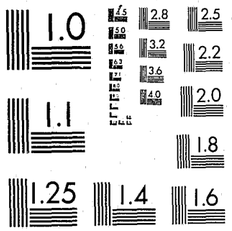

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U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
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Reports of the National Juvenile Justice Assessment Centers

Implementation Issues

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Implementation Issues

U.S. Department of Justice
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Reports of the National Juvenile Justice Assessment Centers

Implementation Issues

by
Walter Williams

July 1981

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PREFACE

This paper was developed at the National Center for the Assessment of Delinquency Behavior and Its Prevention (NCADBIP). Located within the Center for Law and Justice at the University of Washington, the NCADBIP was established in July of 1977. The NCADBIP conducts and assesses research on the theories, causes, and correlates of delinquent behavior; studies program designed to prevent delinquent behavior before youths become involved with the juvenile justice system; and reviews evaluations of these programs to identify effective prevention approaches. Analyses of a number of existing data sets on self-reported delinquency and the results of a national survey of promising prevention programs have informed much of the NCADBIP's work.

Implementation Issues presents concerns which arise once an appropriate strategy has been selected. The author, Professor Walter Williams, is Director of Research at the Institute of Governmental Research. His monograph discusses the concept of implementation and stresses that this is not an abstract idea but a plan for action. The first part of the volume is concerned with developing a perspective for the process while the second highlights the role of information in the planning. A design for a specific assessment of the implementation of Washington State's 1977 juvenile justice reform constitutes an appendix.

The intention of the National Center for the Assessment of Delinquent Behavior and Its Prevention is that its reports and papers will help practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and the public in establishing a theoretically sound framework for the understanding of delinquent or antisocial behavior and that this framework will lead to sound decisions on preventive measures.

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FOREWORD

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 and its Amendments of 1977 mandated the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to assume leadership in planning for delinquency prevention. Recognizing prior difficulties in conceptualizing and developing effective prevention approaches, the Act also mandated a systematic gathering and assessment of data on the causes, prevention, and treatment of juvenile delinquency to serve as a foundation for planning prevention policies and programs. To fulfill these mandates, the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention within the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention established the Assessment Centers Program.

Three topically-oriented centers were organized to assess (1) delinquent behavior and its prevention (Center for Law and Justice, University of Washington); (2) alternatives to justice system processing (School of Social Services Administration, University of Chicago); and (3) the formal juvenile justice system (American Justice Institute, Sacramento). In order to integrate and analyze the efforts of the topical centers, a fourth center was instituted at the National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

The work of the Assessment Centers attempts to clarify an area clouded with opinion, varying and often conflicting definitions, and poorly conducted research. In this context it is important that both researchers and practitioners work together to identify and develop effective strategies for preventing delinquency. However, once those strategies have been identified their implementation becomes a central concern. The present monograph seeks to identify the issues and clarify the necessary processes. An appendix traces a particular implementation assessment design. I encourage those interested in the field of prevention to make use of these reports and papers and to develop their own understanding.

J. Price Foster, Ph.D.
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I. INTRODUCTION

Implementation is the stage between a decision about programs and the point at which they become operational. It is the hard next step that comes after making such "big" decisions as how much money to spend, who will get it, and what program approaches will be followed.

If those who make the big decisions want to have material influence on evolving policy, they must attend to the implementation process stretching from decision to delivery. The admonition is to "look down"--to take the implementation perspective in which what happens at or near the point of service delivery is viewed as a critical factor shaping policy. Such advice applies to the high level decision makers charged with the governance of programs, to the people at the top of an operating organization, to the managers of funds going to organizations which run programs (granting agencies), and to those who do analysis in support of decision making.

The advice to be concerned with the implementation is much like the warning to keep one's eye on the ball in tennis. First, it seems so obvious. Everybody knows that. Second, doing it does not guarantee success since lots of things can still go wrong with the eye fixed unrelentingly on the ball. Third, there is almost a Cassandra-like aspect to the advice. It is a prediction of problems before the great new idea gets started. But, alas, not heeding it is a fundamental error which seems certain to undo any other positive steps. Fourth, and most discouragingly, however simple and straightforward

the advice may sound, it is almost always devilishly difficult to carry out in action.

That is the problem. Implementation cannot be neatly segmented, isolated into a contained compartment in the policy process and assigned to some special unit of the organization to get done with. As will be argued, implementation should be a major concern even prior to making a complex decision in posing the obvious, but strangely almost never asked, question of how hard it will be to implement various alternatives being considered in the decision process. But even if thoughts of implementation only spring forth after the decision, the implementation problem is with the organization almost immediately and stays until the often arduous task is finished of moving from a decision to operations. And if the decision to be implemented is a complex new social service delivery project or program, the implementation stage is <u>not</u> completed when the doors open but rather runs through that terrible, and sometimes seemingly indeterminable, period of start-up where Murphy's Law predominates.

Implementation is an extremely broad concept. Implementation issues do not arrive only with the passage of new legislation or with major legislative or executive branch efforts to modify existing programs. Rather, legislatures and administrative or operating organizations make a range of decisions about programs and processes that must be implemented in the field so that implementation becomes an integral part of the continuing activities of a public organization administering and/or operating social service delivery programs.

Not only is implementation a lengthy process in social service programs, it is an extremely involved one. In a federal agency, for example, a vast distance in layers of bureaucracy stands between the

major decisions made at the top and the ultimate service delivery at the operating level. The implementation process stretches from the halls of Congress or the corridors of agency power to the point of delivery between a social service professional and a client. And along this route emerge political, organizational, bureaucratic, and technical problems, often in mindboggling combinations, that thwart the implementer at every turn.

Implementation, then, is not simply a problem of the field or a technical problem of getting a product in working order. The issue may be one of politics when local people defy implementation efforts by going to their congressional delegation. Bureaucracy may be the blockage when there is an effort to change existing organizational modes of behavior. Or, implementation may involve continuing questions of intergovernmental relationships when federal funding and supervision and state or local operations force an uneasy partnership such as that emerging in federal grants-in-aid for social service delivery programs.

However, with all of this political and bureaucratic complexity, it is critical to keep in mind that implementation is not some abstract social science concept. Individuals and organizations must take action after a decision. "To decide" does not necessarily mean "to do." For an individual a decision requiring implementation may demand commitment (not eating), capacity (money, personal capacity), or both for execution. When the decision maker and the implementer are different, a third demand is for communications. The decision maker needs to get the message across to the implementer. <u>The implementation issue most straightforwardly concerns how to bring together communications, commitment, and capacity so as to carry a decision into action</u>.

Actually, when we turn to large-scale public organizations, there are two implementation issues. The first is what might be labeled "implementation proper"--putting in place a specific decision over time. That decision may set out both specific objectives such as improving the earning capacity of individuals or reducing the delinquency rates and the means (procedures, techniques) for pursuing the objectives. Implementation concerns putting these means in place. At issue is how to get changes in organizational behavior--that is, what people in the organization do--to reflect what the decision envisions. The first implementation issue is the process of trying to get from the here of a decision to the there of operating policy and that people in organizations are doing things in a different way.

The second implementation issue is the more general aspect of the first one. It is the capacity problem. Over time a major organization will be making new decisions which require changes in organizational behavior. A basic question is what that organization can do to raise capabilities generally to help in future, yet unspecified implementation and operations.

The two problems blend together. Any major decision begets a host of minor decisions all of which raise implementation problems. Any organization at a particular point in time is likely to be concerned with implementing a decision or decisions and also expecting to make other decisions the implementation of which will be enhanced if there is greater administrative and operational capability. In what follows, we will address both the immediate problem of implementing a known decision and the capacity problem of preparing for the implementation of yet unmade decisions.

Organization of the Monograph: This monograph has three sections. First, there are two long essays of mine entitled "Developing an

Implementation Perspective" and "Information Demands for Control, Advice, and Policy Formulation." These are followed by an appendix by Richard Elmore entitled "Implementation Assessment Design: SHB 371, Juvenile Justice Reform."

The first essay is a broad treatment of implementation issues. I consider what is known about the implementation process including deriving some basic tenets of the implementation perspective, indicate the implications of adopting an implementation perspective, and then recommend the need for an analysis to determine the feasibility of the implementation perspective for a particular organization. At basic issue is what a major organization needs to do if it takes seriously the implementation issue in both its meanings.

In the second paper I deal with information--the raw material of governance--asking to what extent organizations can answer the basic questions of how well a policy or program works in terms both of organizational and program (outcome) performance. That is, to what extent can organizations determine whether a project is operating as prescribed (staff is performing as desired) and whether a project is producing positive benefits for program participants? An organization needs to determine both its information needs and its capacity to get such information in order to formulate a reasonable information strategy to support management control, advisory activities, and policy formulation.

The appendix offers a paper by Richard Elmore on designing an implementation assessment of House Bill (HB) 371, a 1977 effort to reform Washington State's juvenile justice system. A study team which I headed was involved in following HB 371; and as a part of this effort, Professor Elmore developed this short piece on implementation assessment.

It is a useful paper that adds some dimensions to my essays, particularly for those people with a particular interest in juvenile justice and delinquency prevention.

II. DEVELOPING AN IMPLEMENTATION PERSPECTIVE

I consider implementation problems in the social policy areas to be the major substantive, as opposed to purely monetary or political, hurdles to the improvement of social programs. Implementation is the primary management issue facing the public organizations responsible for social service programs providing employment and training, education, health services, criminal prevention and rehabilitation services, and housing and community development assistance.

These public organizations need to recast their approach to policy formulation, management, and execution to reflect the reality of social science delivery programs. The starting place for considering the nature of this recasting is the lack of control--the limits to governance in complex social programs, especially those funded by the federal government through grants-in-aid. This lack of control brings an unavoidable discretion permeating organizations from the top through the delivery point of service. The problem of lack of control is compounded by lack of knowledge. Discretion must be exercised without clear guides to organizational and programmatic means because appropriate tactics can only be determined in the field in the dynamic process of implementation and administration. Unavoidable discretion and indeterminancy are the basic ingredients of social service delivery programs where prescription must start.

The basic need is for a decision making rationale and framework to shape choices that will orient social program organizations toward

better performance. The recommended decision framework for guiding action in social service delivery programs, I label the implementation perspective.

The cardinal commandment of the implementation perspective is "Look down toward where services are provided; that's the crucial point of policy determination." After the "big" decisions get made at the highest levels, what is done by those who implement and operate programs and projects has a--perhaps the--critical impact on evolving policy. The implementation perspective shifts away from the glamor of making decisions toward the details of putting them into the field. This focus seems certain to demand fundamental organizational changes. Such changes are never easy. The stakes, however, are high. Inattention to implementation is often fatal to performance.

The principal recommendation of this paper is that social program organizations consider adopting an implementation perspective as the underlying rationale and framework shaping policy choices and related actions. What I will do is look first at the intellectual orientation of recent research underlying the implementation perspective, lay out and discuss some basic tenets of the implementation perspective derived from this current knowledge, indicate the implications of adopting that perspective, and then consider the first steps a particular organization should take in its specific consideration of adopting the implementation perspective.

The purpose of the section on implementation research is not to summarize that work but to provide some insights into the orientation of the studies. In my opinion, the most important work on implementation has been done by people without strong disciplinary ties. The researchers working on implementation have focused on central policy

issues without some of the constraints of the academic disciplines. This orientation has been crucial in the development of useful studies.

In the next section I will try to "distill" the most important aspects of the recent work on implementation. Set out and discussed are six tenets of the implementation perspective that apply generally when complex social services are delivered by any organization. A final tenet speaks to the special case of the federal social agency where one political jurisdiction is responsible for managing funds but a second political jurisdiction operates the social service delivery programs.

When I consider the implications of the implementation perspective, my main concern will be with the hardest case, the federal social agency. However, most of the implications to be drawn about organizational behavior pertain whether the main actors are in the federal agency, state, or local organizations. That is one of the basic dilemmas of implementation. We cannot escape implementation problems even in relatively small units. It is a fundamental management problem for any organization which seeks to develop new social service delivery programs or modify existing ones over time.

The final section turns to the need for each organization to consider the feasibility of adopting the implementation perspective. However reasonable that perspective may strike us, it raises fundamental problems for a particular organization. That organization is going to have to ask hard questions which force a consideration of its own underlying commitment and capacity. At basic issue is whether the organization can alter its perspective and style of decision making and develop the resources and the organizational

structure needed to implement the implementation perspective.

IMPLEMENTATION STUDIES: THE INTELLECTUAL BAGGAGE

The implementation issue began to emerge in the literature as a serious research question in social service delivery programs around 1970.[1] Early on, the problem was seen as a central one. As I wrote in 1971, based on the Great Society program experience of the 1960s: "Implementation was the Achilles' heel of the Johnson administration's social policy" (p. 11). Yet research on implementation developed slowly in the social areas, and there was little to go on from established academic areas.[2] Indeed, there is a Kafkaesque element in that the question of implementation surely is one of the central issues of organizational performance. Yet the late Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky in the most widely cited book yet published on implementation observed:

> There is (or there must be) a large literature about implementation in the social sciences--or so we have been told by numerous people.... Nevertheless, except for the few pieces mentioned in the body of this book, we have been unable to find any significant analytic work dealing with implementation (1966:166).

The basic approach of implementation studies, however, can be characterized in broad terms. First is the emphasis on a detailed investigation of what happens in the field in the effort to make a decision operational. The good studies generally are factually dense with lots of information about what actually happened. Case materials have been critical. Take the Rand study of educational change which is by far the most ambitious study of social service delivery program implementation to date. In that study a carefully selected sample of 293 education projects yields a host of statistics

based on detailed questionnaires. But to my mind the most interesting findings come from in-depth studies of 29 projects (not picked at random) that provide vivid images of what people actually do in struggling to change things in a classroom.[3]

The second common feature is a wide scope in looking at the interplay of various political, technical, bureaucratic, organizational, and socio-economic factors that impinge on the effort to put a decision in place. As Bardach has noted: "It is perhaps this broad focus that distinguishes the study of 'implementation,' a subject of fairly recent interest, from the more traditional subject matter of public administration" (1977:46).

Perhaps most critical of all in the development of implementation studies has been the lack of disciplinary orientation of the researchers. The driving force seems to be significant government experience which defies any of their academic theories as to explanation. Absent in the work is simplicity, "that mark of elegance in the physical sciences that social scientists quixotically continue to seek" (1978:96). In addition, thus far, there is neither a dominant person nor a single theoretical framework. Scholars have not rushed to closure, letting disciplinary concerns or a big theory dictate what is acceptable to look at.

The most critical feature of the important implementation studies has been that they have keyed on delivered policies; or more precisely, on the process that moves from decision through the delivery of policy. This orientation has been crucial. It has meant that factors which often become the ends of academic areas (e.g., the organization or the public administrator) are viewed as means to be questioned in terms of their relevance and usefulness along the path from decision

to policy.

Those taking the implementation perspective view what happens at or near the point of policy delivery--the bottom if we take an hierarchical view--as being as important, or more likely, more important, than what happens during the machinations in the decision sphere. Front line staff who exercise discretionary power in the direct delivery of services may end up as far more significant than the "powerful" senator or agency political executive in shaping policy.

The methodological approach of the implementation studies also has been important. Particularly some of the younger researchers have strong methodological training. But thus far, and this is becoming more rare in academia, issues have dominated methods in the study of implementation. There was a willingness by the researchers to start with what they perceived as the right questions and to move toward them with the techniques that seem most appropriate, rather than reformulating questions to fit the dominant methodology or discipline. At the same time, my feeling is that the researchers have kept before them the rationale and demands of rigor as much as possible so that the studies have not degenerated into the pleasant, but nonanalytic, case studies of the past.

