The Negative Sociological Effect of Federally Funded Employment Programs on Their Target Recipients

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HONORS THESIS

The Negative Sociological Effect of Federally Funded Employment Programs on Their Target Recipients

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ABSTRACT

While many economists and political leaders have tried to deny the seriousness of poverty in the United States, the truth is that poverty is not an issue which can be ignored. The federal government has recognized the seriousness of poverty by implementing several types of programs. One specific means is federally funded employment programs. This thesis deals with federally funded employment programs by maintaining these programs have negative sociological effects on their target recipients.

Support for this contention is found through a review of literature from the 1940's to the present. The analysis is begun by looking at the connection between sociology and the federal government. This includes a look at the theoretical and methodological perspectives which sociology often adopts when studying such programs.

The next section of analysis involves an historical account regarding the development of employment programs in the United States over the past fifty-five years.

The final section addresses the negative sociological effect of the programs on their recipients. The analysis was conducted by evaluating and synthesizing current research and comparing the original intent of the programs.
This thesis for honors recognition has been approved for the Department of Sociology and Social Work.

Dr. William L. Smith  
Director  
3/28/88

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Reader  
3/28/88

Reader  
3/28/88
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are several people who have helped, tolerated, and supported my honors thesis and whom I cannot thank enough. Dr. William Smith and Ms. Mary Jo Murray have spent many hours working with me to insure that this thesis was what I wanted it to be. While I may have survived without them, I am thankful it was not necessary.

I would also like to mention my roommates and special friends who put up with the mess and my crazy nuances (a special thanks to L&L).

Finally, I have to recognize the librarians at Carroll College who were not only patient, but who also showed me that a small-town college library can produce necessary research.

Christina Marie Dorfhuber
The problem of poverty in the United States cannot be denied. If poverty were not a problem, why would the federal government spend many hours and dollars trying to solve the problem of poverty in America? One method of handling the problem of poverty has been the development of unemployment programs funded by the federal government. These programs were developed, and have continued to exist, based on a belief commonly held by sociologists that there is a need for people to receive an income which is consistent: a guaranteed amount of income per month (Danzinger 1986).

Today, in the late 1980's, the federal government provides a consistent income to impoverished people via transfer funds such as welfare checks, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and/or Food Stamps. While this income strategy may work for a while, the problems with transfer payments are numerous and have contributed to the many economic and social problems which currently exist (McConnell 1986). The government also attempts to provide jobs for the unemployed, low-skilled worker through federally funded employment and training programs.

The idea of training and/or job-creation programs has been around for some time. It is the purpose of this paper to analyze these past and present programs and to illustrate that these programs have had a negative sociological effect on their target recipients. Before this analysis begins, however, it is necessary to clarify some of the frequent terms which will be used throughout this paper.
When discussing the sociological effect of a program or programs, one's focus should be placed on society's connection with the subject studied. In this case, "society" is a specific group: namely, the targetable recipients. For the purpose of this paper, I will apply a critical sociological approach to the analysis of effects of programs. My approach will evaluate the research which has been conducted and will also seek to analyze the theory and methodology which was used to conduct the research. This approach differs from a traditional sociological approach, which focuses more on an applied theoretical approach to society with no expectations of change. By using this approach, a more comprehensive analysis will be presented.

The term "target recipient" was mentioned as the specific component of society and focus of this study. Obviously, a recipient is someone who receives benefits and/or assistance from a federally funded program. The important factor here is the adjective "target", which will more closely define the individuals who should be receiving benefits. The reason for this delineation is that many of the "recipients" of these programs are not those who were intended to receive the benefits and assistance. This point will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Most of the other pertinent concepts and terms frequently found throughout this paper will be contextually defined during the proceeding chapters. Chapter One will detail the connection between sociology and government work programs. There will be an historical account of the relationship between sociology and the federal government with regard to employment programs. The chapter will explain how sociologists came to be involved with government, and why they (the sociologists) are still an integral part of the evaluation process in government
employment programs. Also in this chapter will be a study of the methodology and theoretical perspectives commonly used by sociologists when researching federally funded employment programs.

