert Simon's formulation, these ethics can be seen as the efforts of the organization to instill a set of fact and value premises in the minds of individual staff members. In the absence of specific rules, these premises inform individual decision-making.

An ethic of service permeated the Baltimore Options Program. Staff were oriented toward service delivery. The program model required them to think about each client as a distinct individual. In addition, staff believed that they were to some degree responsible for insuring that participants' experiences were positive ones. And they made repeated efforts to follow up and reconcile clients who did not comply with program regulations. Sanctioning of recipients for noncompliance was undertaken very rarely, and then only if all other efforts to secure compliance had failed.

In Chicago, in contrast, what might perhaps best be characterized as an ethic of accountability prevailed. This ethic governed the way staff thought both about their own behavior and about that of the

clients on their caseloads. In describing the program both at orientation and thereafter, staff continually tried to impress upon clients that they were expected to take their responsibilities to WDP seriously, by showing up for program activities and making forty job contacts while in Independent Job Search. If clients failed to do so, many staff members felt little compunction about initiating sanctions against them, and the sanctioning process did not involve the elaborate preliminary efforts at reconciliation called for in Maryland.

The factor that perhaps most immediately reinforced this ethic of accountability was the quota system that WDP planners designed to measure the performance of line staff members and on the basis of which the latter believed they were being evaluated and rewarded. This system directly reflected WDP's goals of increased cost savings and caseload coverage. Staff were expected to produce from their caseloads thirteen instances of "cost avoidance" and to enroll sixty clients in IJS each month, and they directed the preponderance of their energies to trying to achieve these numerical targets and completing the requisite documentation. The quota system, which for program planners was a means to an end, became an end in itself for line staff.¹

According to Michael Lipsky, the exercise of discretionary decision-making is a prominent feature of the work of street-level bureaucrats. Moreover, it is an essential condition of their job satisfaction. The WDP example does not support the former assertion. Rather, it suggests that decisions taken by higher-level personnel can

¹I am indebted to Dr. Cynthia Guy for this insight.

largely preempt the exercise of discretion by street-level staff. Indeed, if Lipsky's hypothesis were correct, one would expect that more severe resource constraints would be associated with more frequent discretionary decision-making on the part of program staff. Just the opposite occurred.

In both Options and WDP, three points of decision-making were crucial to shaping the overall configurations of the programs. First, the decision to grant clients deferrals rather than to require immediate participation affected both the total number of active participants and the characteristics of the resulting caseload. Second, the decision to assign clients to particular activities determined as well as reflected the programs' general priorities. Finally, the decision to sanction non-compliant individuals could potentially result in substantial numbers of case closings as well as drive home the importance of the participation obligation. In all three of these areas, staff of the two programs varied markedly in the degree to which they exercised discretion in decision-making.

Options staff had considerable latitude in their interactions with clients. While written guidelines existed, they tended to be general and not to supply fixed rules of conduct for particular situations. Accordingly, Options staff were free to develop their own interpretations of the rules, and they did so in line with the program's general service ethic.

Staff in the Chicago program exercised considerably less discretion in all these areas. To a far greater extent than was the case in Baltimore, their opportunities to do so were limited by the program

rules. Thus, the model prescribed Independent Job Search as the first activity for all new entrants. In addition, cut-and-dried procedures spelled out what was to be done if clients missed two orientation sessions.

But even in the absence of rules, Chicago staff made decisions in line with the program's general goals. This was clearly the case with respect to the first decision-point noted above. The WDP staff manual contained no rules specifying the circumstances under which staff could defer participation. Nonetheless, staff rarely granted such deferrals, primarily because they believed that they were being evaluated on the basis of their ability to achieve a quota of sixty new enrollees in IJS each month and that a liberal deferral policy would place attainment of that quota at risk.

What this suggests is that rewards can substitute for rules as a mechanism for curbing discretionary decision-making or channeling it into desired directions. An alternative way of framing this point is that a more general set of rules to which rewards and penalties are attached can substitute for a more specific set of rules, if the conduct to be regulated by the latter is subsumed under the former.

In fact, if the objective is to secure the compliance of line staff with organizational priorities, then evaluation of staff members along standards that reward certain general kinds of decisions may actually be preferable to the promulgation of additional rules. The latter does little to consolidate the interests of upper- and lower-echelon staff, and indeed, may simply generate resentment. But if staff are evaluated according to certain criteria, they will have a strong incentive to

shape their decision-making accordingly, and thereby to conform to the policy directions desired by program officials. The organizational reward structure can do much to mute potential conflicts of interest between upper- and lower-level staff, and thereby to bridge the gap between official policy and policy as put into practice by street-level bureaucrats.

Although the WDP reward structure appears to loom large in explaining the behavior of Chicago staff, rewards probably should not be considered to be of equal importance with goals and resources in shaping program operations and staff decision-making. This is because the rewards themselves emanate from the program's goals; the behaviors that are rewarded are those that serve the larger ends of the program. Both rules and rewards may be seen as instrumentalities for achieving these ends and of reinforcing the organization's objectives in staff members' consciousness and daily work practices.