What I see in these studies is a healthy eclecticism--a willingness to take bits and pieces of theories or approaches as they provide insights but not to get locked in. Let me draw this point by discussing briefly an important article by my colleague Richard Elmore where he has developed four organization models which in pure form give very different orientations toward implementation and lead to starkly different conceptualizations of the process (1978:185-228). Taking off from Graham Allison's work (1971), Elmore spells

out models ranging from a strict rationalistic approach through organization as bargaining and conflict with a couple of bureaucratic models in between. These models aid us in seeing important differences and distinctions made in earlier work on organizations, thereby providing a basis for integrating useful aspects of the different approaches. This integration, this flexibility in blending the useful parts of earlier theories where helpful while discarding the rest, has yielded a relatively rich knowledge base in fairly brief period of time.

Thus far, I have been trying to spell out the orientation and framework employed in studies of the implementation process, not what has been found. Moreover, I have cast the discussion in terms of research rather than social program organizations. But the jump to these concerns is short. The flaws of academe have so often been the flaws of the public organization--the propensity to convert means such as organizational health to ends, the failure to pursue the right question. And in this respect, the lack of focus on implementation pales in the academic community as compared to the social agencies. There too a host of factors led away from the right question. As I observed based upon my experiences in the Johnson administration:

> It is easy, in the complexity and in the many layers of power and authority, to lose one's sense of direction toward the fundamental goals of an organization. In the period under discussion (1965-1968), many people in the social policy agencies sincerely wanted their programs to help participants and in a general way made decisions with such outcome goals in mind. And what could be more obvious than the fact that these...decisions needed to be implemented, and that inattention to implementation would almost certainly be fatal. But a fantastic amount of bureaucratic foliage so obscured the way that social agencies lost sight of this simple and fundamental proposition (1971:149).

THE TENETS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PERSPECTIVE

This section sets out and discusses seven tenets that represent my attempt to boil down the basic themes of the recent work on implementation. Several brief comments are needed. This is an effort to synthesize earlier research through some general statements that I believe add up to a broad perspective on the implementation issue. It certainly is not viewed as a cohesive theory of the implementation process. At this level of generalization, such statements may offer a useful heuristic base for discusison, but specification going well beyond what we now know will be required to integrate these notions and rule out inconsistencies. Finally, in discussing the tenets in more detail, we should be clear that much of the usefulness of the work on implementation comes from the rich details and the insights which take on full meaning only in terms of those details. The most I can hope for in this section is to make the tenets more explicit so you can tie them to some of the earlier work.

The seven tenets of the implementation perspective are as follows:

1. The innate complexity and diversity in the social service delivery program areas make it most unlikely that effective program approaches can be developed which are useful to many communities without extensive modifications that must be made over a considerable period of time by those communities themselves.
2. The central focus of social service delivery program implementation is the institutional process through which the various actors attempt over time to develop the organizational

means of delivering social services that meet their particular interests.

3. The individuals who deliver social services will operate in settings where there is significant, irreducible discretion beyond the control of higher organizational echelons; and such discretionary behavior is a necessary component of reasonable service delivery.
4. A long time horizon is needed for implementing major institutional changes because organizations generally exhibit both strong resistance to such changes and high susceptibility to prolonged disturbances when experiencing significant changes.
5. At best the broad direction of social policy, not a detailed master plan, can be determined so the implementation process should have the flexibility for adjustments--or fixing--in response to unexpected events.
6. The most needed information is that which provides rich details about existing and expected capacity of organizations to cope with their environments and about means of improving organizational performance within that environment.
7. In the special case of federal grants-in-aid for social programs where federal and non-federal organizations share responsibilities, these organizations are mutually dependent; however, the local entities occupy the central role because of local political/bureaucratic power, technical problems of exerting management control by the social agency, and the fact that local organizations actually deliver the services.[4]

Process, Not Product

There are clear, likely-to-continue limits in our technical capacity to deliver social services. Science does not yield a clear technical fix for our social problems. There seldom is strong evidence showing how to proceed in organizational and programmatic terms to reach desirable social outcomes. In particular, we never seem to have a nice, simple, straightforward solution which is a sure-fire winner both producing material improvements at feasible costs and leaving bureaucratic or political waters undisturbed. Those who would proffer expert advice on social programs have to fall back on recommending approaches which may be unproven, demand resources not readily available, have threatening social and/or organizational consequences, or all of the above.

Take education. Few would argue against the general goal of raising educational achievement. However, available teaching techniques likely have not been tested out to the extent there are definitive results. And these unproven approaches may require teaching skills in short supply or involve means such as substituting teacher's aides for certificated teachers or bussing children from one school to another that stir controversy. Such approaches clearly are subject to legitimate challenge in terms of the information base. There is a fundamental credibility issue for "experts" offering social program advice. Indeed, there are no "real experts" in Rourke's terms:

> Two characteristics are especially valuable in enhancing the influence of any body of experts within a bureaucracy. The first is the possession of a highly technical body of knowledge that the layman cannot readily master, and the second is a capacity to produce tangible achievements that the

> average man can easily recognize. This combination of obscurity in means and clarity of results seems an irresistible formula for success as far as any professional group is concerned (1976:84).

An even more basic point is that the emphasis in complex social service programs on technology per se misleads as to the most pressing needs for advice. Since there is no single dominating technical fix for all situations, but rather a number of possible approaches that might work if tailored to the particular situation, the central concern should be on process. As Berman and McLaughlin have observed in the final volume of the major Rand study of educational change projects:

> Technical assistance...starts from a correct premise--school districts need help. However, the various federal programs generally have failed to provide relevant assistance or they have given the right assistance in the wrong way. For instance, some aid has been narrowly technical and overly detailed, usually because it tried to replicate success that occurred elsewhere. As a result, local project staff would either dismiss the assistance or find it unworkable. The underlying problem in this approach to technical assistance resembles difficulties encountered in the technocratic approach: the innovation is thought of as a product rather than as a process requiring adaption (1978: 38; emphasis in original).

Whenever technical approach is used, the key problem will be how to overcome the political, bureaucratic, organizational, and technical problems in a particular setting.

Each individual setting is likely to have different combinations of variables too complex to be predictable in traditional rational terms. Such circumstances force a search to accommodate particular needs and interests. This is not some mysterious notion. For example, if a complex new educational approach is to be tried in local school systems, the combination of a particular superintendent, principals, teachers, parents, student interest groups, and so on will raise

special problems far too complex to predict in the sense of deriving an immediate solution so that any solution must be worked out at the local level.

The central implementation issue is that of the institutional process in which social service delivery approaches are worked out for particular organizations or localities. The point is not that there are no common elements in different local settings which allow us to increase our knowledge about implementation and our approaches to it. Rather, it is that one clear element is the need for flexibility in the implementation process to accommodate to particular needs and interests. In that sense, each local situation has its unique aspects.[5]

Discretion

The need to grope toward a social service delivery approach compatible with the local setting makes field discretion crucial to the implementation process. This discretion is both unavoidable and essential. There is a fundamental duality. On the one hand, those at the top who either administer programs directly or manage grants are likely to fear lower level discretion because it threatens direct, "hands-on" control. On the other hand, the complexity of the social program process is such that sound performance demands the flexibility of on-the-spot discretionary judgments in rendering services.

More and more, we are coming to realize the importance of the point of delivery of services and the crucial role of the professional staff who provide public services directly. These front line professionals have been labeled "street-level bureaucrats," and include "[teachers], police officers, welfare workers, legal assistance lawyers,

lower-court judges, and health workers" (1977:172). The decisions about which services a client will receive and how the services will be delivered are among the most powerful determinants of government policy.

The images conjured up, however, should not be of persons with great power and control themselves. The literature on street level bureaucracy usually shows these professionals struggling, often desperately, to cope with excessive demands from above (the rules, the immediate bosses) and below (those served). The classroom teacher or the welfare case worker do not appear as powerful figures, and conversations with them surely indicate how harried they feel. But when the classroom door closes or the welfare recipient sits down at the case worker's desk, the unavoidable discretion of the final service deliverers is there.

"They" may use discretion just to survive, but use it they do. And whether these front line staff can be aided so as to have a better structure for and more capacity to exercise discretion is crucial. The commitment and capacity of the final service delivery organization and concomitantly the individual persons who actually provide services must be central elements in the implementation perspective.[6]

The Difficulties and Dangers of Organizational Change

The large-scale organizations operating within the great uncertainty of social service delivery programs paradoxically have both hard-to-penetrate shells and fragile interiors. Efforts that are likely to have a significant impact on peoples' institutional power and/or status are usually met with strong resistance. Organizational units do not like to give up resources or be pushed down

in the institutional pecking order; individuals in those units will not yield their power or prerogatives easily. Trying to make such changes may be like running into a stone wall or hitting a pillow which gives and gives but does not provide an opening.

However, if the organizational shell cracks, and especially if the pressure has been brief and intense, the results may be shattering to organizational morale. The reorganization or restructuring that sends people to different places or positions, makes big winners and losers, and in general changes how things are done, unless orchestrated with great care, can grip an organization. What dominates thinking is the personal impact of the changes on staff and their units rather than the intended substance of the change.

There is no clearer message sweeping from the Great Society years through the Carter administration than that of the difficulty of organizational change. When we combine the field difficulties of social programs with the organizational rigidity and fragility, there seems no escaping the need for a relatively long time horizon.

At the same time, we cannot see very clearly or very far into the future. The underlying uncertainty in social service program hampers efforts to plan and to act so that it is seldom reasonable to make detailed, complex plans. The usual situation is such that "policymaking and policy planning should be directional" (Levine, 1972:164-165). The analogy might be to a group of travelers who can only determine the desired direction of their travel, not the actual terrain.

Planning must not overreach. In the case of a new piece of legislation, for example, it would be sheer folly to spell out in

great specificity a plan of action from legislative enactment to "final" implementation. Rather, any plan should be a broad attempt to guide action while building in the flexibility to cope with the one certainty in the implementation process--that unexpected changes will occur and demand fixing.[7]

Fixing

The indeterminancy of the performance game leads to the notion of fixing. Fixing involves adjustments, repairs, and modifications. As a new program starts up, legislation is quickly found to have flaws, detailed plans go awry, bargains break down.

Even if a path can be laid out reasonably well (the plan can be more detailed), travelers will be confronted by a host of contingencies a planner either did not conceive of or, if he did, had no way of knowing what should be done about until the particular situation unfolds. The best of game plans only takes one so far. The need in the implementation process is for a guide (or fixer) who can keep the group headed the right way by figuring out where to go and how to proceed. The call is for someone to step in and try to set things right during the dynamics of play in the performance game.

The fixer needs to have the power to intervene, and be willing to take the time to work through adjustments along the way. The fixer par excellence will occupy a pivotal position with the commitment and the capability to make on-the-spot adjustments in the dynamics of play.

But position alone is not enough. A fixer needs all kinds of help. As Bardach has indicated in discussing California Assemblyman Frank Lanterman (his fixer):

> Is all this to say that only "power" counts when it comes to fixing the implementation game? Not at all. Formal authority and formal political resources count for much but not for everything. The fixer must also be able to intervene effectively, but he or she must be able to know where, when, and about what. To know these things, he or she must have access to a great deal of information and have the flow of information summarized, interpreted, and validated so that he or she can make sense of it.... Just as money attracts money, information attracts information. Without information about how implementation games were being played "out there" in the field, Lanterman would have been powerless to do any fixing (1977:277-278).

The fixer must operate with an underlying base of technical and organizational resources. The institutional structure must provide needed information, and its analysis support new strategies and tactics by the fixer over time.[8]

The Need for Information Showing Organizational Dynamics and Detail

The central information question of the implementation perspective concerns how people do behave or should behave in their organizational role and status; that is, their organizational performance. This organizational behavior is shaped both by the internal resources and structure of the institution and by the external demands of the environment upon that institution. Of importance are four overlapping, but distinct kinds of behavior: 1) what organizational staff members do with non-human resources (inputs) such as programmatic elements and internal organizational arrangements; 2) how staff members behave with each other; 3) how they behave with staff members of other organizations with which their organization must interact in its external environment; and 4) what they do in treating those who are expected to benefit from their services.

The crucial factor is the dynamic nature of such behavior. What are staff members actually doing in using or managing their time or

that of others? The central concern is how staff employ available non-human resources (materials, equipment, facilities) and what they do when they interact with each other, with members of other organizations, and with clients.

I have labeled as implementation analysis and assessment the kinds of research-oriented efforts to investigate organizational performance discussed in the previous major section. Such studies concentrate on the process by which organizations (usually large-scale ones) will move or have moved from a decision to start a new program or modify an existing one to the point of having that change (innovation) fully in place. Analyses are ex ante attempts to consider implementation capability before a new program is started. Assessments are ex post efforts to determine the extent to which actual organizational behaviors (performance) have changed in the expected direction after the introduction of an innovation.

A critical aspect of these studies is their capacity to provide rich detail about both an organization's history and procedures and the behavior of its staff. Through careful observation and questioning, one can assess how much confusion, lack of clarity, or outright contradiction exist in terms of desired organizational behavior; how administrative duties are executed; how staff delivers service; and what happens in the decision making process including the extent to which clients and other citizens have a real say.[9]

Shared Responsibilities: The Complexity of Intergovernmental Relationships

In the special case of federal grants-in-aid "with strings" (shared responsibilities), public organizations are interacting in a setting where all of the implementers of decisions are not within the same

organization. This appears to be the most difficult of management control situations in political/bureaucratic terms. In contrast to a private corporation, a public organization, even if there is no shared responsibilities, experiences an added difficulty of control "because of the high degree permeability of the federal agency to outside influence," which means that internal (within organizational) control issues can involve "significant actors in the power setting outside" (Warwick, 1975:199). Dealing with the local governments which deliver services compounds problems for the social agency because of the "weakness of management control across jurisdictional boundaries" (Elmore, 1978:198). The agency must operate within the broad confines of democratic federalism where each level of government has powers deriving from the constitution itself and from a long history of past relationships.

A brief historical note is needed. Through most of American history, separation of domestic responsibilities between federal and subnational governments has predominated.[10] The rapid growth of federal outlays both for grants-in-aid generally and for social service delivery programs specifically is a recent phenomenon. Total grants-in-aid for all but transfer payments were only $1.7 billion in 1975 (Schultze, 1976:333, Table 8-5). And certainly today it is difficult to recall that "federal expenditures on grants for social [service delivery] programs amounted to only about $1.3 billion in 1963"(Fried et al., 1973:180).

This emerging federalism that has made such fundamental changes in intergovernmental relationships was brought about by the basic congressional decision to give both federal and local governments significant managerial and operational responsibilities in areas that

either had historically been the sole domain of subnational governments (e.g., elementary and secondary education) or were previously unserved by government such as community development. Local organizations operate these projects but the federal government in varying degrees is to specify priorities and objectives, indicate both program means and the processes, and assess how locally operated projects perform. Congress has decreed an uneasy partnership.

The difficulty and complexity of social service delivery programs makes the federal and local partners mutually dependent upon each other in moving toward performance objectives. Surely neither knows enough to go it alone or certainly to work at cross purposes. Moreover, there is an unsettling capacity imbalance whereby there is much less power to move toward performance goals than to block movement. In the paragraphs that follow, I'll be pointing out the limits to the power of the federal partner. Yet there is significant federal capacity either to confuse or harass the locals. And the locals have tremendous power to defy the federal government. However satisfying may be these bureaucratic and political "victories," the partnership is unlikely to thrive in terms of organizational and programmatic performance without realistic cooperation between the partners.