In Chapter Two, the programs themselves will be detailed according to their historical development and the reason for their development. Furthermore, the differences in the programs and their evolution since the 1930's will be included.

The third chapter is critical in its analysis of job training and employment programs with relation to the unemployed. At this time, many of the researchers who have worked in depth with such programs will be cited according to their attitudes towards the effectiveness of such programs. The chapter also examines the probability that today's poor are not benefitting from the programs. This determination will be based on an analysis of past and current statistics of unemployment rates and program statistics. This discussion will naturally lead to Chapter Four's analysis of the future of such programs and possible suggestions of what may work for the future.

In Chapter Four, the effectiveness of past programs will be briefly reviewed. This information will be relevant for projecting the future direction of new programs or the reorganization of old programs.

**NATURE OF THIS STUDY**

This study is focused on evaluating detailed research and opinions found in available literature. The reader should find the synthesis of the material to be not only original, but pertinent to today's society. The study is pertinent because there has been an expressed need for a solution to the current problem of poverty. A solution could be
developed through the instigation of a new federally funded employment program.

Most of the literature which addresses the issue of poverty in the United States can be found either in text or periodicals. Almost every author or researcher acknowledges that poverty needs to be alleviated through effective policies which guarantee the impoverished a steady income. However, past policies have always been quite diverse. It is this diversity which will open itself to much comment during the course of the paper.
In the mid-1800's, August Comte recognized a need for a scholarly discipline to explain how society functioned. Since that time, sociology has evolved into a discipline which not only theorizes but also evaluates and suggests change. One example of the critical sociological approach which has evolved is the relationship between sociology and the federal government.

Before the 1930's, the discipline of sociology was concerned with the development of theoretical models and abstract concepts which would explain how society acted. Different theories were proposed to explain and, often, to change the world. For instance, Karl Marx was constantly trying to convince the proletariat that communism was the only answer to the plight of capitalism. For Marx, theory was propounded through action, and action created the ultimate end (Turner 1987). While the fervor of such theories has died down, there is still a similar attitude that theory and research can be used to change a given situation in society, hopefully for the better.

It is probably safe to say that not many applied social researchers quote Marx or refer to him when conducting their research; however, it is Marx's attitude towards theory and action which can be seen in today's research. A relevant aspect of sociology's history with regards to its relationship to the federal government can be seen through the idea of applied sociology. Applied sociology has the intent to design a practical outcome given the assumption that a specific group or society will directly benefit from the the study (Monette 1986:135). In this case, it means that the federal government requested the involvement of
sociology with federally funded programs in order to have a practical study which could evaluate and posit information necessary for changes or continuation of a given program. It is interesting that Marx was promoting research which Max Weber was to later bequeath to the discipline. Weber contended that sociology would some day be a convergence of professionalism, national policy-making, and future-making (McKee 1971:111). Weber's influence has led to a philosophical structuring of sociology which promotes federal involvement in social matters.

Historically, the events during the 1920's and 1930's were significant in defining the relationship between sociology and the federal government. It began when sociologists noted society's need for help in managing transitions in rural and urban settings. Both sociologists and the government were interested in understanding how urbanization, industrialization, and immigration affected society. It was this common desire for understanding which later set the stage for the link of government and sociology (Lantz 1984; 583).

The government began by funding programs which were designed to create jobs and alleviate financial stress on the impoverished. Sociology's role was to watch society and note the effect these programs had on the economy, political structure, individuals, family, community, etc. In order to study these effects, both the theoretical and methodological perspectives used to analyze the programs need to be understood.

THEORY, METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The prominent scholarly attitude when discussing theoretical frameworks used in studying employment programs is structural functionalism. This use of structural functionalism is based on the
indicative nature of the research. Structural functional theory can be identified throughout the studies based on the following rationale.

Structural functionalism has long been considered "the dominant sociological theory" (Ritzer 1983:71). Not all sociologists will attribute such grandeur to the theory, though. Turner, for instance, finds structural functionalism outdated and overused (Turner 1979:141). Turner's feelings obviously do not inhibit other sociologists from using structural functionalism, however. The structural functionalist approach to employment programs is specific to what is known as societal functionalism. The primary concern of societal functionalism is "with the large scale social structures and institutions of society, their interrelationships, and their constraining effects on actors" (Ritzer 1983:72).