While the exercise of discretion was constrained in the Illinois WIN Demonstration Program by both regulations and rewards, it was not absent altogether. For example, initially staff could decide which component--IWEP, Pre-Employment, or Modified Job Search--represented the best choice for unsuccessful IJS completers. They could also opt not to request sanctions and instead to give "second chances" to participants who failed to attend an IJS session or come up with the requisite forty IJS job contacts. IWEP workers were especially likely to try to win over non-compliant enrollees, since sanctioning was highly disruptive to their work tasks.

However, discretionary decision-making in Chicago occurred at the

margins, in those areas that were of relatively minor importance to program officials. If these areas increased in importance and visibility, officials stepped in to regulate discretion. This was evident with respect to the question of IWEP assignment, at the outset a matter of little concern to the DPA hierarchy. When it became apparent that an inadequate number of IWEP participants would jeopardize the ability of the evaluation to detect the marginal impacts of participation in that component, officials issued a directive that all those in the research group allowed to participate in IWEP should be placed in that activity upon completion of IJS.

If the Chicago example runs counter to Lipsky's contention that discretion is a major feature of street-level bureaucracies, it nonetheless appears to be an intrinsic and ineradicable element of such organizations. Lipsky cites three reasons why this is the case: the complexity of the situations that are presented, the need to take into account the highly variable human dimensions of each situation, and the street-level bureaucrat's own need for self-esteem. I would suggest that a fourth is at least, if not more, important: that a certain amount of discretion is essential for the organization to operate successfully and to achieve its goals. This is the case simply because not every aspect of program operations is or can be equal in weight to every other. Program officials need to set priorities with regard to ends and means and to establish regulations governing those aspects of staff behavior that are central to the attainment of these priorities. But if they try to regulate all aspects of behavior, then it will be impossible for staff to distinguish what has priority from what does not, what

behavior is essential from what is desirable-but-dispensable. Thus, allowing discretionary decision-making in those areas that are (correctly) perceived to be of lesser importance should help to ensure greater compliance with those regulations that are of principal concern.

Whether discretion is essential to the job satisfaction of line staff is less clear. Morale was undoubtedly higher among staff of the Baltimore program than among their Chicago counterparts, but this could have been due to factors other than the greater exercise of discretion on the part of Options personnel. Baltimore staff had lower caseloads and were not subject to stringent quotas. They received intensive training which helped create a sense of esprit de corps among personnel who had originally come from several different agencies.

The backgrounds and prior experience of staff of the two programs may also have played a role in determining job satisfaction. Line staff in Chicago were Department of Public Aid employees for whom the position of self-support specialist was simply a step up on the career ladder. Half the Options staff members, in contrast, volunteered specifically for the program, partly because they were looking for jobs that would be more interesting and more meaningful than the ones they had left.

Categorization of clients would appear to be a more central aspect of street-level bureaucracies than discretion. Indeed, it is likely to be an inherent feature of bureaucracy in general, as Weber contended. Categorization is present however rich the resource environment. But, where resources are richer, distinctions among categories can be more finely tuned. In Chicago, where resources were scarce, all WDP participants were initially assigned to the same program component;

differentiation occurred afterward, when staff had to decide in what activity to place unsuccessful IJS completers. This decision was a relatively simple one: the only attributes of the client taken into account were the extent and recency of her past work experience, and her "attitude." (Another consideration was whether or not the client came up with an education or training program that met WDP standards.)

In Baltimore, the greater flexibility of the program and the wider variety of activities it offered made it necessary for staff to take additional client characteristics into account. These included: participation in an educational or training program at the time of program enrollment, part-time employment, educational attainment, vocational preferences, and "presentability." Moreover, the fact that many Options activities had specific entry requirements attached meant that the categorization process was not only complex but also had to be performed relatively carefully.

This all suggests that there is no "absolute" quality of the clients--the "raw material," to use Perrow's term--with which street-level bureaucrats work. Welfare recipients in Baltimore and Chicago were on the whole quite similar in their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. But the different guidelines governing the two programs required their staff members to pay more or less attention to certain characteristics and to evaluate their importance in different ways in order to take appropriate action.

The Independent Job Search component of WDP meets Perrow's standard of a "routine technology." According to Perrow, such a technology is likely to exist when two conditions are satisfied: the "raw material"

(in this case, the client population) is perceived as uniform; and the nature of the raw material and of the process needed to transform it are well understood. DPA planners undoubtedly believed that job search was the cheapest means of achieving the transformation desired--moving large numbers of individuals into jobs and off welfare. However, they did not perceive the raw material as uniform: BSS staff recognized that clients had different abilities and needs and that participation in job search would not be enough to move many, if not most, recipients off welfare. This awareness of variation was largely irrelevant, however, since the agency lacked the resources to provide alternative services such as education or vocational training to all those who might need them. For BSS planners and administrators, a more complex understanding of the raw material would not have been worthwhile. Since there was little the organization could have done to accommodate a more complex perception of the situation, the ease of decision-making afforded by acting as if the situation were simple was preferable to a more accurate, but more paralyzing, understanding.