The shared responsibility tenet postulates the primacy of the local partner. This comes in part because the staffs in local organizations are the people who deal directly with project participants. No matter what the feds do or do not do, local staffs are the ones making the critical discretionary actions that determine whether or not projects succeed. This may be obvious, but it is also crucial in understanding the nature of agency-local relationships.

In addition, technical and bureaucratic/political factors reinforce that local dominance by reducing the basis of federal agency management control. To see the difficulties of federal control we need to look briefly at the basic requirements of a strong management control system. Such a system requires 1) objectives and standards for which there are measurable control points and appropriate measuring mechanisms in place and 2) clear, enforcible sanctions that guide performance.[11]

The exercise of control demands hard, specific evidence to support charges of poor program performance--that is, to indicate that a program or a project is not working in the sense of providing material benefits to participants. Yet, in the social service delivery areas, it has been in the area of final outcome measurement that our techniques have proven to be so weak, so challengeable in the basic statistical terms of validity and reliability. First, final outcomes are difficult to define in uncontroversial terms. Or, the agreed upon definitions end up so broad in order to get agreement that they lack the precision needed to support field measurement. Second, measurement itself is difficult. Third, the results are subject to challenge. Lacking are the "robust methodology and powerful designs" required to show definitively the level of outcome performance of social service delivery programs (Rossi and Wright, 1977:10).[12] As Williams and Evans have observed:"[W]e have never seen a field [final outcome] evaluation of a social-action program that could not be faulted legitimately by good methodologists, and we may never see one" (1972: 261). Such evaluations of a social-action program almost always yield controversial information which does little to enhance the direct control

of social agencies over desired final outcomes. The results simply do not provide a sufficiently sound empirical base for exercising direct control.

Nor are strong sanctions available to the social agencies. Both local and state governments now have sufficient political clout and bureaucratic expertise to reinforce this dominant role. As Daniel Elazar has written: "It may not be too great an exaggeration to suggest that the historical model that most closely resembles the federal government in its domestic role today is the Holy Roman Empire in those periods where the Emperor's domestic powers were contingent on the cooperation of his barons" (1978:38). Further, in the intense few years of rapid growth in social service program grants-in-aid, local governments and their national interest groups (e.g., National Conference of Mayors) have had the opportunity for on-the-job training in the specifics of particular program areas. Local staffs became specialists in the social areas with both general knowledge about programs and specific knowledge about their own projects.

To sum up, the social agency lacks both the measurement capacity and the strong sanctions needed for the exercise of strong management control. The genie of local power clearly is out of the bottle. The power and primacy of the local organization that delivers services is the final key proposition of the implementation perspective as it pertains to shared responsibility arrangement existing in federally funded social service delivery programs.[13]

IMPLICATIONS OF ADOPTING THE IMPLEMENTATION PERSPECTIVE FOR FEDERAL SOCIAL AGENCIES

I will use the federal social agency as the basis for a looking at the implications for an organization of adopting the implementation

perspective. Even in this most complex of organizational cases, the implementation perspective, where the basic commandment is lookdown, seems so reasonable one is tempted to say to the agency "What to do is painfully straightforward: accept the severe limits of your control over social service delivery programs funded through grants-in-aid, adopt the implementation perspective, and get on with it." However, adopting the implementation perspective has significant implications throughout the agency for resource allocation, information development, mechanisms of control and influence, and organizational structure. It is a fundamental agency decision. I believe that decision should be made only after a thorough analysis to determine whether the implementation perspective makes sense for a particular organization.

The implementation perspective offers a broad approach. Even if I could take it further to refine each tenet and integrate them, the perspective would still be a broad guide for what a particular organization should do. The next step is to derive a strategy providing more specific guide points indicating how the organization should proceed in certain critical areas. In the case of the federal agency, for example, this strategy of implementation must speak to such issues as the setting of realistic agency responsibilities over time; the appropriate headquarters and field relationships, staffing, and structure; various functions which can be performed and, among the feasible ones, which should be carried out; and the means of increasing technical and organizational capacity over time, particularly in the field.

This section will discuss four critical questions the social agency should address in working toward a more defined strategy based on the implementation perspective. These are issues that I believe should guide the extended analysis. In that analysis the agency should

investigate in depth the extent to which it can:

1. Make bargaining and fixing the primary guides to agency decisions and actions in pursuing organizational and program performance objectives;
2. Establish structural means that support congruent responsibility and authority both in headquarters and the field and greater agency constraint, particularly at the headquarters level;
3. Raise competence in the field both of federal staff and grantees;
4. Develop an information process yielding organizational information aimed primarily at supporting agency efforts to formulate policy and offer advice to grantees.

Two comments are needed about the discussion of each of the issues that follows. First, I cannot overemphasize that no effort will be made to treat these issues in terms of a specific agency. Such an analysis at a distance without working directly with staff of a particular agency is inappropriate both because of the lack of details and of the need for the organization itself to be heavily involved. Second, each issue will be considered separately without my trying to determine potential conflicts among them. This effort too demands the details of a specific case. So we should be clear that what follows is still well removed from specifying agency action--a point I'll return to later.

A New Decision Making and Action Framework

Generally, bargaining and fixing together are the preferred mode of play in the performance game. In the dynamics of play, bargaining

and fixing blend together. Through negotiating or repairing, or renegotiating after repairs, the agency tries to influence local organizations toward better organizational and program performance.

Bargaining becomes the appropriate strategy where the power of hierarchical control in the traditional sense ends, where the credible threat of command and control with clear negative sanctions that apply to discernible boundary points no longer holds.[14] Top agency managers cannot rely solely on the power of hierarchy to induce lower level managers in their own field organizations to do their bidding although there is still the distinct advantage of being in a superior position. And at the bargaining table with local governments, the social agency is at best an equal in the negotiations.[15] There is no trump card of direct hierarchical control to play. As Bardach points out, "'[C]ontrol' is exercised through bargaining, persuasion, and maneuvering under conditions of uncertainty. 'Control'...resolves into strategies and tactics" (1977:56). So the guide to play needs to be cast in a bargaining mode where power is defined in terms of directional influence, not direct command.

Good bargaining strategy requires a search for leverage points--those places where the bargainer's involvement is likely to yield a high return because he has a scarce resource the other party wants. For example, if an individual owns a key parcel of land that is critical to a proposed shopping center, the owner may demand 10 or 15 percent of the total payment for the land even though he has only 5 percent of the acreage.

Leverage yields positional advantage. But it can exist only where other players already seem likely to move in the desired direction. That is, leveraging makes sense only when two or more parties see gains

from bargaining. Leverage is good horse-trading at the margin where there is a willing buyer and seller.

Leveraging becomes particularly important where there is no brute power to force desired behavior. Those who can command an action be taken and insure its execution with the threat of strong sanctions need not bother with either the hard search for potential leverage points or the subtle moves to secure the bargain. Those with strong direct control do not have to scurry about for positional advantage where a relatively weak push may tip the scale. Such luxury it must be clear is not possessed by the social agency in the performance game. A much higher level of play is demanded if the feds are to be adroit bargainers.

Bargaining, however, can be a trap if it lures players to emphasize too much the immediate consequences of the deal at the bargaining table. Good bargaining in the performance game is more than a virtuoso display of political wits in action.

Federal bargaining strategy must not ignore potential field weaknesses or needs. The critical point is that the two bargainers are not like buyers and sellers who go their separate ways after the transaction but rather are engaged in a continuing relationship where they are also partners, albeit uneasy ones. The need, as McLaughlin points out, is for "mutual adaptation" (1976:167-180). But again, the locals deliver the services, their adaptation is paramount.

The bargain is a good one for the federal government if it increases the likelihood that the other partner will move toward better performance. Getting a local organization to overcommit itself in the bargain, even though it fully intends to fulfill that promise, is not a good federal deal.

The federal bargainer must know the playing field including the social agency's own limits, local limits, local needs, and the kinds of resources likely to address those needs. Such knowledge about limits and what resources the locals need is far more important in indicating how the federal government can help in a joint effort than it is in showing what the federal government can wave before the locals as a bargaining chip. The highest level of federal credibility may be for the locals to realize that social agency staff is sensitive to this situation and its implications in the program performance game. This is what can make the continuing game with its recurring bargaining productive.

Making repairs and adjustments can cut across all demands and range from legislative changes through project repairs so that fixing may be the most difficult of tasks. Bardach has captured its essence when he observed:

> Game-fixing is quintessentially government by men rather than laws. It is not necessarily, though, irresponsible government.... The real problem...is that too few of the would-be fixers know how to do the right thing, are willing to do it if they do know how, and have the political resources to make their will effective (1977: 279).

Fixing in broad terms, of course, is being done all the time. What is so problematic is getting a top level fixer. As Bardach observes of different levels of fixers: "[T]he one that is hardest to come by, is the intervener at the top, the person or persons with powerful political resources" (1977:279).

Asking who at the top is to be responsible for fixing the performance game is essentially the same question as who is to manage the agency. The latter is a recurrent issue as Seidman has observed: "[A Secretary's] principal duties involve matters which are unrelated

to the internal administration and management of the institution.... Minimal time is...[available] for managing the department, even if a Secretary is one of the rare political executives with a taste for administration" (1970:134).

When the same person is expected to handle political issues having implications both up (organizational viability, top-level decisions) and down (organizational and program performance, implementation perspective), the pressures can be overwhelming. There needs to be full recognition by the secretary that his or her duties will not allow fixing. This function has to be "turned loose" by the secretary in the sense of giving it up as a main function but assigned specifically to a top-level subordinate with explicit recognition of its time demands.

This is the first step toward institutionalizing the fixer role. But one fixer is unlikely to be enough. Fixers seem needed at key points in the operating bureau with critical fixing responsibilities in the field. Nor is the responsibility enough. There remains the commitment of significant amounts of agency resources to support bargaining and fixing in the performance game. But clearly the establishment of the top-level responsibility for bargaining and fixing is the first critical commitment.

Constraints and Credibility

The most important source of field confusion is the incongruity between responsibility and authority. Headquarters tends to overcompensate for initial uncertainty of mission by drawing up broad statements of responsibility. The assignment of unrealistic responsibilities is likely to force federal staffs to overact. A flow

of rules that elaborate on or counteract existing rules represent a bureaucratic response to responsibility overreach. In this confusion federal staffs lose credibility. Chasing after unrealistic controls, the agency jeopardizes the forming of the belief by local organizations that the agency knows what it is doing and can set reasonable tasks. To avoid confusion and loss of credibility, the agency must keep responsibilities in line with capacity.

Now we need to recognize that responsibility in the broadest sense is a political choice. Congress usually sets these responsibilities for the agencies without necessarily giving much thought to whether or not the agency can really do what is specified. But over time it can negotiate with the Congress to determine more realistic ones. More importantly, the agency has a great deal of flexibility in defining and refining responsibilities. Most of the responsibilities that the agency assumes are not set out explicitly in the legislation or in congressional intent. Agencies themselves appear as the main culprits in overpromising.

Perhaps the most destructive case is when headquarters tells agency field staff and local organizations that the former are accountable for performing at a competence level that is well beyond what they can come even close to doing. Local organizations with any understanding of the gap between responsibility and authority will question headquarters' motives or capacity. If the federal field staffs overact, they also may become suspect. Federal field staffs may work out some kind of accommodation with local organizations which may circumvent federal specifications. But this action itself erodes the local sense of agency believability. The watchword is constraint.

Constraint can be seen as part of the headquarters search for a credible position in the eyes of federal and local field people. Credibility may necessitate a tactical retreat to stronger ground that reflects the realities of the field. The aim is to restrict action to what the agency can do well. And in so doing, the social agency is likely to develop greater influence over organizational behavior and outcomes, not less. What is sought is a strategy of the type Sundquist labled "deference":

> There are many examples, within the federal government, of a policy of deference--but not all are models for emulation. In the case of many programs where funds are distributed among states by formula, deference has meant a virtual abdication of any federal influence at all--a quiet glossing over of inadequate state and local performance. Much is lost, obviously, if the federal government fails to exert leadership. The federal government can assemble expertise that individual communities cannot hope to match. It can collect and evaluate data from many communities. The information and insight of the federal experts must be brought to bear upon the community plans, and the advice growing out of evaluation must be made available. These purposes require an aggressive federal approach but an aggressive attitude is consistent with a policy of deference if the federal influence is achieved primarily through consultative relationships while the plans are being formed, rather than through review and modification or disapproval of the community's proposal afterwards. The one approach is calculated to stimulate local initiative; the other tends to stultify it (1969:251-252).

Field Competence

No issue looms larger in shifting to the implementation perspective than that of the allocation of staff resources between headquarters and the field. All the evidence indicates the difficulties of exerting direct control and influence by having most of the top-level civil servants, the highly trained specialists, and the brighter generalists in Washington. The argument is that staff on-the-spot potentially can make more sensible judgments because of

their detailed knowledge of the situation. Being present must be coupled, of course, with competency. The strategy is to deploy better human resources in the field where the action is, and to increase the tools available to support discretionary judgment.

The most obvious approach to improving the staffing situation is to increase the rewards for those in the field. A Coopers and Lybrand report points out: "With only 25% of the total staff, HUD Headquarters has two-thirds of all grades GS-15 and higher, whereas the Field has most of the responsibility for operating the programs" (1976:10). Coopers and Lybrand recommend that more of the high grades be distributed through the field. There needs to be a sufficient upgrading so that top level field positions are seen as highly desirable career attainments. Also recommended was that a more intensive effort be made to prepare field staff for greater responsibilities through formal training arrangements.

Perhaps even more important are less tangible factors. After all, there are some super grades and a number of GS-15s in the field. But as long as implementation and field administration remain inferior positions in the agency, the better people will be attracted to them at a lesser rate. There must be recognition in terms of status and responsibility as well as money.

Field staff can become the key agency people making important discretionary decisions intended to influence performance. Those in the agency with high career aspirations must see field service both as challenging and as a major route of personal advancement. Only with rewards and status and challenging jobs more and more in the field can this crucial element be put in place over time. All we know

about organizational structure tells us that better staff must want to be in the field.

There is certainly a need for them. A major Rand study of the implementation of education programs found the lack of local staff capability a crucial barrier to improvement and an excellent place for federal activities. As Berman and McLaughlin observed: "A major opportunity for federal policy to improve the institutional capability of school districts lies in the largely ignored area of local staff development.... [T]he success of any practice depends less on the inherent merit of the technology than it does on the skills and commitment of the user" (1978:42; italics added). One of the major recommendations made by the Rand research group is to establish "a separate categorical effort [which] would provide a clear signal to state and local school personnel about federal priorities; it would imply that the federal government considers local capacity building to be a fundamental need" (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978:42). There must be more field capacity--a better "human resource base" for the exercise of discretion. People "out there" need the knowledge, sensitivity, and confidence to work toward solutions.

Information

The implementation perspective dictates a search for different kinds of information to be put to different uses than in the past. To elaborate on this point, it is helpful to distinguish the following information uses: policy or decision formulation, control, and advice. Policy formulation is a continuing effort to determine in relatively broad terms an organization's future policy directions and how to pursue them. Given our notions that much of policy is

determined at the operational level, the better name for this activity may be decision formulation, but I'll stick with the standard usage of policy formulation. Control and advice are more specific, more detailed in speaking to particular aspects of carrying out of formulated policy. Control involves efforts by an organization or a unit of an organization to direct the activities of other organizations or units. In the case of a social agency, directions to grantees for which it has administrative responsibilities may indicate 1) target groups to be served, 2) administrative, organizational, or programmatic approaches and procedures to follow, and 3) expected organizational and programmatic performance levels. Advice is focused on the same general areas as control, offering specific means of complying with directives or reaching performance levels. But advice, including extended support such as for capacity building, is proffered on a take it or leave it basis. Control gives directives to be in compliance with guidelines or reach performance standards; advice speaks to means of compliance or performance but with the intent that choice rests with the recipient of the advice to follow a suggested approach or to accept proposed resources such as training.