None of the research on employment programs specifies that it uses a theoretical framework of structural functionalism. Furthermore, there is no indication of what form of functionalism is used, be it Parsonian, Mertonian, etc.¹ This distinction is unimportant, however, in discussing the overall theoretical framework used, because only the general picture is needed.

Some of the prime indicators of the research following this particular sociological theory are found in relation to the definition of structural functionalism/social functionalism. The research studies how the federal government (specifically through unemployment programs) relates to and affects individuals in society.

A method is a tool which is used in conducting research. Method is the manner in which research will be approached and executed. Methodology, however, is the framework which instills meaning to the method
used (Monette 1986). For example, there are quantitative methods that fall under a quantitative methodology which entails the entire spectrum of data gathering and statistical assimilation of data which is then used to project or confirm a stated hypothesis.

The form of research often used when studying federally funded employment programs is termed evaluation research. Evaluation research monitors programs to determine to what extent the programs achieve their goals and whether they do so in the least costly and most expedient fashion. Furthermore, this form of research determines if there are "unintended consequences that are desirable or undesirable" (Monette 1986:6). There are two prevalent methodologies used with evaluation research, which are 1) quantitative, and 2) qualitative studies. When research and evaluation of employment programs first began in the 1930's the most common form of research was qualitative; this focused more on theoretical than statistical analysis. However, in recent years, the desire of some to have sociology become more "science-oriented" has led to the use of quantitative methods.

In reviewing the existing literature on the subject, few studies were conducted from a purely qualitative stand. For instance, The Mean Season: The Attack on the Welfare State, is a collection of writings which are both quantitative and qualitative. The qualitative sections are literature reviews which study common rhetorical and historical frameworks which are often looked at when studying employment programs. However, the quantitative sections are considered the "meat" of the book, for they are based on original research supported with statistical analysis.
Qualitative studies have much to offer, for they focus on theory and methodology rather than proofs and algebraic equations. Unfortunately, as demonstrated by the extensive quantitative studies which have emerged, the recent trend in research has not recognized qualitative methods as particularly relevant or beneficial. The remainder of this section will address the studies which were reviewed with respect to quantitative studies. This analysis will contribute to the understanding of how conclusions were made on the sociological effect of the employment programs on target recipients.

One of the most prominent quantitative studies referred to in this paper is done by the Brookings Institute, entitled: Creating Jobs: Public Employment Programs and Wage Subsidies. This research comes from a conference held in April, 1978, by the Institute of Research on Poverty. It is important because of its reports on poverty and employment programs, which were written by researchers from all over the nation. The research which was collected statistically analyzed data about current and past programs.

George Johnson's study on "Structural Unemployment Consequences of Job Creation Policies," is an example of one of these quantitative studies. It focuses on selected issues associated with programs aimed at improving the labor market position of the disadvantaged (Palmer 1978: 123). His analysis of the effect of subsidies on skilled and unskilled employment is calculated by focusing on the elasticity of supply and the rate of wage adjustment. The numerical values given are then placed in a comparative graph to illustrate the effects of subsidies on the gross national product (the effect will be discussed in Chapter Three).
Another quantitative study done by John Kesselman, "Work Relief Programs in the Great Depression," concentrates more on conveying percentages and tables of the programs available in the 1930's. While most of his computations are purely algebraic with few statistical comparisons, his research is very effective in describing the work relief programs during the Great Depression (Palmer:154).

Although there are many examples of quantitative research, only one more need be mentioned in order to understand the nature of this research. In Danzinger and Weinberg's book Fighting Poverty: What Works and What Doesn't, Rebecca Blank and Alan Blinder include lagged dependent variables, R coefficient factors and a Durbin h-statistic (rather than a Durbin-Watson) in order to calculate the effects of unemployment on income shares and poverty rates. This demonstrates the extensiveness of statistical analysis in the discipline (Danziger 1987: 186). (The results of this study will be pertinent in subsequent discussion).