In Perrow's classificatory scheme, the Options Program most closely adheres to the "engineering" model. In this model, the nature of the raw material is perceived as varied; it is further assumed that the best means of treating each category of the raw material is understood and that actors will arrive at rational choices. But as the Chicago example suggests in counterpoint, the concept of a "best means" has meaning only in Options' relatively rich resource environment, where a variety of treatment modalities was available.

This dissertation was not intended to confirm or disconfirm

Perrow's hypotheses regarding the congruence of organizational structure and technology. But it raises questions about Perrow's formulation and suggests that it is too limited. Perrow treats the organization as a self-contained entity that has little relationship to its environment. In fact, however, the kind of technology an organization applies to its raw material is not simply a function of perceptions of the raw material and knowledge of effective means of transforming it, but also of the ability to act on such perceptions and knowledge. Understanding an organization's technology is impossible without respect to the larger range of choices that can be put into practice. And these choices are themselves the by-products of goal and resource decisions made both within the organization and in its larger environment.

The effectiveness of the two programs in achieving their objectives of increasing employment and decreasing welfare receipt is reported in two MDRC monographs (Friedlander, Hoerz, Long, and Quint, 1985; Friedlander, Freedman, Hamilton, and Quint, 1987). In both states, an experimental design was used to measure program impacts. Random assignment is the most reliable way to determine these effects, because it ensures that the group(s) receiving the treatment are similar to the control group, except for the program activities to which they are assigned. Outcomes for the control group serve as a benchmark against which outcomes for the treatment group(s) can be measured. Statistically significant differences in outcomes for the groups during the follow-up period can then be confidently attributed to the effects of the treatment itself, because the experiences of the control group reflect the extent to which program registrants would have become

employed or left welfare in the absence of the treatment.

In Baltimore, welfare recipients who were eligible for the program were assigned to one of two research groups. Experimentals were expected to participate in Options. Controls were sent instead to the regular WIN program, which continued to operate along with Options and to serve the large majority of welfare recipients who could not be accommodated in the special experimental program. Before and during the study period, funding for WIN staff and activities was substantially reduced. Only a handful (3.7 percent) of control-group members participated in group job search, work experience, or training, although they did meet periodically with WIN staff, who sometimes referred them to GED and vocational training programs as well as to job openings.

Table 5 shows how outcomes for experimentals assigned to Options compared with those for control-group members over a fifteen-month period following random assignment. This period is divided into five three-month quarters, but because of the way that earnings data are organized, follow-up on employment and earnings does not begin until the second quarter. Sample members with no earnings or no welfare payments were included in the averages of earnings and welfare dollars. Tests of statistical significance indicate whether the measured differences were likely to be the result of the program intervention or were simply due to chance.

The table shows that the program achieved increases in employment. About 44 percent of the controls worked at some time during the follow-up period. Among experimentals, this rate rose to 51 percent for a gain, or impact, of 7 percentage points. The total number of quarters

Table 5--Impacts of the Baltimore Options Program on Employment, Earnings, and Welfare Receipt

Outcome and Follow-Up Period	Experimentals	Controls	Difference
Ever Employed, Quarters 2 - 5 (%) ^a	51.2	44.2	+7.0***
Average Number of Quarters With Employment, Quarters 2 - 5 ^a	1.31	1.15	+0.16***
Ever Employed (%)			
Quarter of Random Assignment	28.1	26.4	+1.6
Quarter 2	27.2	24.0	+3.2**
Quarter 3	32.4	27.9	+4.5***
Quarter 4	34.7	31.6	+3.1*
Quarter 5	36.5	31.6	+5.0***
Average Total Earnings, Quarters 2-5 (\$) ^a	1935.15	1758.74	+176.41
Average Total Earnings (\$)			
Quarter of Random Assignment	261.98	255.89	+6.09
Quarter 2	318.55	332.99	-14.44
Quarter 3	467.80	408.24	+59.55*
Quarter 4	570.65	504.59	+66.07
Quarter 5	578.16	512.92	+65.23
Ever Received Any AFDC Payment, Quarters 1 - 5 (%)	94.9	95.1	-0.2
Average Number of Months Receiving AFDC Payments, Quarters 1 - 5	11.14	11.29	-0.15
Ever Received Any AFDC Payments (%)			
Quarter of Random Assignment	92.5	92.1	+0.4
Quarter 2	87.3	87.5	-0.2
Quarter 3	77.4	78.2	-0.8
Quarter 4	71.7	73.2	-1.5
Quarter 5	68.8	70.4	-1.7
Average Total AFDC Payments Received, Quarters 1 - 5 (\$)	3058.03	3064.12	-6.09
Average AFDC Payments Received (\$)			
Quarter of Random Assignment	679.46	672.22	+7.23
Quarter 2	678.55	671.53	+7.02
Quarter 3	593.68	593.42	+0.26
Quarter 4	563.66	569.22	-5.55
Quarter 5	542.68	557.73	-15.05

(continued)

Table 5--(continued)

Source: Friedlander, Hoerz, Long, and Quint, 1985, p. xxiv.