Available techniques for assessing organizational performance may yield strong evidence that a project is making no effort to do what is desired or is fouling up that effort. The information can be hard and specific enough to support the exercise of control at least to the extent of indicating clear losers. The greatest potential for improving agency governance, however, is likely to come from "softer, richer" information. Such information about organizational processes and procedures that can be employed in the provision of social services can expand materially the empirical base for advice and policy formulation.

The lack of proven approaches that characterizes social service delivery programs places a real premium on information drawn from extensive field experience. The scarce commodity is organizational and programmatic experience that can aid in seeing, and sensing, where something is wrong. Often the most useful, and the only available, information on which to base such advice comes from "having been there before." This information is likely to come from people who have lived through past organizational and program difficulties, rather than from the organizational theorist.

Care must be taken not to oversell what can be done. There can be major problems. First implementation assessments, just as evaluations, require measurable criteria if there is to be a judgment about success. Second, the precise measurement of complex organizational behavior is difficult. Clearly the results are often subject to challenge. Despite these caveats, I think useful decision making information can be gathered from observation and interviews indicating in detail the extent to which an organization is trying to do what is desired. As I have observed elsewhere:

> [P]eople with well-honed bureaucratic sensitivities should be able to assess within tolerable limits how well an activity is going and whether it is beginning to fit into its institutional environment. Surely it ought to be possible to spot the bad cases--but not necessary to know what to do about them, since that step requires ex ante prediction.
>
> The central role of reasoned judgment in assessing implementation should be clearly delineated. A static checklist of all the specified inputs (one teacher, two teacher aides, three talking typewriters, and so on) will not indicate the viability of the project. On the other hand, enough missing pieces may spell trouble. The exercise of judgment or of a composite of judgments of an activity in motion seems the only way to determine viability. At the same time, technique may facilitate judgment. A set of "dynamic" questions

> (e.g., does the principal support the project?), a common scaling system, or a sampling frame may keep these carrying out the assessment from missing important issues, provide a useful means of comparing judgments, and avoid selectivity biases. Good judgment, however, remains the key element. Methodology simply does not appear to be the big barrier. Nor do I see the need for highly trained social scientists to carry out the various tasks. The biggest need is for competent, reasonable people with sound substantive knowledge of programs and of bureaucracy (1976:286).

A MODEST PROPOSAL

Whatever the general appeal of the implementation perspective, its appropriateness and feasibility for the individual agency must be analyzed carefully in terms of commitments, limits, and resources. That the agency should determine if the implementation perspective makes sense in its particular case is the basic message of recent attempts to implement new decision making approaches. In looking at the experiences with the Planning-Programming-Budgeting System, Management by Objectives, and Zero Based Budgeting, it becomes clear that a real commitment within the agency is the necessary ingredient to put a new decision making approach in place. The Programming-Planning-Budgeting System, probably the most ambitious of the three and the most widely written about, provides overwhelming evidence of the difficulties of imposing such a system government-wide with the central budget authority having the primary responsibility for implementation of a new way of thinking.[18]

Strong support of both the Secretary and other political executives are necessary for changing the decision making process. But, in addition, the people in the agency who are going to implement the new approach must accept its rationale and its implications.

Unlike the earlier decision making approaches which are concerned primarily with how issues were conceptualized in the decision sphere,

the implementation perspective has its strongest implications for lower agency echelons including staff in the field. The people affected must be convinced that the changes make sense and are in their interests. An extensive analysis of implications of adopting the implementation perspective is necessary even if agency management is generally convinced of its usefulness. They must have the facts to sell it to everyone concerned.

Internal restructuring can be the most complex agency implementation of all when there are major shifts in people and power. As Havemann has observed about President Carter's reorganization efforts across agencies:

> In its baldest form, turf is the desire to exercise power for its own sake.... If it's not always clear when turf is the real force behind an argument for or against a particular reorganization, the President's Reorganization Project has learned one lesson: substantive arguments rarely fail to coincide with self-interests (1978:788).

The issues of turf as an organizational and status as a personal phenomenon, apply whether or not the reorganization is among agencies or within a bureau in a single agency. An agency may face no more difficult kind of implementation than that of a reorganization where it must deal with its own bureaucracy which combines inside knowledge with power including the staying power of the career civil service. Basic agency decisions should not be made without detailed study and deliberations that include those whose status and jobs will be affected in the organizations.

Lest there be some misunderstanding, let me be clear about my argument. On the one hand, I believe strongly that the implementation perspective is needed by <u>all</u> social agencies operating under the shared responsibility model. On the other hand, <u>all</u> the available

evidence indicates both that new styles of decision making are difficult, if not impossible, to impose from above and that major internal organizational changes cannot be put in place successfully without careful analysis and the involvement of key organizational units in that change process. The only sensible suggestion, then, is for the agency to start the necessary analysis of its commitment and capacity to adopt the implementation perspective.

Such analyses will undoubtedly show limits and weaknesses. I think it will also indicate there is room for maneuverability. Analysis over time is likely to show where organizational change is least threatening and where agency resources have potential for a visible impact. The general expectation is that there are opportunities within the social agencies for taking the initial steps toward adopting the implementation perspective and for building an institutional base that will support it. I have guarded optimism that the social agencies can have success in using their resources to foster a higher commitment in the field to performance objectives and to provide the needed resources to support the exercise of field discretion by those who ultimately determine social policy.

NOTES

1. This is the date where Fullan and Pomfret start their review in what so far has been the most studied program area, that of educational curriculum (1975).

2. For a discussion of these points, see Williams and Elmore, 1976:286-290.

3. Rand has now issued 8 volumes on this study. For an excellent summary of the study, a guide to the earlier volumes, and a statement of the important research findings, see Berman and McLaughlin, 1978.

4. To cite all the sources for this synthesis would be impossible. I can indicate recent pieces that have most influenced me. Of the general works on implementation, I have drawn most heavily on the Rand study of educational change (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978), Bardach's The Implementation Game (1977), the several essays in the edited volume by Elmore and me (1976), and Elmore's paper on models (1978). In more specific terms, Weatherley and Lipsky's article (1977) on street-level bureaucracy aided in understanding that notion and its importance for unavoidable discretion; Ingram's paper (1977) sheds much light on bargaining; Warwick's study of the State Department (1975) helped crystalize notions about the difficulties of carrying out major organizational change; Levine (1972) was useful for understanding the difficulties of social planning; and Heclo's recent study of political executives (1977) indicated nuances of the limits of federal governance. Finally, I have drawn in a number of ways on my own study of efforts to implement the Community Development Block Grant program and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (1981).

5. The Rand study (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978), McLaughlin (1976), and Elmore (1978) are helpful in seeing process issues.

6. See Weatherley and Lipsky, 1978, for a good discussion of street-level bureaucrats and the implications in terms of unavoidable discretion.

7. For a first-rate account of the impact of internally imposed organizational change, see Warwick, 1975. Warwick derives general concepts applicable also to organizational changes imposed from the outside. I have used Levine's work (1972) as a basis for statements on planning.

8. The notion of the fixer has been developed most fully by Bardach. See Bardach, 1977:268-284, for a useful discussion of fixing the implementation game.

9. For a more detailed discussion of these implementation studies, see Williams, 1976:267-292, especially 282-286.

10. For a general discussion of federalism, see Reagan, 1972.

11. There is a large literature on management control with a goodly portion having been produced by Robert Anthony and his colleagues at the Harvard Business School. For example, see Anthony, 1965 and Anthony and Dearden, 1976.

12. The Rossi and Wright article (1977) is a good basic discussion of the combined technical, political, and bureaucratic difficulties of doing evaluative research. The authors may be somewhat more positive than I am about the likely usefulness of such data, but they certainly present a relatively grim picture of the underlying capabilities of our evaluative techniques.

13. In developing this section I have relied heavily on my own field work (1981); and also Bardach, 1977; Elmore, 1978; Heclo, 1977; and Ingram, 1977.

14. There is a growing literature on bargaining with some general classics such as Schelling, 1963. I have relied heavily on Elmore (1978) and Ingram (1977) because their discussions cast bargaining in the context of implementation. The two also contain good bibliographies.

15. For purposes of illustration, I put bargaining in face-to-face terms but it can occur in other ways.

16. Control is being used more broadly than management control and could be better labeled as influence.

17. Similar notions are found in Friedan and Kaplan (1977), pp. 310-312.

18. For an extended discussion both of the problems of the Bureau of the Budget in implementing PPBS and of the adoption of policy analysis by individual agencies, see Williams, 1971:17-35.

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III. INFORMATION DEMANDS FOR CONTROL, ADVICE, AND POLICY FORMULATION

This essay is concerned with the extent to which organizations can develop sound, relevant, and timely information to support management control, advisory assistance, and policy formulation in social service delivery programs. I will first focus at the basic notion of management control both generally and specifically for the federal social agency. Then, in several sections a non-technical treatment will be offered of the underlying capacity to develop useful information about social service delivery programs. Finally, I will try to tie together the notions of control, advice, and policy formulation and of underlying capacity in discussing an organization's information strategy.

Brief comment is needed on the relationship of this essay to the previous one. The earlier provided a broad overview of implementation issues with a special focus on the federal social agency. This essay will pursue one key issue--that of information--in depth. Most of the discussion will concern the question of what information available techniques can produce. But in the final section I'll return directly to the larger concerns of the earlier essay in discussing the agency information strategy.

THE BASIC ISSUE OF CONTROL

Control is a fundamental problem for all organizations. As Anthony and Dearden observe: "A business company, or indeed any organization, must be controlled: That is, there must be devices that ensure that it does what its leaders want it to" (1976:3). In large-scale

organizations, management control involves a complex process whereby those at the top must induce intermediate level managers to behave so as to lead others to respond as desired.

Control in large-scale organization almost never fits the old military image of command with an unquestioned response to an order. As Anthony has pointed out: "The word control in its ordinary sense has unfortunate connotations.... [I]t often is used in the sense of boss, curb, dominate, enforce, forestall, hinder, manipulate, prevail, restrain, shackle, and watch, and these connotations are not at all realistic as description of what actually goes on in a well-managed organization" (1965:28). Management control ultimately comes down to the intangible ability of top managers to motivate line managers to motivate others. "Psychological considerations are dominant in management control. Activities such as communicating, persuading, exhorting, inspiring, and criticizing are an important part of the process" (1972: 5).

When top decision makers are located at headquarters and most of the implementors and the operators are in the field, the key question is how much discretion should headquarters grant. To have centralized authority or not, that is the question. As Lundquist observes: "[D]ecentralization is a general problem of organizations. In all the meanings in which the term is used, there is a common denominator, namely, 'away from the centre'"(1972:13).

A critical device for supporting more decentralized management is a formal control system. Anthony and Dearden define such a system as follows:

> A control system is a system whose purpose is to maintain a desired state or condition. Any control system has at least these four elements:

1. A measuring device which detects what is happening in the parameter being controlled, that is a detector.

2. A device for assessing the significance of what is happening usually by comparing information of what is actually happening with some standard of expectation of what should be happening, that is a selector.

3. A device for altering behavior if the need for doing so is indicated, that is, an effector.

4. A means for communicating information among these devices (1965:3-4).

Decentralization is a common problem for large-scale organizations whether in the public or private sector. Just as corporate managers, agency political executives must decide how much discretion to grant explicitly to subordinate units including their (regional office) field staffs. But there is also a fundamental difference. In the business area top management will be able at least to some degree to choose between decentralization and centralization in the traditional sense of having direct organizational authority over <u>all</u> implementors and operators. It only has to confront a <u>within</u> organization choice. But Congress in effect rules out such a direct authority by opting for the earlier discussed shared responsibility model. When the social agency considers the question of tight control versus decentralization for its own field staff, it is a second order decision made <u>after</u> the political one that puts project operators within the jurisdiction of another political entity.

This last point is critical. A number of the key implementors and <u>all</u> those who run projects operate outside of the traditional within organizational control devices. But even though these people are in other organizations and often in other political jurisdictions,

social legislation usually casts the top political executives as responsible for operations as if all administrative units and service deliverers were segments of a single organization. The rhetoric of within organization control is there. It is not a very useful way of thinking about how social agencies "control" implementation and operations.

Let us look at the implementation issue from the other side. As Lundquist proposes:

> If the angle of approach is changed to that of the implementer, one can formulate the problem by posing the question: why does the implementer obey the decision maker's steering? For the large organization, which is involved here, at least three sets of reasons can be imagined:
> 1) the implementer obeys for fear of penalty or wish for reward.
> 2) the implementer obeys because he believes the decision to be rational or because it agrees with his evaluations.
> 3) the implementer obeys because he appreciates the decision maker personally or because he always obeys the [implementing] communications from certain organization roles, irrespective of who occupies the role (1968:36).

The first response fits well the image of strict hierarchy with the implementor motivated by clear sanctions either of force or positive and negative inducements (promotion, higher pay). The third response is to either charismatic authority or traditional or legal authority. In modern large-scale organizations the latter is more likely and also fits the hierarchical structure. The remaining response flows from what Lundquist labels "expert power," and which I call "credibility." It is quite different from the other two; not a response to a command, an authority figure, or to direct inducement, but to a recommendation or to advice. There is a clear choice: to decide to implement as prescribed if the prescription makes sense. There is the further implication that the notion makes sense, especially in highly

ambiguous areas, because the recommender has a reasonably good track record. Credibility is earned; authority comes from direct force or granted status. The latter is control in the traditional sense; the former seems more aptly described as influence.

INFORMATION: THE BASIC RAW MATERIAL OF GOVERNANCE

Organizational control and influence usually depend in important degree on information and its analysis. As Schultze has observed: "Cynics to the contrary notwithstanding, knowledge is power. An agency head's ability to control the direction his department takes depends in part on his being able to face his operating subordinates with information and analysis about their own programs" (1968:94). What is true for the agency head is also true as we pass "down" the hierarchy to lower levels of headquarters managers and then into the field to agency and local staff who also seek control and influence over social service delivery programs. For all of them, information looms as a critical component of governance.

The term "information" as used here has the common dictionary meaning of that which informs. Information can be highly technical showing the specification of a complex scientific process. It can be based on large-scale surveys such as those indicating socioeconomic conditions. But it need not be. In the agency policy process all sorts of information having to do with social, economic, political, and bureaucratic phenomena may be useful. For example, essential information for an agency is that the chairman of its appropriations subcommittee would be perturbed if a particular project in his district was not re-funded.

More and more, the development of policy information requires highly specialized methods and skills. Even though the computer era

may place undue emphasis on the uses of the esoteric (and difficult to understand) information techniques, this bundle of techniques does establish important boundaries as to what can be done. We must investigate how available technical capabilities limit the supply of sound, policy relevant information in support of policy formulation, control, and advice.

DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

In this section we consider definitions and concepts needed to discuss information development and use. First are three definitions classifying organizational and programmatic information. Second, the soundness of information is discussed in non-technical terms by looking at the quality (reliability and validity) and the generalability of data. Finally, we look at notions of information development over time to indicate a basic distinction between information required for control and that needed for policy formulation and advice.