Although the results are very important for each of these studies they are not particularly relevant for this chapter. It is important that the delineation between qualitative and quantitative methodologies be understood as well as the methods which can be used to support and uphold these methodologies. This differentiation is essential; it must be realized that when measuring the sociological effect of these programs, the answers will not be derived from theoretical frameworks in sociology. Instead, the answer will come from numerical calculations and their relationship to projected variables.
In the 1600's England created what are now referred to as the Elizabethan Poor Laws to control unrest among the impoverished. The laws required the Church of England to provide employment and sustenance to prevent anarchy and riots, and also to create jobs that were of service to the society (Rouse 1986).

Today's employment programs were founded on the principle of the Elizabethan Poor Laws: to provide work for the poor so they might provide for themselves. There may not be the same concern about riots and anarchy today as then; however, it appears that the concern should still be valid, because employment is said to alleviate vagrancy and crime in groups of individuals who are without work and who are bored (Rouse 1986).

The major difference between England's laws in the 1600's and today's policies is that the burden of support is no longer on "The Church"; instead it is on the federal government. The first movement towards federal involvement with employment programs was during the Great Depression, when people began to plead for relief from their impoverished economic state. A response from the federal government was not immediate, so state government decided to intervene. The states began by creating work-relief programs to aid in alleviating some of the problems. The states soon realized, however, that they did not have the proper resources or expertise necessary to reach all of the people. This realization compelled the state governments to apply pressure to the federal government to intervene (Kesselman 1978; 155).
While many people say that the WPA (Work Progress Administration)\(^2\) was the first federally funded program created during the Roosevelt Administration, there were actually programs which superseded it. However, these programs were mismanaged and poorly planned and did not lead to a successful handling of the crisis. But the programs were significant because they established a precedent for the development of the Work Progress Administration. The WPA was targeted to be a massive direct job-creation program, employing more than one-third of unemployed workers (Bassi 1986; 134). WPA programs lasted until World War II, when job-creation efforts were no longer needed because the jobs created themselves.

The 1960's saw the next major unemployment program creation movement. At this time, the focus was significantly different from the first program. In the 1960's, job creation efforts were aimed at alleviating the financial hardships created by technological advances and employment bottlenecks occurring from these new advances. The program created was the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA). Its purpose was to provide "vocational and on-the-job training for displaced workers" (Bassi 1986:134). Other programs created during this time were the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Emergency Employment Act of 1971. All of these programs, however, were merely fragmented solutions to a very big problem. In order to remedy this fragmentation which had occurred, the Federal Government decided to develop a new program which would be unitary and cohesive (Segalman:321). This decision led to the creation of the Comprehensive Education and Training Act of 1973. CETA was the first program to consolidate all of the training programs which were present in the
1960's and early 1970's. This was accomplished by making "Titles" to address specific problems of unemployment. It was the intent of CETA "to transfer decision-making from the federal to the local level... to permit local authorities to assess their manpower needs and plan accordingly; and to enable the localities to design their own job and service programs" (Segalman:327).

Under CETA, there were many Titles which varied in focus. Segalman and Basu in their book Poverty in America detail the purpose of each of these Titles. A brief summary is offered below in Table 2.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title I: Provides grants to state and local governments for recruitment, testing, placement, and on-the-job training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title II: Establishes grants to state and local governments in areas that experience an unemployment rate of 6.5% or higher for longer than three months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title III: Nationally sponsored and supervised training and job placement programs for special at risk populations (also includes nationally operated research).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title IV: Job Corps - intensive training for ages 16-21.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title V: National Commission For Manpower Policy, established to identify labor needs and goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title VI: Grants for emergency public employment programs to augment the locally administered jobs under Title II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title VII: Directed towards youth employment efforts (Title VIII not mentioned.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title IX: A combination of Titles II and VI created in 1978.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CETA experienced a very positive response during 1978-1979, employing approximately 1.4. million people (Segalman:327). However, 1978-1979 were also years which marked an extensive reauthorization which consequently resulted in a program which focused solely on the structural aspect of unemployment. It was this focus which brought
about the transition from the CETA program to the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). The JTPA, as mentioned, focuses more on structural rather than cyclical unemployment problems. What this means is that a program would be developed to emphasize training for disadvantaged individuals, but not create jobs for them. The reasoning behind this can be found in the Reagan Administration's attitude that funds should not be available for any form of job creation even if the unemployment rate attains the double-digit levels (Danziger 1986: 136).