These data include zero values for sample members not employed and for sample members not receiving welfare. There may be some discrepancies in calculating sums and differences due to rounding.

For employment and earnings, the quarter of random assignment refers to a calendar quarter. For AFDC payments, the quarter of random assignment refers to the three months beginning with the month in which an individual was randomly assigned.

^aQuarter 1, the quarter of random assignment, may contain some earnings from the period prior to random assignment and is therefore excluded from the measures of total follow-up employment and earnings.

A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between experimental and control groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; *** = 1 percent.

in which experimentals were employed also increased, as did the quarterly employment rates. In addition, the average earnings for quarters two through five went up by \$176, from \$1,759 for controls to \$1,935, although these gains were not statistically significant in most quarters.

The employment gains of the experimental Options enrollees were not accompanied by reductions in welfare receipt or grant expenditures, however. Only a small difference was apparent between experimentals and controls in the number of follow-up months each group received welfare and in the proportion receiving welfare in any given quarter. Correspondingly small dollar reductions in welfare payments took place. In no case did program effects on any welfare measure approach statistical significance during the fifteen-month follow-up period.

Part of the explanation for this finding of employment gains without comparable welfare savings probably lies in the rules for calculating benefits, which allow deductions from gross earnings for work-related expenses, such as child care, as well as the disregarding of some earnings as a work incentive. Another part of the explanation may be a possible lack of communication about changes in employment between Options personnel and staff of the local welfare offices, who were responsible for actually recalculating the benefits.

In Chicago, just the reverse pattern of impacts--welfare savings without concomitant employment increases--was discovered. There, the research design was more complex, in that the evaluation measured not one but two experimental treatments. Eligible individuals were randomly assigned to one of three groups. Those in the first group were required

to attend orientation followed by IJS. After these activities they were placed in either Pre-Employment or Modified Job Search, but not IWEP. Those in the second group were also required to attend orientation and IJS, but thereafter could be assigned to IWEP. The only obligation of control-group members was to attend the orientation; however, they could be sanctioned if they failed to do so. (In fact, 7.6 percent of the controls were sanctioned within nine months after program entry, compared with 11.7 percent of the experimentals in the two groups combined.) Thus, the study assesses only the incremental impact of the post-orientation part of the program; it cannot capture any changes in welfare or employment status arising from the orientation requirement. In addition, controls located and enrolled on their own in educational and vocational skills training programs with almost the same frequency as experimentals. For both these reasons--the requirement to attend orientation and the extent of participation in education and training programs--the control group cannot be regarded as a "no-treatment" group.

Table 6 reports the results, this time over eighteen months, or six quarters, of follow-up. Neither participation in IJS nor in the IJS/IWEP sequence led to statistically significant effects on employment and earnings over the follow-up period as a whole or for any quarter during it. Over the full 18-month follow-up, 37.1 percent of IJS experimentals were employed at some point, as were 36.8 percent of the IJS/IWEP experimentals; neither of these proportions differed significantly from the 35.8 percent employment rate recorded by the controls. The earnings gain for experimentals in the IJS/IWEP group was

Table 6--Impacts of the Chicago WIN Demonstration Program on Employment Earnings, and Welfare Receipt