Inputs, Outputs, and Outcomes

Most of the concern in this essay is with organizational and programmatic information deriving from the operation of programs and projects in the field. We can classify this field information under three headings: inputs, outputs, and outcomes.

Inputs describe elements (e.g., a particular training manual) or physical arrangement (an intake desk which applicants are to come to before being assigned to a job counselor) in a project or program. Inputs can include personal qualifications that establish quantitative dimensions of specialized training or experience--a teaching certificate, broad-certified practitioner, or three year's experience in working with handicapped children. Inputs are the static factors or

components that characterize an activity and can be verified without extended observation or qualitative judgments.

Outputs are used to describe organizational behavior. They refer to the tasks done by staff members in servicing clients and administering the organization as an institution. Outputs have a dynamic quality that must be observed and judged over time. For example, an employee may have certain educational qualifications on paper, but he or she must be observed in action to determine how the various inputs are used in providing services.

Outcomes point to whether participants are better off after receiving service. I will distinguish among distributional, proximate, and final outcomes. Distributional outcomes show what classes of individuals (e.g., black, aged, female, or poor) or geographic areas have received funds and/or services. Final outcomes indicate whether a program or project is yielding benefits that improve the long-run status of the participants such as a significant positive change in a person's capacity to earn or to learn. Proximate outcomes are ones expected to lead toward desired final outcomes. In a training project where the desired final outcome is increased earnings over time, proximate outcomes might be obtaining a job after training, getting a job in a particular training specialty such as welding, or holding a job for six consecutive months after training. These proximate outcomes do not show conclusively that a participant has improved his or her long-run earning capability. However, their presence does suggest that individuals are moving in the right direction. Their absence indicates even more strongly that participants are not getting longer run benefits.

We need to distinguish between organizational and program performance. How resources are employed (how people use inputs and outputs)

is what I've called organizational performance. What happens to program or project participants is deemed program performance. When we ask how well a program or project is working, we are addressing the basic issues of organizational and program performance.

These elements of performance can be thought of in terms of a "theory" about program delivery. When a law is passed, the ostensible assumption is that program inputs and outputs (organizational performance) will produce desired objectives (program performance). For example, the explicit (or at least implicit) theory in elementary and secondary school legislation is that if certain school materials (inputs) are used in the prescribed way (outputs), children in the classroom will learn more (outcomes). In essence there is an hypothesis about cause and effect. However complex the social policy setting, we should not lose sight of the fact that what is at issue is whether the use of human and other resources (inputs and behavior) will bring a desired outcome.

Data Quality and Generality

The first question to ask of data is how good is it. In statistical terms, the quality of data question is cast in terms of validity and reliability. Validity indicates the extent to which a particular or measure or criteria is an indicator of a specific outcome that is not or cannot be assessed directly. Reliability indicates the degree of precision obtained in measurement. An example may be helpful at this point. A major recent concern in the U.S. is that of family stability. A researcher cannot walk into a house with a slide rule and measure this concept but rather must seek some proxy that seems to get at one or more dimensions of this concept. Thus, it might be asked whether or not divorce rates, numbers

of runaway children, or minutes of interaction between parents and child are valid indications of the degree of family stability. If it was agreed that parental interaction was a valid indicator of stability, the question would arise as to the degree with which we could measure such interaction with precision. Thus, validity speaks to the extent to which a particular measure captures an outcome not amenable to direct assessment; reliability speaks to the accuracy of the measuring device.

A second critical concern about data is the extent to which generalizations can be made from it. The basic question is whether or not a particular finding has general applicability to the situation that had been observed.. For example, suppose an exemplary training project using a particular combination (often labeled the "treatment package") of counseling, classroom instruction, and on-the-job training was determined to be highly successful through valid and reliable measures of placement and job retention. Could this treatment package be recommended for other training situations? The statistical requirement for such generalization is that alternative explanations to the impact of the treatment package be ruled out. It may be that this particular project had an unusually dynamic training director, trained only white males with at least a high school education and an extended record of work, and placed people in a single plant with a temporary high demand for people. But even if none of these obviously restricting factors exist, the statistical requirement is for the testing this particular method in a number of training sites before it would be legitimate to claim that the findings be applied generally. That is, generalization in the strict sense usually requires evidence

from multiple sites, and this almost always is a costly and time consuming endeavor.

A Basic Distinction in Information Needs

It is useful to consider the development of information over time to see differing information demands in the policy process. When a policy is first formulated (e.g., legislation first enacted), the availability of sound, relevant information is a major factor in determining what should be specified. The better the available information, the more likely the initial legislation and agency policy directives can set forth clear and realistic expectations about what various organizations should do in implementing, administering, and operating the program. Political/bureaucratic factors still may intrude. But with solid information there will be an empirical base for a relatively high specificity as to organizational and programmatic performance.

The exigencies of policy formulation including the exigencies of the legislative process may force the use of poor data or the making of policy without much information. Even if the initial policy specification is weak, decision makers over time can strengthen their specifications by obtaining new information on what is happening in the field. The new information can serve two purposes: 1) it may be used by the agency to exercise control in managing funds that go to local organizations which administer and/or operate projects; 2) it may become part of the available information that can support advice and a new stage of policy formulation.

Such new information may allow policymakers to specify far more clearly and realistically at this new point what is wanted in the

legislative program or what could be done to improve performance. Hence new information can reshape the basis of federal policy formulation, control, and advice.

A critical distinction needs to be made, however, in social service delivery programs between the information demands for exercising control and the information needs for the offering of advice or the formulation of policy. The exercise of control requires hard, specific data with which to pinpoint noncompliance and poor organizational or program performance. Advice and policy formulation are likely to benefit more from softer, richer information that speaks to how organizational processes and procedures were used in the political/bureaucratic environment in the provision of social services.

Control demands evidence sufficiently specific and precise to support the claim of wrongdoing against a funded organization. The underlying empirical base of control will be improved if particular inputs, outputs, and outcomes can be defined in measurable terms that are not subject to significant controversy (validity) and can be measured with a relatively high degree of accuracy (reliability). Conversely, the more a particular measure is subject to controversy concerning whether it represents the desired result (i.e, are wages immediately after training a good proxy for long-term earnings changes?) or is challengeable on statistical grounds, the weaker is the empirical base of control and the less likely that control can be exercised.

A lack of proven approaches amenable to straightforward presentation places a real premium on information drawn from extensive organizational and programmatic experience. Here the need is for sufficient depth and breadth of information to support the development of agency policy and of recommendations to field organizations on

implementing, administering, and operating programs. Perhaps most of all, people in organizations need advice and help on making marginal adjustments in what they are doing. They seek means of making small changes which do not threaten to disrupt the organization in terms of structure and staffing. In a situation where someone is performing poorly or some project element is causing immediate problems, there is a need for sensible advice on personnel or minor procedural adjustments rather than highly technical advice or elaborate procedures.

The information needed for marginal adjustments and the occasional crisis generally does not emphasize statistical or theoretical knowledge. Rather, the demand is for information based on organizational and programmatic experience that can aid in seeing, and sensing, where something is wrong. Such information is likely to come from the competent bureaucratic professional who has lived through past organizational and program difficulties rather than the organizational theorist.

This distinction uses the loaded terms of "hard, specific" and "softer, richer," and however much the terms convey a needed impression, they oversimplify the situation and hence can be misleading. In particular, the main elements of the distinction do not revolve around statistical quality. This is true even though generally the statistical requirements will be higher to support proof of noncompliance or poor performance than to support new ideas or recommendations. That is, one may have to present a strong case pinpointing the reliability, validity, and generalizability of results to force a change on a reluctant organization but be able to rely on a few good, but untested examples to offer ideas on how to attack a perceived problem. The crucial distinction is in terms of uses to which the information is to

be put. This notion must be elaborated on in this chapter to make its meaning more clear. But I would emphasize at this point that the distinction in what information is required for different purposes is central to devising a reasonable information strategy.

ANALYTIC APPROACHES

This section and the next one will consider available techniques for analyzing and developing information in support of policy formulation, control, and advice. The concern is with the means of gathering and preparing information for use. What is the state of art in information methodologies? The two sections offer a mainly non-technical treatment of how powerful and how useful are current methodologies in providing information for the policy process. Even without technical elaboration, however, the reader should be warned the discussion is still rather long and complex.

Policy analysis has been defined as "a means of synthesizing information...to produce a format for policy decisions (the laying out of alternative choices) and of determining future needs for policy-relevant information" (1971:xi). Quade has captured the essence on analytic practices in this statement:

> Analysis of one sort or another has been used to provide advice on public questions for a long time and the fundamentals of what has to be done have been long recognized. What is novel, if anything, about the sort of public policy analysis we are discussing is mostly a matter of emphasis and attitude. The emphasis is that of rational analysis: on the clarification of objectives; on the search for alternatives, including their design and invention; on the attempt to look at the problem as a whole and at the whole problem, including spillovers and distributional impacts; on explicitness; on the recognition of uncertainty; on iteration; and, particularly, on the use of quantitative procedures insofar as this can be done without distortion. Other novel aspects lie in attitude: toward using models and computations as much to supply

> perspective and to focus judgment as to furnish answers; in the acceptance of quasi-quantitative or even purely intuitive methods rather than omit significant considerations; and in the attempt to take political and organizational feasibility into account (1975:20-21).

The emphasis is upon systematic, orderly conceptualization and synthesis. However, policy analysis is not a bundle of esoteric methodologies dependent on high-powered theory or advanced computers. Williams, based on the experience with the social agency analytic offices in the Johnson administration, argued that "[there had been an] unfortunate tendency of early advocates of the new approach to describe it in terms of such esoteric names as systems analysis and worse, while the truth was that the [policy analysis] practitioners were seldom using much more than sound micro-economic principles out of Paul Samuelson's elementary economics textbook" (1971:6-7). Enthoven and Smith drawing on their service at the Department of Defense observed: "In fact, most of the really important contributions made by the Systems Analysis Office between 1961 and 1969 were based on simple analytical tools, often being worked out by hand with no more sophisticated equipment than pencil and paper" (1971:68).

Policy analysis has become a major factor in the information process of the social agencies. It has spread through the development of policy analysis offices which at headquarters may serve both the secretary and bureau heads. These analytic offices have become a critical point in the decision making process where policy analysts develop and synthesize program information and other data including research results to provide an empirical basis for policy formulation and guidance.

Policy analysis as practiced in the social agencies has been primarily concerned with policy formulation issues. The agency analytic

offices have looked for new policy approaches and worried about how to sell them to agency heads, the White House, and Congress. But as those who have staffed the analytic offices at the top of the agencies so often found, the bright ideas that were accepted by senior agency decision makers floundered as policy moved into the field. Implementation was the flaw. Allison succinctly captured the issue when he noted:

> If one is primarily interested in what government actually does, the unavoidable question is: What percentage of the work of achieving a desired governmental action is done when the preferred analytic alternative have been identified? My estimate is about 10 percent in the normal case, ranging as high as 50 percent of some problems....
>
> If analysts and operators are to increase their ability to achieve desired policy outcomes, they will have to develop ways of thinking analytically about a larger chunk of the problem. It is not that we have too many good analytic solutions to problems. It is rather that we have more good solutions than we have appropriate action (1971:267).

Such concerns have led to the call for implementation analysis which basically mirrors policy analysis in terms of rationale and techniques. Both seek to determine before a program is launched how likely it is to work. But policy analysis traditionally has focused on programmatic outcomes and upon selling the idea to decision makers. Implementation analysis focuses downward to provide decision makers estimates of the technical capacity to implement and the political feasibility in the field of carrying out alternative proposals.

The starting focus of an implementation analysis is the clarity and reasonableness of preliminary policy or design specifications. Certainly some sketchiness would be expected because preliminary specifications would go through additional rounds before reaching a

final product. At the same time, the absence of any concreteness in terms of either program objectives or the delivery system well may indicate grave troubles at the beginning of the implementation effort.

An implementation analysis also should consider both the technical capabilities to implement and the political feasibility of such implementation in the field. As to the former, the first concern should be with the agency itself in terms of its lines of communication, its administrative and managerial capabilities in the administrative and support domain, and the technical programmatic skills available in the field to help local organizations in the implementation effort. Also, at issue should be the extent to which local organizations have the organizational and technical skills to implement, administer, and operate the new program or major program modification. These questions certainly are not easy ones to answer, but simply posing them may uncover such major deficiencies that either action on the innovation will be postponed or large-scale corrective measures will be seen as required. Much the same may be said in looking at political feasibility. One hardly needs rare political skills to find out about the various political/bureaucratic barriers that will emerge in the field.

We can envision major, extended field studies to develop the kinds of information needed for an implementation analysis. However, time demands well may make short run approaches the only feasible alternative. The most fruitful source of information is likely to be observation of persons with significant experience in the programmatic area who can develop the richer, softer kind of information

we have alluded to earlier. The implementation analysis might also include the development of scenarios that would play through potential political and bureaucratic contingencies that might arise in the field.[2]

Two final points need to be made about implementation analysis. First, the discussion thus far has assumed that implementation analysis will be a facet of an overall analytic effort carried prior to the making of a major decision about a new program policy or a major modification in a social agency. Such orderliness often does not fit with political reality as Congress works through the legislative process and hands the agency a finished piece of legislation to implement. However, there is nothing that precludes the social agency from carrying out a preliminary implementation analysis during the long process of legislative passage. Further, even after the legislation is passed, a concern with implementation feasibility is still in order even though the legislation has obviously established certain constraints. Indeed, it would appear that sensible management practices would demand such concerns which leads us to the second point.

A key issue concerns who in the social agencies should do implementation analyses. Certainly, field staffs ought to think in terms of the issues that underlie implementation analysis. However, the first responsibility must rest with headquarters. If top level staff does not focus on "implementation problems," it is strong evidence of agency management's lack of sensitivity to field issues.

FIELD TECHNIQUES AVAILABLE FOR GATHERING INFORMATION

This section will consider the present technical capability for developing field information to be used in policy formulation, approval, and advice. Much of the discussion is cast in terms of the information needed for exercising control in a fund-granting agency. In his discussion of control systems which draw mainly on private sector examples, Ouchi observed:

> Because the process of control...is basically a process of monitoring something, comparing it with some standard, and then providing selective rewards and adjustments, it suggests a very simple scheme. In controlling the work of people and of technologies, there are only two phenomena which can be observed, monitored, and counted: behavior and the [outcomes] which result from behavior. Thus, control systems can be regarded as being based essentially on the monitoring and evaluation of one or the other, and these will be referred to as being behavior control and [outcome] control--remembering even in the case of [outcome] control, real control comes about only through changing the worker's behavior (1977:97; emphasis in the original).[3]

At issue is the underlying capability of available information techniques to generate sufficiently sound information on outputs and outcomes to exercise control in carrying out the approval function. From this base, however, we can also discuss the information needed to support the provision of advice in the administrative and support domain.

Before we turn to questions of substance, however, it is necessary to dwell on terminology since the terms used to describe field techniques in both the research community and the social agencies are neither uniform nor consistent. As to the former, evaluation research has been defined as "the application of social science methodology to the assessment of human resource programs, so that it is possible to determine, empirically and with the

confidence that results from employing scientific procedures, whether or not they are useful" (1977:25). The broad definition seems somewhat pretentious in what it promises but does describe the general direction and focus of the social science-based studies. Within this broad category the single distinction will be made between studies which focus upon outcomes (or "impacts") referred to as evaluations and studies which look at inputs and outputs labeled implementation (organizational) assessment.[4]

In the agencies, monitoring usually describes efforts to look at compliance thus focusing on inputs, outputs, and distributional outcomes while evaluations generally speaking define longer-run efforts to consider proximate and final outcomes. But these distinctions about outputs and outcomes are not uniform. For example, HEW defines "efficiency" or "management" evaluations as one focusing on ways to reduce costs or streamline procedures within a program or process. Nor is there consistency as to methods employed either in terms of time or technique. Either monitoring and evaluation may be used to describe a brief site visit (the one day "quick and dirty") or quick perusal of field reports at a desk. In what follows we restrict the term evaluations to science-based studies of outcomes and try to be clear what we mean when we use the term monitoring. At this point, let us leave the prickly topic of definition and return to the substantive problems of actually assessing compliance and performance in the field.