Of course this action gives rise to the question of the differentiation apparent in federal policy. Available literature defines two main reasons for this differentiation. First, the political affiliation of the presidential administration in office is a determining factor as to what kinds of policies would be made. Second, the type of unemployment which the society is experiencing at the time will influence policy makers. Table 2.2 shows that the major employment programs over the past 65 years were founded for different reasons and with different intentions. The table shows that the WPA was a program based solely on job creation, employing three million people to build roads, bridges, viaducts, and other infrastructure needs (Segalman:326). No real training was offered through the WPA because the purpose of the program was to provide immediate employment to relieve economic stress caused by the high rate of cyclical unemployment. Once the Great Depression came to an end, there was no longer any justification to "make jobs" which were considered to be make-work. However, there was still a need to provide meaningful employment to laborers without work. Hence, the Manpower Development and Training Act was created to be a training program and a job creation program. Unfortunately,
the Act failed to put the concepts of training and job creation together (Magnum 1967: 161).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. WPA</td>
<td>1935-1943</td>
<td>Work Progress Admin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. MDTA</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Manpower Development and Training Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. EOA</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Job Corps Oriented-Economic Opportunity Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. EEA</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Emergency Employment Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. CETA</td>
<td>1973-1979</td>
<td>Comprehensive Employment Training Act to transfer responsibility of labor evaluation needs from federal to local level. ($10.6 billion /year.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This of course created problems which continued to accrue as more Acts of similar planning and policy were enacted. The Federal Government was implementing a band-aid approach to a problem which needed preventive medicine. Such band-aid Acts continued until 1972 when CETA was created. CETA provided both training and work, and it was comprehensive in its approach. Actually, this program is the only program which can be recognized as both a job creation and job training program (Palmer 1978).

The final program to be listed in Table 2.2 is the JTPA. As noted the JTPA was created to address structural problems. Therefore federal funds were utilized for paying the salary of an individual once he had been hired and trained to work in the private sector.
There have been many job programs over the years largely because society is dynamic. A dynamic society demands dynamic social policies. While it is important to understand the development and structure of these policies, it is also important to understand the connection between policies and society. It is this need for understanding which leads us to Chapter Three.
CHAPTER THREE

The previously addressed employment programs have varying effects on society. It is the contention of this paper that the overall effects of these programs are negative. This contention is supported by a review of specific research in this area. The analysis will begin by recognizing the target recipients of the programs. Then, the trends of poverty in the United States and the programs which were created to alleviate the tension created by these trends will be analyzed. Careful evaluation based on research will then be directed towards the programs to determine their effects on the individual, including psychological, emotional, economic, family, and social effects. From this analysis, the effectiveness and viability of federally funded employment programs can be determined.

THE RECIPIENTS

Every program which has been created has had a target group in mind. Some programs were aimed at the impoverished, unskilled worker while other programs were directed to the disadvantaged worker who was skilled but unemployed. No matter what the goals of the program were or are, and no matter how many people were served by it, the program cannot be considered a success until it has demonstrated that there has been direct and specific benefits to the intended group more than any other. This is usually measured after the program has been discontinued or has been in effect for a period of time (usually five years). Also, poverty levels are statistically measured before and after enactment of the program.
The WPA program was directed towards providing immediate work relief to needy, unemployed persons. Most of the jobs required little skill and revolved around public service activities (Upjohn 1955: 116). This program served about 3 million people over eight years. All direct recipients of the program were the intended recipients, who were taken from the work relief rolls (Upjohn 1955:38).