Outcome and Follow-Up Period	IJS/IWEP			IJS		
	Experimental	Control	Difference	Experimental	Control	Difference
Ever Employed, Quarters 2-6 ^a	36.8%	35.8%	+ 1.0	37.1%	35.8%	+ 1.3
Average Number of Quarters with Employment, Quarters 2-6 ^a	1.09	1.05	+ 0.04	1.09	1.05	+ 0.04
Ever Employed						
Quarter of Random Assignment	16.3	16.2	+ 0.1	16.1	16.2	- 0.0
Quarter 2	17.9	17.8	+ 0.1	18.6	17.8	+ 0.8
Quarter 3	20.8	20.1	+ 0.7	21.2	20.1	+ 1.1
Quarter 4	22.6	21.4	+ 1.3	22.0	21.4	+ 0.6
Quarter 5	23.3	22.4	+ 0.8	22.7	22.4	+ 0.3
Quarter 6	24.4	23.4	+ 1.0	24.4	23.4	+ 1.0
Average Total Earnings, Quarters 2-6 ^a	\$1977.33	\$1920.75	+\$56.58	\$1933.62	1920.75	+\$12.87
Average Total Earnings						
Quarter of Random Assignment	182.72	183.64	- 0.92	174.44	183.64	- 9.19
Quarter 2	280.71	286.24	- 5.52	278.24	286.24	- 8.00
Quarter 3	358.72	353.53	+ 5.19	337.28	353.53	-16.26
Quarter 4	404.76	393.64	+11.12	400.52	393.64	+ 6.88
Quarter 5	436.66	412.29	+24.37	418.35	412.29	+ 6.06
Quarter 6	496.48	475.05	+21.42	499.23	475.05	+24.18
Ever Received Any AFDC Payments, Quarters 1-6	99.8%	99.8%	- 0.1	99.7%	99.8%	- 0.2
Average Number of Months Receiving AFDC Payments, Quarters 1-6 ^b	14.23	14.45	- 0.22**	14.07	14.45	- 0.38***
Ever Received Any AFDC Payments						
Quarter of Random Assignment	99.6	99.6	- 0.0	99.6	99.6	- 0.1
Quarter 2	92.5	92.6	- 0.1	91.8	92.6	- 0.7
Quarter 3	83.9	85.5	- 1.6**	83.7	85.5	- 1.8**
Quarter 4	78.9	80.8	- 1.9**	78.1	80.8	- 2.7***
Quarter 5	75.1	77.1	- 2.0**	73.7	77.1	- 3.4***
Quarter 6	70.9	72.7	- 1.8*	68.9	72.7	- 3.8***
Average Total AFDC Payments Received, Quarters 1-6 ^b	\$4416.03	\$4486.38	-\$70.36*	\$4346.36	4486.38	-\$140.02***
Average AFDC Payments Received						
Quarter of Random Assignment	841.57	832.64	+ 8.93**	839.11	832.64	+ 6.47
Quarter 2	823.95	824.07	- 0.11	813.03	824.07	-11.03
Quarter 3	739.74	762.95	-23.21***	731.06	762.95	-31.89***
Quarter 4	699.95	726.03	-26.08***	689.85	726.03	-36.18***
Quarter 5	674.85	690.40	-15.55*	655.66	690.40	-34.74***
Quarter 6	635.96	650.29	-14.33	617.64	650.29	-32.66***

(continued)

Table 6--(continued)

Source: Friedlander, Freedman, Hamilton, and Quint, 1987, pp. Ex. 13-14.

These data include zero values for sample members not employed and for sample members not receiving welfare. There may be discrepancies in calculating sums and differences due to rounding.

^a Quarter 1, the quarter of random assignment, may contain some earnings from the period prior to random assignment and is therefore excluded from the measures of total follow-up employment and earnings.

^b AFDC quarters are calculated from date of random assignment. Quarter 1, therefore, does not include any data prior to random assignment.

A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between experimental and control groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; *** = 1 percent.

\$57 above the control-group mean, while for experimentals in the IJS group the gain was only \$13. Again, neither of these differences was statistically significant.

On the other hand, there were small but statistically significant welfare savings for both the IJS and IJS/IWEP groups. For the eighteen-month follow-up period as a whole, welfare grants averaged \$4486 per control and \$4346 per IJS experimental, yielding a statistically significant welfare savings of \$140. The welfare savings for IJS/IWEP experimentals was smaller--\$70--but still statistically significant. Most of the savings were associated with reductions in the percent of experimentals who received any welfare payment rather than with benefit reductions for cases that continued to receive welfare.

These AFDC reductions cannot be attributed to the very small experimental-control differences in earnings. While the greater sanctioning of experimentals probably accounts for some of the difference, it, too, is an insufficient explanation, since sanctions typically lead to temporary grant reductions, not to case closings. Two other possible explanations for the program's impact on case closings in the absence of significant employment or earnings impacts may be advanced. First, WDP staff were more frequently in contact with the experimentals and were therefore more familiar with their activities. They also had an incentive to record instances of registrant employment in order to meet their quota of positive terminations. This emphasis on recording employment could have led to a higher or faster rate of earnings discovery, and consequently, case closings, for the experimental group. Second, imposition of the WDP participation

obligation--the "hassle factor"--may have deterred some individuals in the experimental groups from remaining on welfare.

Findings on the distribution of benefits and costs of the two programs are also available. This analysis extends the impact results in several ways. First, it includes not only the programs' impacts on earnings and welfare payments but also effects on Medicaid and Food Stamps (for which AFDC recipients are automatically eligible), the administrative costs of these transfer programs, fringe benefits, and tax payments. These were not measured directly but were imputed from observed earnings and welfare effects. Secondly, the analysis projects program impacts and costs that are likely to occur after data collection ends. This longer-range view is necessary because most costs are incurred early, while participants remain registered with the program, whereas benefits are likely to accrue over a longer time period. The projections into the unobserved period are, however, subject to considerable uncertainty. Thus, conclusions about overall program effects are more reliable than precise numerical estimates.

Participation in the Illinois WIN Demonstration Program did not make members of the two experimental groups better off financially, and may have made those in the IJS group somewhat worse off, on average. The small earnings gains experienced by the experimentals, when projected over five years, were offset or more than offset by their projected losses of AFDC and Medicaid. However, WDP produced net savings for the government, resulting primarily from reductions in AFDC and Medicaid payments. Projecting over five years from random

assignment yields net savings for government of \$230 to \$330 per experimental for the IJS/IWEP sequence and \$400 to \$550 per experimental for IJS.