Past field efforts to gather field data have bogged down the most at opposite ends of the spectrum. On the one hand, these activities have been overly concerned with the minutiae of compliance, focusing on form more than substance. By concentrating on low level procedures

and practices, federal staff often avoid major questions or hinder the consideration of programmatic and organizational issues. The CETA and CDBG case materials gathered for this study speak clearly to this problem.

At the other extreme, attempts to measure final outcomes--so compelling because these are the bottom line of performance--are marked by difficulty. In an analysis of checking techniques, we will start with these final outcome measures because the difficulty of doing this kind of measurement is central to information development. First, as already emphasized, it raises the most basic issues concerning responsibility and control. Second, it underscores the critical question of what can be done if we cannot get good measures of final outcomes. We need to examine what can be controlled through the development of accurate "intermediate" information on inputs, outputs, and distributional and proximate outcomes.

The Weakness of Final Outcomes Evaluations for Supporting Federal Control

Final outcome evaluations were originally conceived as hard-nosed, science-based investigations which would yield definitive empirical evidence about a policy's effectiveness in improving social conditions. However, the complications arising from the interactions of theory, methodology, politics, institutions, and people can severely limit the direct usefulness of these results for control in social agency governance.[5]

No relatively short discussion can do justice to the complex issue of whether final outcome evaluations can provide information of sufficient validity, reliability, and timeliness to support the federal control of locally operated and administered social service

delivery programs. Rather let us consider briefly in nontechnical terms some of the problems of doing final outcome evaluations, generally using as example a training project or program.

Part of the difficulty of evaluation lies in the fact that desired social objectives either cannot be measured directly, can be determined only after an extended time period, or both. Take the goal of earnings capacity as an example. To determine whether a training program has worked, one must determine trainees' earning capability prior to training and then measure the same phenomenon after training. There is no direct measure of earning capacity, however, so we are forced to look for a proxy such as wages or income earned in some relatively short period before and after training, or else wait years for a lengthy earnings record. Given short-run earnings instability, this means either a fairly suspect (unreliable, possibly invalid) measure or foregoing measurement for a considerable period of time. Even if we wait, there are likely to be severe problems. The passage of time may add to the stability of the measure (three years of earning should be a better indicator of "true" earnings capacity than six months) but time raises problems of recall and of keeping track of people in our highly mobile society.

There is also the problem of determining whether the training program rather than other factors such as economic conditions was the primary cause of a positive change in earnings capacity. The most valid means of measuring would be to consider two groups eligible for training, one of which is in a project while the other is not, to find out how both do in the job market, and see if trainees earn more than the group with which they are being compared. The ideal approach is random assignment where chance means are used to assign

people either to the training or to the comparison group.[6] The professionals who operate projects, however, usually do not like to use random techniques because they prefer to pick people they think need help or those they may aid most easily. Even when random selections is used, if the evaluation runs over the extended time period, there can be problems such as more people dropping out of one group (usually the comparison group) than the training segment. Results under these conditions might be suspect even in the "optimum" approach.[7]

Evaluative data may be affected by time passage in another way. An evaluation taking a couple of years may see project directors, staffs, and components of a social service project change dramatically. Whatever the relative merits of the evaluation in technical terms, the present staff director may be able to point legitimately to past management failure and present project differences which render the evaluation results out of date. We have the seeming paradox in which the more time taken in a final outcome evaluation to develop sound information, the more likely it is that program and project changes will have negated the relevance of data for control purposes.

The nature of the programs themselves add to the difficulties. Social problems are so complex and hard to treat that objectives are often vague and realistic effects small. As Rossi and Wright point out:

> [T]he demonstrated effects of the intervention will usually be weaker than proponents originally hoped or promised... [so] evaluation methodology must be sensitive or powerful enough to detect small effects....
>
> The combination of vaguely defined goals, deeply rooted and incalcitrant social problems, high expectations, and weak effects ideally requires robust methodology and powerful designs (1977:10).

Limited evaluative techniques can get overwhelmed by internal bureaucratic factors and external realities. Both politicians and bureaucrats can use the technical limitations in final outcome results to avoid making decisions. Difficult political choices can be postponed indefinitely on the basis of need for further, more authoritative (read politically incontestable) information.

These technical, bureaucratic, and political barriers do not imply that final outcome evaluations should be ruled out but rather that their usefulness at this time may be questioned as a means of social agency control over projects that are administered and operated by local governments or other non-federal entities. The ambiguity at this critical point of decision making imposes a limit on the degree of control from above with profound implications for social agency structure and function.[8]

Distributional and Proximate Outcomes

Some outcomes defined as distributional and proximate may be measured at a single time point without significant disagreement about the interpretation of the measure. In a welding program to train Vietnam veterans, determining that a former trainee was a veteran and is holding a welding job hardly seems subject to debate as a reasonable indication of progress. Unlike the case of final outcomes, the measure is not a proxy for some immeasurable phenomenon such as higher earning capacity but the result that was desired and which has been observed at a particular time point.

Distributional and proximate outcomes often may be determined through quite straightforward field methods. If the distributional target is easily defined and ascertained (e.g., race, ethnicity, age, or sex), the demand is for simple head counting. If a poverty

group is the target where determining yearly income is difficult, methodological complexity will increase along with the cost of getting information. Much the same can be said about proximate outcomes. Employment, length of employment, wage rates, hours of work per week, and similar factors can be measured with a relatively high degree of accuracy by trained interviewers. Precisely this kind of information is gathered monthly in the Current Population Survey (the instrument used to determine monthly unemployment rates) and other periodic surveys.

It has been noted that distributional outcomes can be viewed as a special case of proximate outcomes in that a program intended to yield long-run benefits to a particular group or area as a first step toward success must actually be reaching the designated persons or places. But there is a key difference. In a political sense, distribution may not be just an indicator of progress but an end in itself. Distributional outcomes like final outcomes are set out in legislation. Indeed, during legislative development, distributional outcomes are much more likely to be the center of debate than final outcomes. Definitions will be at issue at this stage. Measurability, however, becomes a concern only later on.

Proximate outcomes are seldom specifically treated in legislation. They come about through agency actions. Their development may stem from external concerns about how the program is going (raised, perhaps by Congress) or from an internal demand to exert some kind of control. However, the key point is that legislation seldom if ever sets out a proximate outcome, so that the agency is forced to seek a reasonable measure after the fact (as is the case with distributional and final

outcomes). Therefore it is feasible to require that proximate outcomes meet high standards of reliability and validity at a single point in time.

Measures of distributional and proximate outcomes are more modest in intent than assessments of final outcomes in that they are not expected to indicate whether projects are producing lasting benefits for participants. However, these intermediate measures can show the extent to which projects are complying with legislative and agency demands. Moreover, through comparisons along distributional and/or proximate lines, project ratings systems may be developed that yield valuable data on relative performance.[9] In case of relatively poor project performance (e.g., trainees get few jobs, lose jobs quickly, or work few hours relative to comparable projects), one can see that projects are unlikely to yield long-term benefits.

Distributional and proximate outcomes may provide stronger levers of control than the more controversial final outcomes since the technical means available can produce measures of these intermediate outcomes with a reasonably high degree of reliability and validity. Such measures can be joined with information about compliance and organizational viability (discussed next) to provide a relatively powerful check on performance.

It is important to note, however, that some critical issues are embedded in the seemingly benign notions of reliability and validity. Reliability primarily involves technical opinions about the accuracy with which phenomena are being measured. Validity on the other hand is much more a political judgment. To illustrate the difference, consider the reliability and validity of job placements as a proximate

outcome for a training program intended to raise earnings capability. Assume placement services are provided and a trainee is sent to one or more prospective employers. In assessing reliability one might ask how accurately placement can be determined by a telephone call giving the person's name and social security number and asking such questions as: did the person apply, was he hired, and so on. Or would more expensive mailed questionnaires or actual visits be required to elicit the needed information? Even though field visits may yield more accurate information than phone calls, the latter may be considered sufficient to rule out costly visits. Although judgments about the acceptable level of accuracy have a political element in that statistics per se do not say what degree of accuracy (below 100%) is sufficient, the issues center on technical questions of determining that a placement has occurred.

However accurate a particular measure, the question remains as to how much it tells about movement toward the desired final outcome. For example, in assessing a manpower training project, to what extent does a verified job placement evidence enhanced earnings capability? A July 3, 1978 Washington Post article reported:

> [A] new study shows that, in one national sample, 58 percent of those leaving CETA training or job slots were in non-subsidized jobs within three months. But no one is certain whether this is a result of their CETA experience or whether they would have obtained such jobs anyhow.

Most unemployed people eventually get jobs with government programs. Unless there is a basis of comparison (e.g., a similar group of people who did not have the CETA experience), we do not know if the 58 percent is good or bad. Even if it is a good rate, there is not direct indication of earnings enhancement. We have only ruled out

the intermediate outcome of poor placements.

Beyond placement, there is the issue of job quality. Is the position temporary or permanent, full-time or part-time, well paying, or in the trainee's area of training? If these had been a comparison group for the CETA trainees in the quote above, these people not having the CETA experience may have looked hard for non-subsidized jobs and found better ones than the CETA people. The more complex and sensitive the proximate outcome, the more that technical problems emerge with each additional bit of information posing the accuracy issue anew. Even when resolved, the judgment remains as to whether the pieces add up to valid indicators of movement in the desired direction.

These distinctions may seem obvious. But in the field, how often does accuracy give a measure undue importance? How often do people rely on that which can be easily measured without thought of the measure's meaning? Proximate outcomes can take on a life of their own. Body counts in Vietnam is a most notorious example. Placements in the U.S. Employment Service were once defined as a job of three days or more. A disproportionate placement effort was directed to temporary jobs in order to register a good "placement count." The relative simplicity of these intermediate outcomes can invite a mindless reliance on the availability of hard numbers and in the process driving out reasonableness.

Implementation (Organizational) Assessments

Implementation assessment is the label given to research-oriented efforts to investigate inputs and outputs.[10] These studies, as the name implies, have concentrated upon the critical problem faced by

organizations (usually large-scale ones) in moving from a decision, to start a new program or modify an existing one, to having that innovation fully in place--i.e., operational. As we will try to make clear in what follows, this label has become too restrictive in that the field techniques being developed can be used in the assessment of organizational activities after they are fully operational. Hence, organizational assessment seems a better label, but we will continue to use implementation assessment primarily because of the historical background of the term.

Implementation assessments are of relatively recent origin with most of them having been undertaken in elementary and secondary school settings.[11] These studies resemble evaluations in that both examine what has happened ex post facto, that is, after a program or project is in the field. But the two measure different things. Evaluation efforts ask how much the activity benefited the participants. Implementation assessments focus on what the organization does. Assessments ask the extent to which a project adhered to its specifications and overcame political and administrative problems to become a viable activity. The key question is whether project inputs and organizational behavior have changed in the intended way.

The major emphasis in implementation assessments is on organizational behavior; that is, how people act in their organizational status or roles. Their behavior is shaped both by the internal resources and structure of the institution and by the external demands of the environment upon that institution. Of importance are four overlapping, but distinct, kinds of organizational behavior: 1) what organizational staff members do with non-human resources such

as programmatic elements and internal organizational arrangements; 2) how staff members behave with each other; 3) how they behave with staff members of other organizations with which their organization must interact in its external environment; and 4) what they do in treating those who are expected to benefit from their services.

Such behavior is dynamic. This is crucial. The focus is on people in action. For example, we may learn little from knowing that a person receives counseling or from looking at the arrows on a chart that depict how services are to be offered. Until we see a counselor provide his or her services or observe how the process of service delivery actually is carried out, we have little or no indication of what is really happening. Hence the central concern of implementation analysis is with what staff members do when they interact with each other, with members of other organizations, and with clients.

The study of such behavior often is difficult because individual behavior, even outside of the context of a large-scale organization, is complicated and is made even more complicated when organizational demands and constraints are added. So implementation assessments may include complex sampling designs, rigorous efforts to determine interviewer (rater) reliability where several observers are used, and sophisticated statistical techniques to examine the extent to which various factors contribute to implementation success.[12] However, even the most complicated studies generally employ three standard techniques: direct observation usually over an extended time period, detailed investigations of existing documents, and extensive questioning that often is open-ended.[13]

The most important aspect of these studies is that they can provide rich detail about an organization's history and procedures and the behavior of its staff. Careful observation and questioning can yield information on the extent to which there is confusion, lack of clarity, or outright contradictions in terms of desired organizational behavior; how administrative duties are actually carried out; what the staff is doing to deliver services; and what is happening in the decision making process, including the extent to which clients and other citizens have a real say.

In terms of the approval function, available techniques may yield strong evidence that a project is making no effort to do what is desired or is fouling up that effort. The claim is not that present technique can distinguish small differences but that clear losers can be spotted.

It is this softer, richer data which can expand the empirical basis for technical assistance, advocacy, and policy formulation that may offer the greatest potential for improving agency governance. Looking in detail at the implementation process should show where adjustments are needed or where organizations appear to be doing the right thing. Even if one may not be able to generalize from the findings in the strict statistical sense, ideas about what works may still be useful in offering advice about changes.[14]

There may be some opportunities for combining information on outputs and proximate outcomes. Do projects with superior proximate outcome performance engage in certain organizational activities that are <u>not</u> found badly done in poorer projects? Particularly if we have relatively rich detail on the program techniques and organizational processes being used by the superior projects, the

potential for good advice may be quite large.

Here a methodological note is needed. Determining that certain techniques or procedures (outputs) are associated with higher proximate outcomes does not necessarily demonstrate that a particular organizational practice will cause particular outcomes. Projects will not be looked at before and after but only after they have yielded certain outcomes without using random procedures. Under such circumstances, statistical theory tells us that inferences about cause and effect cannot be made from this data alone. For example, it may be that the organizational activity that proved successful can only be carried out by competent staffs so that incorporating such practices in a project with a poor staff will not necessarily help.

However, over time there may be real opportunities for expanding these findings. For example, if it is determined that an organizational approach has been employed successfully with conpetent staffs, then it might be tried with unproven staff or less able staff and changes in outcome assessed over time to determine the extent of usefulness with these staffs.[15] The changes may not bring improvements. However, even if particular techniques can be used only by relatively competent staffs, it may be that once a minimum competence level is reached, certain practices do bring better outcomes. Under such circumstances, there could be a strong case for extensive capacity building.

We must be careful not to oversell what can be done since there are major problems. First, studies of implementation, like evaluations, require measurable criteria if there is to be a judgment about success. Second, the precise measurement of complex organizational

behavior using observation and interview is difficult. Clearly the results are often subject to challenge. Moreover, if the study attempts to relate implementation process variables to outcomes, we can get into all the complexities that have made final outcome evaluations so difficult and controversial. Despite these caveats, we think useful decision making information can be gathered from observation and interviews indicating in detail the extent to which an organization is trying to do what is desired.