In Maryland, in contrast, experimentals were better off as a result of the program. Their gains in net income largely reflected their earnings increases. Society as a whole (including welfare recipients as well as others) benefited from the program. However, from the perspective of government expenditures, there was a net budgetary loss of about \$300 per AFDC experimental. It is likely that if welfare grants had been correctly adjusted to reflect the experimentals' increased earnings, the cost to government (as well as the benefits to participants) would have been reduced.

It is useful to reconsider the theory of street-level bureaucracies in light of these findings, and to reflect on the degree of congruence between goals and outcomes. Lipsky maintains that because street-level bureaucracies serve involuntary clienteles, they are always mechanisms of social control, punishing those who deviate from established behavioral norms. This insight is less useful than it might be, because it could be argued that every organization, as a condition of its existence, serves a social control function. Nonetheless, the above data suggest that, whatever its mix of proclaimed purposes, the impacts of the WIN Demonstration Program in Cook County stemmed more from the controls it exerted--in sanctioning recipients who did not comply with program regulations, in permitting staff to scrutinize more closely the activities of participants, and in adding an obligation to welfare receipt--than from the services it offered. These services appear to

have been ineffective in moving participants off the welfare rolls and into jobs. The pattern of impacts that emerged, along with the fact that the government incurred considerable fiscal benefits (although participants did not) was consistent with the program's primary aim: achieving cost savings.

In Baltimore, the establishment of some sort of work obligation in return for welfare receipt was part of the rhetoric of the Department of Human Resources. But in practice, sanctioning was rare, and this aspect of the program was of minimal importance. To the extent that Options sought compliance from its participants, it did so through more hortatory, less punitive means. There, impacts would appear to have arisen from the program's service functions, rather than those of social control. The program was thus successful in achieving one of its main objectives--moving welfare recipients into employment. But fulfilling this end was originally seen by program planners as a means to another end--reducing welfare caseloads and costs--and this second objective was not realized.

Some would argue that the institutional auspices under which a program operates are as important as its goals and resources in determining its implementation. Certainly, the fact that Options was run by the Mayor's Office of Manpower Resources, an agency concerned primarily with the provision of job training to the disadvantaged, was influential in shaping its service ethic and the range of services it offered. In Chicago, in contrast, a large state bureaucracy both created and operated the WIN Demonstration Program.

Developments in Illinois over the past two years suggest, however,

that this argument may not necessarily hold. In December 1983, Governor James Thompson appointed as new Director of the Department of Public Aid the man who had previously headed the Department of Children's and Family Services. This change was accompanied by numerous shake-ups in the middle as well as upper ranks of the DPA bureaucracy. It also brought a change in the general philosophy and orientation of the state's welfare employment programs.

In late 1985, Governor Thompson announced a new welfare-to-work initiative, known as Project Chance, which as of this writing has replaced the WIN Demonstration Program examined in this dissertation. Project Chance is even more ambitious than WDP in scope: not only is it directed toward all WIN-mandatory clients, it also urges staff to conduct outreach to volunteers (i.e., household heads whose children are under six). Beyond this, the espoused program philosophy and design differ from that of its predecessor in several important ways related both to program services and to funding.

First, while the Project Chance program model still begins with up-front job search for all participants, a detailed assessment follows for those clients who are unsuccessful in finding employment. As was the case in Baltimore, the model calls for individualized treatment geared to meet each client's specific needs. Suitable components may include remedial education, work experience, specialized vocational training, or GED instruction.

In particular, much greater emphasis is placed on vocational skills training and remedial education. In WDP, staff made little effort to locate education or training program programs for participants; in

Project Chance, staff are expected to take on an active referral role. WDP registrants were not exempted from program participation if they attended a four-year college; currently, DPA is planning a small demonstration for several hundred AFDC recipients to see whether it is feasible and cost-effective for them to take four-year college courses. At the same time, IWEP has diminished in importance, and participants in this component must be simultaneously involved in other activities, such as remedial education.

Sanctioning is also de-emphasized in Project Chance. The streamlined sanctioning procedures used in WDP have been replaced by procedures similar to the ones used in Options that require staff to engage in conciliatory efforts before sanctions are imposed.

The thrust toward enrolling new clients and providing them with a greater variety of services suggests the need for increased resources. This has largely been accomplished by establishing linkages with other state agencies. Thus, the state department of education is responsible for adult education components. The Department of Economic and Community Affairs oversees those organizations that provide job training funded under the Job Training Partnership Act, and numerous welfare recipients are referred for JTPA training. DPA also received \$5.2 million from the state legislature for special contracts with programs offering short-term training in occupations that are in high demand in the local areas.

Project Chance does not fall within the scope of MDRC's evaluation. It is therefore impossible to determine to what extent these guidelines have been translated into practice, or to what degree the

ethic of service implicit in the Project Chance rhetoric has come to supplant, or at least supplement, WDP's ethic of accountability. A crucial factor may be whether additional funding is available to ease staff caseloads, so that line staff will have the time needed to develop individualized perceptions of clients and their needs. Nonetheless, the Project Chance example suggests that the institutional auspices under which a program is mounted should not be considered an independent variable of equal importance with goals and resources in determining the contours of the program. Rather, it confirms Thompson and McEwen's point that the institution's own goals (and the resources at its disposal) are themselves subject to change, in this case through the political process.

One fact that is worth noting about the earnings and total income of both participants and non-participants in the Chicago and Baltimore programs is that they are very low in absolute terms. In Chicago, average total earnings of experimentals and controls over the five quarters following the quarter of random assignment were under \$2000.. Because this average is skewed by the large number of people with no earned income at all, it is useful to look at the earnings distribution as well, presented in Table 7. In the sixth quarter after random assignment, over three quarters of both experimentals and controls had no earnings, and only about 13.5 percent had earnings of over \$1500 (\$6000 on an annual basis). The bottom panel of the table shows the amount of income from both earnings and welfare (but not from other sources, such as contributions from other family members or earnings from the "underground economy," which were not measured in the study).

Table 7—Impacts of the Chicago WIN Demonstration Program on the Distribution of Earnings and Measured Income

Employment and Welfare Outcomes ^a	IJS/IWEP			IJS		
	Experimental	Control	Difference	Experimental	Control	Difference
Average Total Earnings, Quarter 6 (%) ^b						
None	75.6	76.6	- 1.0	75.6	76.6	- 1.0
\$1 - \$1500	10.9	10.0	+ 0.8	10.9	10.0	+ 0.8
More Than \$1500	13.6	13.4	+ 0.2	13.6	13.4	+ 0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0
Average Measured Income, Quarter 6 (%) ^c						
None	15.0	13.9	+ 1.1	16.2	13.9	+ 2.3***
\$1 - \$1500	65.6	67.0	- 1.4	64.9	67.0	- 2.1**
More Than \$1500	19.4	19.1	+ 0.3	18.9	19.1	- 0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0
Average Measured Income (\$)	1148.36	1144.14	+ 4.22	1129.87	1144.14	-14.27
Sample Size	4050	3805		4057	3805	

Source: Friedlander, Freedman, Hamilton, and Quint, 1987, pp. IV. 12-13.

These data include zero values for sample members not employed and for sample members not receiving welfare. The data are regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for pre-random assignment characteristics of sample members. There may be some discrepancies in calculating sums and differences due to rounding.

^a Monthly welfare data, which count the month of random assignment as "month one", were regrouped into calendar quarters that exactly match Unemployment Insurance earnings quarters. Percentages receiving welfare will therefore not precisely match other text tables.

^b Impact estimates for the two experimental groups are identical.

^c "Average measured income" is defined as sample member's earnings plus welfare payments received during a quarter.

A two-tailed t-test or a chi-square test was applied to differences between experimental and control groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; *** = 1 percent. The distributed differences are not, however, strictly independent.

Over 80 percent of the sample received less than \$1500 from these two sources during the quarter; the average income was about \$1145, or \$382 a month. In Baltimore, the results are of about the same magnitude, as is evident from Table 8, and a similar pattern emerges in other states studied by MDRC. A general conclusion that may be drawn from the MDRC evaluation of work/welfare initiatives is that while such programs may be of some utility in reducing welfare dependency, they appear to be of limited value, at least in the short term, in reducing poverty.

A number of "welfare reform" proposals have been presented to the 100th Congress. Although as of this writing it appears unlikely that any of these will be enacted, given the concern of legislators to reduce the size of the federal deficit, it is nonetheless instructive to compare the key provisions of the three bills that have garnered the greatest amount of media attention and political support.

The most liberal of these proposals, H.R. 1720, is also the most expensive; its cost is estimated at \$5.2 billion over five years. The legislation was introduced by Representative Harold E. Ford (D, TN) and reported out to the full House from the Ways and Means Committee. Originally the bill called for an increase in minimum benefit levels; this was dropped from later versions, but the federal share of AFDC costs would be increased in states that raise their benefit levels. The bill would also extend AFDC-U to two-parent households in all fifty states. Some provisions for stronger child support enforcement are included.

Table 8--Impacts of the Baltimore Options Program on the Distribution of Earnings and Measured Income

Employment and Welfare Outcomes ^a	All AFDC: Applicants and Recipients		
	Experimentals	Controls	Difference
Average Total Earnings, Quarter 5 (%)			
None	63.5	68.4	- 5.0***
\$1 - 1500	20.4	17.7	+ 2.7*
More Than \$1500	16.1	13.9	+ 2.2*
Total	100.0	100.0	0.0
Average Measured Income, ^b Quarter 5 (%)			
None	12.2	12.7	- 0.5
\$1 - 1500	66.4	69.3	- 2.9*
More Than \$1500	21.4	18.0	+ 3.4**
Total	100.0	100.0	0.0
Average Measured Income (\$)	1131.29	1079.26	+52.04
Sample Size	1331	1372	

Source: Friedlander, Hoerz, Long, and Quint, 1985, pp. 113-114.