Monitoring is the closest thing in agency procedures to implementation assessment. Unfortunately, monitoring efforts in general have been none too good. As Waller and his colleagues at the Urban Institute have observed: "Government offices are full of 'monitoring reports' that have not been read by anyone except their authors. Personnel expected to use such monitoring reports frequently find them useless" (1976:11).[16] Monitoring efforts in the past have been far too much concerned with inputs in a static sense, relatively low-level administrative practices, and issues of financial accountability. That is, monitoring efforts have focused primarily on narrow compliance issues with little done to assess how an organization's staff behave in broader terms.

Better agency monitoring can be performed with available techniques. The main requirement is for people with sufficient in-depth knowledge of both program substance and organizational issues to make reasoned judgments about whether or not an activity is moving toward successful implementation.

AN AGENCY INFORMATION STRATEGY

We now need to tie together the present critique of information capabilities with the earlier discussion on agency management control and influence found in both this and the previous essay. Both discussions have indicated how limited is the ability of social agencies to exercise direct control because of political and bureaucratic factors. To use the Anthony and Dearden terminology (1976) presented earlier, the social agency is without a strong "effector." In particular, grants-in-aid that provide operating funds to another political jurisdiction but charge the federal agency with management responsibilities make the uneasy partnership more amenable to influence than control.

The difficulties of developing sound data discussed at length in the last several sections add another barrier to the exercise of strong, direct control. Again, in Anthony and Dearden's terms, the agency lacks strong "detectors." And nowhere is this more critical than in the case of final outcomes. Woefully weak are the available tools for asking if programs are working as measured by the yielding of long-term benefits to participants. The basic requirement of management control to assess final outcomes is sadly lacking. Greater capacity appears to be available in assessing distributional and proximate outcomes and organizational performance. But even here technical weaknesses combined with difficulties of using sanctions hardly makes a solid base for exercising control.

At the same time it is important to recognize that the lack of strong agency sanctions ("clout") makes useful information even more important in the control/influence game. After all, the absolute ruler needs little or no information to command and expect

compliance. So useful information may be one of the agency's only inducements to getting the kind of positive behavior it wants from local fund recipients. Information looms as a critical factor in sophisticated games involving bargaining (leveraging) and fixing.

An agency information strategy needs to be cast in terms of the comparative advantages and limits that derive from these technical and bureaucratic/political realities. The agency appears to have much more opportunity to influence grantees through advice and policy formulation than it does through direct control measures. Here the softer, richer data of implementation analysis and assessment can be crucial.

We have gone about as far as we can go, however. The agency information strategy is part of the larger agency implementation strategy discussed in the earlier essay. And in both cases, it is not appropriate to try to spell out the strategies from a distance. Both are critical internal organizational tasks. And in the specific case of the information strategy, what information should be sought depends not simply on technical capabilities but also upon resolving other of the issues raised about the implementation strategy.

At the same time I would hazard a prediction based in good part upon my personal experiences both inside the government as a policy analyst and outside as a researcher following analytic and implementation efforts in various programs and agencies. My prediction is that the emerging information strategy will be our best early indicator of the extent to which an agency has begun to adopt the implementation perspective. If we continue to see the same rhetoric about final outcomes and the same kind of unrealistic reliance on

management information systems of the past, this surely is good evidence of game playing or of basic misunderstanding. Information demands take on a concreteness not found in other areas, and so can tell us a great deal about the seriousness of the agency in pursuing the implementation perspective.

NOTES

1. If so, the techniques used would generally speaking be those employed in implementation assessment which is discussed shortly.

2. Meltsner provides a useful summary of some of the approaches to the analysis of political/bureaucratic feasibility (1972:859-866).

3. Since the two terms have the same meanings, I have substituted the term outcome (placed in brackets in the quotation) for Ouchi's term output in order to avoid confusion.

4. The distinctions made by various writers within evaluative research create confusion for our purposes. In his review of evaluative research, Freeman distinguishes among evaluations (outcomes), process evaluations (inputs and outputs) and comprehensive evaluations which look at both impacts and process (1977:18-51). In another review of evaluation research, Rossi and Wright generally label all outcome studies as evaluation or evaluation research and then distinguish among process evaluations and implementation (1977: 21-26). In what follows, we will never use the term process evaluation but refer to study inputs and outputs as implementation or organizational assessments and restrict the term evaluation only to outcomes distinguishing among distributional, proximate, and final outcomes when appropriate.

5. The previously cited article by Rossi and Wright (1977) is a very useful review of evaluative capability. The authors provide a sound, but still not highly technical, critique of available techniques and recent studies. Rossi and Wright seem somewhat more optimistic about likely payoffs from evaluative research than I am.

6. If there is random assignment, the "comparison" group technically is referred to as the "control" group because random assignment controls for exogenous factors. As a Social Science Research Council committee studying experimentation has observed: "Random assignment of study subjects...to...control groups is the essential feature of true experimentation because it provides the best available assurance that experimental subjects (as a group) are as much like control subjects in regard to ability, motivation, experience, and other relevant factors (including unmeasured ones) that differences observed in their performance following treatment can safely be attributed to the treatment [i.e., the training project] and not to other causes with a specific degree of precision" (Riecken and Boruch, 1974:8). The Social Science Research Council committee volume (Riecken and Boruch, 1974) is a useful discussion of a host of conceptual and practical problems that make the determination of final outcomes difficult.

7. The differing dropout rate is referred to as "differential attrition." The problem is that such losses may not be random so that final results can be biased without analysts knowing the size or even the

direction of the bias because the people disappeared. See Riecken and Boruch, 1974:186-187.

8. For a discussion of even broader problems of evaluative research that treats our inability to develop strong explanatory models that tie treatment to outcome, see Aaron, 1978.

9. Project ratings are discussed in Wholey et al., 1970:25-26, 101-103. It may be necessary to group projects together on some dimensions (e.g., unemployment rates) to permit fairer comparisons.

10. For a more detailed discussion of the notion of implementation assessment, see Williams, 1976:267-292, especially 282-286.

11. By far the most extensive of these studies is the Rand Corporation change agent study now reported in several volumes. This study is summarized in Berman and McLaughlin, 1978. Fullan and Pomfret who date the education studies from the early 1970's review a large number of them (1977:335-397). A study that deserves special mention because of the careful effort and the useful reporting is the study of educational change by Gross and others (1971). Also worth noting is O'Connell's investigation of an effort to change insurance company practices (1968). Even though direct applications from business to government are usually hazardous, the reader may find this volume useful for several reasons. First, it contains an extensive bibliography on earlier uses of the field techniques employed in the study. Second, there is a valuable discussion of specification efforts employed by the insurance company, an effort infrequently found in government activities. Finally, O'Connell is able to obtain some outcome measures and presents an interesting discussion of output and outcome relationships.

12. The Rand change agent study mentioned in the previous footnote exemplifies this type of sophisticated approach (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978).

13. See the earlier-cited studies by Gross and others (1971) and O'Connell (1968) for interesting applications of these techniques. In the latter, for example, O'Connell found a stopwatch extremely valuable because the changes envisioned involved people altering the amount of time they spent on tasks.

14. Even if a good study design can be developed to support generalization, time factors may rule it out. For example, if a single exemplary training project is found, will decision makers wait years for a testing out of the concept? For a discussion of these issues, see Wholey et al., 1976:283-285.

15. Here I have in mind efforts to get people to try new techniques as part of the ongoing advisory process rather than a carefully-designed experimental activity.

16. Very little has been done to study government monitoring efforts. The Urban Institute study (Waller et al., 1976) is a useful exception. It should be noted that the authors use the term monitoring broadly to include outcomes.

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APPENDIX

IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT DESIGN:

HB 371, JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM*

by

Richard F. Elmore

From early July to mid-October 1978, a group under the leadership of Professor Walter Williams at the Institute of Governmental Research undertook the design of an implementation assessment for Washington State's juvenile justice reform law, House Bill (HB) 371. The project was sponsored by the University's Center for the Assessment of Delinquent Behavior and Its Prevention. For a variety of reasons too complicated to discuss here, it proved impossible to complete the project. But a substantial amount of conceptual work and field research was conducted, generating a number of useful ideas about implementation assessment. The purpose of this note is to report on some of this work.

THE RATIONALE FOR IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT

Analyses of social programs have typically focused on outcomes at the expense of process. With the growth of policy analysis and evaluation in government, the central concern has been demonstrating the success or failure of social programs by comparing their performance with their goals. These outcome evaluations have two serious limitations: they purport to give a summary assessment of program effectiveness, but they seldom describe the process by which programs come to succeed or fail. In addition, information on program outcomes,

*Editorial note: see Attachment C for background information on HB 371.

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by itself, does not tell policy makers or administrators what needs to be done to improve program performance.

The purpose of implementation assessment is two-fold: 1) to describe the process by which general statements of intent (policies) are translated into specific administrative actions; and 2) to relate administrative actions to program outcomes. In other words, implementation assessment tracks the process of translating policy into practice and clarifies the relationship between administrative actions and program outcomes.

INITIAL DESIGN WORK

The group proposed to break the assessment design into four tasks: 1) Legislative history; 2) Start-up year activities; 3) Mapping the delivery system; and 4) Outcomes. The product of the work was to be a document that could serve as a basis for a sustained and detailed study of the implementation of HB 371; the group did not propose to conduct the assessment, only to design it. The definition of the four tasks and the logic connecting them is relatively straightforward. Any assessment of implementation must take its point of departure from an understanding of legislative intent. One would not expect to find a clear, unambiguous view of the intent of the law, but it is possible, through interviews and careful examination of documentary evidence, to construct a detailed statement of what legislative actors had in mind. Passage of legislation is typically followed by administrative activity designed to prepare for the program. In the case of HB 371, a full year transpired between the enactment of the legislation and the starting date of the program. A description of the activities during this year is important to understanding how legislative intent was interpreted by administrators and how unanticipated problems were

dealt with. The process of implementing the law presumably results in the construction of a service delivery system. A basic inventory of service providers and a description of their proposed relationship to one another under the new law is essential to understanding how legislative provisions are translated into administrative mechanisms. Finally, all actors in the process--legislators, administrators, and service deliverers--have in mind certain kinds of evidence that would constitute proof of success or failure. These perceptions can be brought together into statements of intended outcomes, or program effects.

The group felt strongly that an assessment design should be based on first-hand data from participants, rather than the group's preconceptions. So our strategy was to develop a series of interview protocols that could be used to gather information from key participants on each of the four major topics (legislative history, start-up activities, delivery system, and outcomes). A single protocol was developed for the first two topics and a number of interviews were conducted before the project was abandoned. (See attachments A and B: "371 Fieldwork--Tasks 1 and 2" and "Fieldwork Protocol #1: HB 371").*

The group's initial design work demonstrated some basic principles that might be of use to others. The first principle is that an assessment has to be based on a fairly thorough understanding of the legislation and the setting in which it is being implemented. There are no standard, off-the-shelf techniques that can be applied to any problem. We chose deliberately to base the design work on extensive

*Editorial note: some brief discussion by Professor Elmore of other efforts in the study project has been deleted.

field interviews because we felt that the design would be useless if it did not reflect a detailed understanding of legislative intent and program operations. Investing so much effort in fieldwork prior to producing a design might seem inefficient, since the assessment that follows the design will also require extensive fieldwork. We saw pre-design fieldwork as a way of increasing the sharpness of the eventual assessment.

The second principle follows closely from the first: assessments of implementation should be based, to the extent possible, on statements of intent, descriptions of process, and statements of outcomes that come directly from participants. The utility of implementation assessment depends on whether policymakers and administrators find it helpful in understanding immediate, practical problems. If assessments are based on abstract constructs developed by analysts, they are less likely to be useful. Our approach to design put the premium on participant's perceptions of important issues.

ELEMENTS OF AN ASSESSMENT DESIGN

Since the development of the design didn't proceed to its conclusion, we have no tangible example of what an implementation assessment might look like. From our initial design work, however, it is possible to sketch some basic elements.

HB 371 is an enormously complex piece of legislation. It removes a substantial number of juveniles from the jurisdiction of the court and provides voluntary access to social services offered by public and private providers. It sets up complex procedures for handling juvenile offenders, including the establishment of diversion units and new sentencing standards. And, perhaps most importantly, it

substantially redefines the roles of law enforcement officers, juvenile court officials, and social service providers in the handling of juvenile problems. The purpose of an implementation assessment would be to provide information on whether changes in procedures and role specified in the legislation have occurred in practice.

In purely methodological terms, the basic element of a design, once legislative intent and the structure of the delivery system were established, would be a sampling framework. This task would require an inventory of all the administrative units involved in implementing the law and some rationale for selecting examples of each for detailed interviewing and observation. A basic map of the delivery system helps in specifying which units should be included. But drawing a sample requires some preliminary understanding of expected sources of variation. In other words, the sample should cover a diverse enough collection of settings to allow for conclusions about variation in implementation. Some sources of variation are readily apparent: rural counties cannot be expected to respond in the same way as cities. Other sources of variation may be much less apparent and would have to be identified by actors close to the implementation process. The objective of the sampling framework would be a set of "cells" describing the important sources of variation that would have to be included in the study; the cells would be filled, either randomly or intentionally, with specific sites where interviewing and observation would be conducted.

The other essential element of a design would be a relatively detailed set of questions, organized by role, to be asked of implementors. In each setting in the sample, one would want to interview a cross-section of actors whose behavior is important to the implementation of the law: law enforcement officers, child welfare caseworkers,

private providers, juvenile court personnel, etc. Questions would be constructed both out of the basic prescriptions provided by the legislation and general issues of implementation (e.g., how much and what kind of training were provided?). The result would be a composite picture, for each of the sampled sites, of implementation from the individual's perspective. One could look either at variation site-to-site among people performing the same role or at variation across sites in relationships among actors.

The important general point is that the assessment design should provide a relatively systematic way of drawing conclusions about site-to-site variation and about the problems of specific actors in the implementation process.

BASIC ASSESSMENT ISSUES

Following on the methodological issues are some substantive issues that would have to be taken into account:

Compliance vs. Capacity. Our first instinct is to think of implementation strictly as a problem of compliance: is the behavior of implementors consistent with the intent of the legislation? This question is a useful one, but it doesn't exhaust the subject. Any service delivery program relies heavily on the use of discretion by implementors--law enforcement officers, caseworkers, prosecutors, and private providers all are faced with applying general principles to specific cases and their judgment is essential to the success or failure of the law. In addition, the delivery of services depends heavily on resources--training, staff time, competing responsibilities, etc. Successful implementation, then, is not just a matter of whether implementors are complying but also whether the organization of

the delivery system supports or undermines the efforts of implementors to do their job.

Structure vs. Process. Legislators and administrators tend to concentrate primarily on structure rather than the behavior within structure. HB 371 mandates important structural changes: a social service system for handling status offenders, a diversion system for first and minor offenders, for example. Are we to assume that if these structures are in place, the law is successfully implemented? Probably not. The behavior of individuals within the structure has a great deal to do with whether the law accomplishes its intended effects. Law enforcement officers who previously detained juveniles for status offenses when they might have been suspected of more serious offenses should be expected to behave differently under the new law. Case workers, who previously viewed themselves as child advocates, are now expected to behave as family counselors. Diversion units, many of which acted as community social service agencies, are expected to act as adjuncts to the court system. Successful implementation is not just establishment of a delivery system but change in the behavior of individuals within that system.