These data include zero values for sample members not employed and for sample members not receiving welfare. The data are regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for pre-enrollment characteristics of sample members. There may be some discrepancies in calculating sums and differences due to rounding.

^aMonthly welfare data, which count the month of random assignment as "month one," were regrouped into calendar quarters that exactly match Unemployment Insurance earnings quarters. Percentages receiving welfare will therefore not precisely match other text tables.

^b"Average measured income" is defined as personal earnings plus welfare payments received during a quarter.

A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between Experimental and Control groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; *** = 1 percent. The distributed differences are not, however, strictly independent.

H.R. 1720 requires that each state establish a work preparation program for all welfare recipients with children age three and over (one and over at the option of the state), although those who volunteer for services would receive priority over other registrants. In some respects, the program model resembles that of Options: program staff would be required to assess each recipient and develop an individualized employability plan for her, and states would have to offer a variety of employment services, including remedial education and advanced education as appropriate. Participants could not remain in a work experience component longer than six months. Enrollees would receive federally subsidized payments for child care and other expenses associated with participation.

The Republican proposal (introduced into the House as H.R. 3200 by Hank Brown of Colorado and into the Senate as S. 1655 by Robert Dole of Kansas) anchors the other end of the ideological and cost spectrum. (Its estimated cost is \$1.4 billion over five years.) States would be required to implement work programs targeting AFDC recipients with children six months and older; no child care would have to be provided, but individuals would not have to participate if no child care was available. An individualized assessment and treatment plan is not required. States could offer an array of services, but would not be obligated to offer any particular ones. Education programs would have to be "remedial" in nature; that is, post-secondary educational activities would not be allowable. Work-for-benefits assignments could be indefinite in duration, and the value of the Food Stamps allotment could be included in calculating the work obligation so as to increase

the number of hours. By 1996, 70 percent of the mandatory population in any state would be required to be participating actively in the program. The bill does not call for an extension of AFDC-U or for an increase in benefits; it does, however, contain stronger child support enforcement provisions than H.R. 1720.

S. 1511, introduced by Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D, NY) represents a compromise between these two bills both in contents and in cost (estimated at \$2.3 billion over five years). Like H.R. 1720, states would be required to set up work programs for women whose youngest child is age three or older, and women with children one or older could be required to enroll at state option. Although an individualized assessment must be provided, no particular services are prescribed, except that states must enroll individuals under age 22 who have not completed high school in an educational program unless that activity is inappropriate. There are no limits on the duration of workfare assignments. Transportation and child care costs would be reimbursed (the latter at a somewhat lower level than under H.R. 1720). States are not obligated to raise benefits to a minimum level, but all states are required to implement AFDC-U programs. Strong child support enforcement is called for.

The welfare reform initiatives now before Congress provide evidence of a strong consensus that mandatory programs preparing welfare recipients for work should be incorporated into federal AFDC policy. What differentiates more liberal from more conservative proposals is not the principle that welfare mothers should engage in efforts to become self-sufficient but rather, the specifics of those efforts: the kinds of

employment-related activities allowed, the support services offered, the point at which mothers of young children are expected to enter the work force. While two of the three proposals would marginally improve the equity of the system by extending benefits to needy intact families as well as to female-headed ones, increasing the level of benefits has been relegated to minor importance at a time of fiscal stringency.

This dissertation suggests some important lessons about both the implementation and the probable impacts of any measure that might be adopted. First, maximizing program effectiveness will require securing street-level bureaucrats' compliance in the pursuit of desired objectives. Lower-level staff are more likely to comply with agency directives and less likely to engage in discretionary decision-making if two conditions are met: 1) objectives are clearly specified and expressed in quantifiable goals; and 2) evaluations of staff members' performance are conditioned on their ability to achieve these goals. In this way, the organizational reward structure can play a critical role in aligning the interests of program officials and street-level personnel.

Second, while mandatory work programs for welfare recipients may benefit some individuals, they are not a general cure for poverty. Too few participants benefit, and even when those who do get jobs and get off welfare, their incomes often remain so low that any unexpected event--a layoff, a child's illness, and the like--may catapult them back onto the welfare rolls. A more comprehensive approach to reducing poverty would necessitate much more sweeping structural changes in the economy, the schools, and the child care, child support, and health

delivery systems.

As noted in earlier chapters, public policy toward the poor has historically served both relief and social control functions. As the United States enters its third century as a nation, there appears to be widespread agreement that mothers of young children should be expected to be self-supporting and that programs for welfare recipients should emphasize work effort rather than income redistribution. It is within this general framework of assumptions that the Congressional debate about the assistance versus the obligational aspects of public welfare now takes place.

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