Reform vs. Incrementalism. How should one expect implementors to respond to a new legislative mandate--by taking their instructions from the law or by adjusting their previous actions to take account of the new requirements? We expect implementors to take reform on its own terms, without regard for the way they did their work prior to the reform. But there are strong reasons why this expectation may be unrealistic: the law's instructions may not be clear, legislative

intent may run counter to strongly-held professional values, and in the short term difficult organizational problems may need to be resolved before changes can be made. Successful implementation is not just following instructions but the adjustment of a prior system to new requirements.

These three statements are all versions of the same problem--the formal versus the informal aspects of implementation. On the one hand, we expect implementation to proceed in a rational, goal-directed manner with each person carrying out his or her responsibility in accord with the stated intent of the law. On the other hand, we expect serious problems to arise out of the complex organizational and individual adjustments to a new policy. An assessment should be sufficiently sensitive to the informal aspects of implementation not to view the central problem as simply one of compliance. Assessment should look, for each type of respondent, to problems in the use of discretion, in the availability of resources, in shifts of behavior, and in the process of adapting old to new. In other words, assessment addresses not only the question of whether legislative prescriptions are followed but also how individuals and organizations adjust to new policy.

ATTACHMENT A

371 Fieldwork--Tasks 1 and 2

Task 1. Legislative History.

The purpose of this task is to construct an analytic statement of legislative intent. The final product of this task should provide a chronological narrative of the development of the legislation. But in order to be useful in later analysis of the implementation of 371, it should also address the following issues:

--Conflicting expectations among parties to the legislative process on the purposes and expected effects of the law;

--Major policy issues not resolved in the legislative process (e.g., the division of labor between Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and private providers;

--Areas of substantial disagreement that were addressed in the legislation, but could unravel in the implementation process;

--Areas of substantial discretion delegated to administrators (e.g., administrative definition of 'crisis intervention'); and

--Outright conflict and inconsistency between legislative provisions that could later create implementation problems.

In other words, we would like to emerge from this phase with a document that records the legislative history of 371 and provides an inventory of actual and potential implementation problems stemming directly from the nature of legislation and the politics of the legislative process.

Interviews for this task should be conducted with representatives of the major constituencies involved in the passage of 371, including: DSHS headquarters personnel, legal services, juvenile court probation personnel, prosecuting attorneys, police chiefs and sheriffs, youth service organizations, community mental health centers, civil liberties groups, legislative staff people and key legislators. The interviews should provide direct evidence on the motive or interest of the interviewee in 371 (why did you get involved?), what form their influence took (mobilizing constituency support/opposition, drafting legislative language, lobbying, etc.), specific legislative provisions they can point to as evidence of their influence, their perception of legislative intent (what's the most important single effect of this legislation on the juvenile justice system?), and their perception of the expected effects of the legislation (what specific effects, on institutions and clients, should be examined for evidence of success or failure?).

In addition, there are a number of other issues that should be tracked when they are relevant to the interviewee:

--Did participants have in mind specific operating programs as models for the activities mandated by 371? If so, what were they and what sort of information was available?

--Generally, what sources of information and assistance did the legislature rely on in drafting the bill?

--Did the legislature ever directly consider DSHS's capacity to administer the new authority granted under 371?

Task 2. The Start-Up Year.

The purpose of this task is to describe activities undertaken by DSHS between 7/77 and 7/78 to prepare for the implementation of 371 and to describe the interaction between DSHS and the legislature during this period. Interviews for this task will overlap considerably with those for Task 1: DSHS headquarters personnel, legislative staff, constituencies (especially the youth services group). In these cases the interviews should cover both legislative history and start-up. The major chunk in which there probably will be no overlap will be in the DSHS regions, but here there will be a substantial overlap between interviewing for start-up and interviews for later tasks. This creates problems--for us and the interviewees--that need to be discussed. Basically, the interviews should trace headquarters development of administrative guidelines and policy statements, the regional planning efforts, and the by-play between the legislature, the departments, and the constituencies over interpretation of the legislation.

Some specific issues are:

--How did the conflict arise over the division of labor between DSHS and private providers?

--What specific evidence is there of region-to-region variation in the regional planning process? To what extent did the legislation and DSHS's initial planning anticipate this variation? Does it pose problems for implementation?

--What has been the impact of regional advisory groups on planning for 371? Are there any specific effects that regional people can point to as evidence of their influence?

--What has been the role of state-level offices outside of DSHS in planning for 371?

--Do the formal documents generated in the planning process give an accurate reflection of start-up problems? What problems have emerged that are not discussed in planning documents?

ATTACHMENT B

Fieldwork Protocol #1: HB 371

We have defined four tasks that need to be accomplished prior to the construction of an assessment design: 1) an analysis of legislative intent; 2) a description of legislative and administrative activities during the start-up year, July 1977 through July 1978; 3) an analysis of the delivery system, as it now exists and as it is planned; and 4) an inventory of outcomes. This protocol serves as a guide for fieldwork on the first two tasks. A later protocol will be constructed to guide fieldwork on the third task. And results of the first two tasks, plus discussions among ourselves, will serve as the basis for the fourth task.

The purpose of a protocol is to focus, guide, and structure questioning. It is not as specific as a questionnaire, but it should be specific enough to provide some degree of consistency in data collection and some degree of reliability among interviewers. The questions and issues outlined below describe the exact form in which questions will be asked of respondents. In some instances questions will have to be elaborated or specified for particular respondents. It is also clear that questions will arise in the course of interviews which are not anticipated here; the protocol should not prevent collection of data on these questions, but we should keep a running log of new questions as they emerge.

Task 1. Legislative History.

The purpose of this task is to construct an analytic statement of legislative intent. The final product of this task should be a chronological narrative of the development of the legislation. In order to be useful in later analyses of the implementation of HB 371, however, it must be more than a simple historical narrative. It must also tell us how the politics of the legislative process and the provisions of the legislation affect the implementation process. In other words, an analysis of legislative intent ought to address at least the following issues:

--Conflicting expectations about the purpose and expected effects of the law;

--Major policy issues not resolved in the legislative process (e.g., the division of labor between DSHS and private providers);

--Provisions in the legislation on which there was substantial disagreement which could re-emerge in the implementation process;

--Areas of substantial discretion delegated to administrators (e.g., administrative definition of "crisis intervention");

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In addition, there are a number of other issues that should be tracked when they are relevant to the interviewee:

--Did participants have in mind specific operating programs as models for the activities mandated by 371? If so, what were they and what sort of information was available?

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Some specific issues are:

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--What specific evidence is there of region-to-region variation in the regional planning process? To what extent did the legislation and DSHS's initial planning anticipate this variation? Does it pose problems for implementation?

--What has been the impact of regional advisory groups on planning for 371? Are there any specific effects that regional people can point to as evidence of their influence?

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Task 1. Legislative History.

The purpose of this task is to construct an analytic statement of legislative intent. The final product of this task should be a chronological narrative of the development of the legislation. In order to be useful in later analyses of the implementation of HB 371, however, it must be more than a simple historical narrative. It must also tell us how the politics of the legislative process and the provisions of the legislation affect the implementation process. In other words, an analysis of legislative intent ought to address at least the following issues:

--Conflicting expectations about the purpose and expected effects of the law;

--Major policy issues not resolved in the legislative process (e.g., the division of labor between DSHS and private providers);

--Provisions in the legislation on which there was substantial disagreement which could re-emerge in the implementation process;

--Areas of substantial discretion delegated to administrators (e.g., administrative definition of "crisis intervention");

--Outright conflict and inconsistency between legislative provisions; and

--Assumptions made about the capacity of administrative agencies to implement legislative provisions.

There are a number of ways to address these issues: asking respondents direct questions, interpreting legislative provisions in light of legislative history, piecing together documentary evidence. The point is that our discussion of legislative history should be anchored on implementation problems.

Interviews for this task should be conducted with the major actors involved in the passage of HB 371, including: DSHS headquarters staff, legislative staff, key legislators, legal services, juvenile court personnel, judges, prosecuting attorneys, law enforcement personnel, youth service organizations and other private providers, and civil liberties groups. The interviews should provide direct evidence in the following areas:

Coalition Politics.

--Which actors were most influential in shaping legislation? What form did influence take?--e.g., mobilizing constituency support/opposition, drafting legislative language, providing information, lobbying, etc. How do the major actors describe their interest in the legislation and their motive for influencing it? Can respondents point to specific provisions of the legislation as evidence of their influence?

--How was the "reform coalition" constructed? Who was active in mediating differences, building support, defusing opposition, etc.? How is the alliance between certainty-of-punishment forces and diversion-treatment forces likely to affect implementation?

Sources of Information.

--Did participants have in mind specific operating programs as models for activities mandated by HB 371? If so, what were they and what sort of information was available?

--Were there theoretical arguments (e.g., the Naon paper) or empirical studies that influenced decisions? How were they influential?

Legislative Intent/Expected Outcomes.

--What, in the respondent's words, would constitute adequate evidence that the legislation was having its intended effect on families and children? What would the respondent look at first to find out whether the legislation was "working" for its target group?

--What, in the respondent's words, would constitute adequate evidence that administrative agencies and service providers were acting consistently with legislative intent? What things would the respondent look at first to determine if the law was being administered properly?

--What weaknesses in the legislation have been identified since its passage? How have they affected implementation? And how have they constrained implementors? What specific proposed amendments have been developed to deal with these weaknesses?

Administrative Capacity.

--What interaction did the legislature have with sub-units of DSHS during the legislative process on the additional administrative load that HB 371 would impose? What evidence was asked for and offered on administrative capacity?

--Did the legislature assemble evidence on the capacity of private providers to respond to HB 371? What information was asked for and offered? From whom did it come?

--At any point in the legislative process was evidence requested or offered on questions of administrative feasibility, e.g., projected costs of administration, availability of staff, magnitude of training required, experience in other states with similar program components, etc.?

Task 2. The Start-Up Year.

The purpose of this task is to describe preparation for the implementation of the status offender and diversion provisions of HB 371 between 7/77 and 7/78. This includes both description of administrative activities during this period and documentation of interactions between DSHS, juvenile court personnel, the legislature, and program constituencies. Respondents for this task will overlap considerably with those for Task 1; where this is true, interviews will cover both legislative history and start-up. The following areas represent the central focus of interviews for the start-up year:

DSHS Headquarters Planning/Implementation.

--By what process were regulations and administrative definitions developed? Who was responsible for critical decisions translating legislative provisions into administrative guidelines and program specifications? What was the nature of interaction between DSHS and legislative staff on this issue?

--What internal reorganizations were undertaken as a result of HB 371? How were responsibilities assigned for planning and implementation? What shifts in personnel occurred as a result of HB 371? Were there other organizational shifts, changes of personnel, etc. within DSHS that were not connected with the implementation of HB 371 but which nonetheless has some influence on it?

--What sort of advice did DSHS seek from external sources in planning and organizing for HB 371? Who was consulted? What sort of information was requested and provided?

--Who were the major actors within the state government, but outside DSHS, in the planning/implementation activities, and what did they do to influence the process?

--What provisions were made by DSHS headquarters staff to develop information sources on the implementation and effects of HB 371?

The Regional Planning Process.

--How was planning at the regional level in DSHS initiated? Who was in charge? Who defined the nature of tasks to be accomplished? Who reviewed regional plans?

--Did any administrative issues emerge in the regional planning process that substantially changed DSHS's initial conception of how HB 371 would be administered?

--What specific evidence of region-to-region variation emerges from regional planning documents and interviews with regional personnel? What kind of regional variation was anticipated in the legislation and DSHS's initial planning? Does regional variation pose problems for implementation?

--What has been the effect of regional advisory groups on planning for HB 371?

Relations Between Public and Private Providers.

--How did the conflict arise over the division of labor between DSHS and private providers? Who were the critical actors? What were the stakes for DSHS and private non-profit groups?

--How did DSHS initially decide to allocate funds and responsibilities to private groups? Was the Request for Proposal (RFP) preceded by some needs assessment process? How were funding decisions made?

--How did differences in the nature and availability of private providers from one region to another affect planning and implementation?

Overall, the rationale for Task 2 is to assess the role of internal organizational factors--leadership, assignment of responsibility, financial and staff resources, etc.--combined with external political factors--constituency pressure, interaction with legislative staff, advisory process, etc.--to influence the way the legislation moved into the field.

ATTACHMENT C

Background Notes on HB 371

by

Walter Williams

On June 10, 1977, the Washington State Legislature passed a new juvenile code--House Bill 371. The legislation was signed into law by Governor Dixy Lee Ray on June 18, 1977, with an effective starting date of July 1, 1978. Much attention focused on this legislation because it was viewed as an important move toward some of the newer concepts of treating juveniles within and outside of the formal judiciary system.

HB 371 is an extremely complex piece of legislation with many facets. However, two major aspects stand out. First, the legislation attempted to remove dependent children or status offenders (e.g., runaway children labeled as incorrigibles, truants) from the purview of the juvenile justice system. That is, children who had not committed a crime were not to be passed through the formal judiciary process. Instead, the responsible state agency would be the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), the state's superagency with responsibilities across the health, corrections, income maintenance, and social service areas. Second, those juveniles who committed a crime were to be held accountable for their acts. "Punishment [was to be] commensurate with the age, crime, and criminal history of the juvenile offender."

The implementation assessment design discussed in this paper focused only on the changes in the system relating to dependent children/status offenders. The big change was in shifting a number of state responsibilities from the juvenile justice system to the Department of Social and Health Services which was charged with providing services

to juveniles either directly or through "contracting out" the variety of non-public agencies who provide counseling and crisis intervention services for juveniles. One of the most controversial issues during the planning for implementation and initial start-up of the legislation was how much service should be provided by DSHS and how much by other institutions with whom DSHS would contract.

On October 7, 1977, the Division of Community Services of the Department of Social and Health Services prepared on eleven-page "Overview of House Bill 371." What I will do in the remainder of this statement is to quote a few paragraphs from that document:

> HB 371 redefines the juvenile courts jurisdiction over dependent youth--that group of children who are under the courts jurisdiction because they have been abused, neglected, abandoned, or because they have committed a status offense (running away, incorrigibility, or truancy).
>
> Under H.S. 371, a dependent youth is newly defined to be limited to: 1) any child who has been abandoned, 2) who has no parent, guardian, or custodian, 3) who has been abused or neglected, or 4) who is in conflict with his or her parents, has run away from a placement decided by the court, is exhibiting behavior that evidences a likelihood of degenerating into serious delinquent behavior, and is in need of custodial treatment in a diagnostic and treatment facility.
>
> This new definition of a dependent child eliminates some very old provisions of the existing law which authorized juvenile court jurisdiction over young people for reasons that are vague, outdated, and even offensive. This revision, for example, strikes the provisions which permit the courts to assume jurisdiction over children whose home "by reason of the depravity of the parent...is an unfit place for such child" or over children "who are in danger of being brought up to lead an idle, dissolute, or immoral life."
>
> This new definition of dependent child narrows the juvenile courts responsibility for status offenders substantially. Only the fourth kind of dependent child can be considered a status offender. Juvenile court jurisdiction over truants is eliminated altogether....
>
> This part of the new code evidences a belief that status offenders should not be handled in criminal justice ways and that the help that is to be provided status offenders in Washington will be

> social service efforts to reunite a family and resolve family conflict in the least restrictive setting possible. After many years of juvenile court history with the juvenile court as the agency of first resort for youth in trouble, that responsibility is transferred by H.B. 371 to the Department of Social and Health Services.
>
> The responsibility for shelter and disposition recommendations in the past has been the primary responsibility of juvenile court counselor. DSHS personnel have been assisted in these tasks to varying degrees throughout the state. H.B. 371 shifts the responsibilities for these reports entirely to DSHS personnel.

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