The Manpower Development and Training Act, as well as the Emergency Employment Act and the Economic Opportunity Act, did not fare as well as the WPA in meeting the needs of its target recipients. All three Acts were intended to provide work, and in some instances training, to needy individuals. The difference between the more recent Acts and the WPA is that the WPA was an immediate work-relief program; the others created a make-work scenario which was not run with any focused direction. This fact is elaborated upon by Segalman when he states that:

training programs have generally been fragmented rather than unitary and cohesive...Generally no coordinative process was built into the fragmented programs (Segalman 1986: 321)

This policy essentially meant that those who were trained never became a "successfully placed person"; instead they became professionally trained trainees who moved from project to project, program to program (Segalman 1986:321). Furthermore, this program failed to meet the needs of its target group; the people who usually benefitted from these Acts were people who did not need training as much as they needed a job. Unfortunately, the connection between training and job placement was not given the attention it deserved, which left the unemployed in a situation worse than with when they started (Magnum 1968).
CETA is the most interesting program to evaluate because of the controversial attitudes regarding its success. According to Segalman:

CETA has become another form of revenue sharing, with all of the connotations that make revenue sharing both a blessing and a problem to the community and with few of the intended benefits for those most in need of created jobs...60-90 percent of CETA employees are simply stand-ins for normal municipal job-holders (Segalman 1986:328).

Furthermore, Segalman notes that the intended recipients such as those who are illiterate, untrained, and who possess few job readiness skills did not benefit from the CETA program. Therefore, the individuals who needed the most attention, the "chronic transgenerationally unemployed" have received the least. As Segalman says in Poverty in America, "CETA, like the U.S. Employment Service, best serves those who need its services least and least serves those in greatest need (Segalman 1986: 329).

George Gilder in his book Wealth and Poverty further elaborates on the uselessness of CETA in meeting the needs of the needy. He cynically remarks that of the 10 billion dollars spent annually on the program, most of the money went to unionized municipal workers and middle-class social servants. He also notes that the bulk of the jobs were not going to the poor unemployed youths and adults, but to the premeditated poor of the middle-class who wished to avoid work. According to Gilder, "...the uselessness of CETA seems obvious and inevitable" (Gilder 1981:193).

While Gary Burtless is not as critical as Gilder, he too notes that CETA has done little to profit the men and the youth of society. However, he does find it encouraging that the education and training programs have had a positive effect on women in society (Danziger
1987: 38). Unfortunately, this positive effect is short lived, for Gilder remarks:

A basic problem with workfare is that it focuses its job incentives, training programs and subsidies on women rather than on men because, in general, it is only the mothers who are on welfare... The problem of hard core poverty lies with violent and disruptive men and boys, not with unemployed women (Public Interest 1987:20).

What this says is that all of the unemployed, impoverished women in society do not need to be trained and do not need work, because their income does not contribute to alleviating poverty. While Gilder may agree with this remark, his statement connotes a sexist and condemning attitude which is hard to take seriously. He states that female domination amongst the poor is the problem, not the solution, and that "only fathers can support, really discipline teenage boys, and lift a community from poverty" (Public Interest 1987:20). The sad thing about George Gilder's comments is that many people accept his thesis as true without realizing that there is much subjective analysis written into his work. This is not to say that Gilder's works should not be given the credit they are due, but, just as with any other piece of research it should be critically analyzed.

Despite all of the negative remarks which the CETA program has received, many people still consider the program a success. Michael Harrington, a renowned researcher on issues of poverty and society, comments that CETA was given an almost impossible task of adequately preparing the "most disadvantaged workers" for the labor market, a market which did not have openings available for such workers, or even much more skilled workers. Despite this forbidding task, Harrington comments that, "It (CETA) was not a failure, and there are hard numbers to suggest that it was a success" (Harrington 1984: 22). The
hard numbers to which Harrington is referring are in the ballpark of 4,000,000 jobs at the cost of 10.6 billion dollars\(^3\) (Murray 1984:48). But, as optimistic as an individual may want to be towards CETA, Gilder is correct in saying that the people who received most of the jobs were not the intended recipients. It is for this reason that the program cannot be considered a success. It can, however, be considered a beneficial program to those who were able to participate.

In 1979, CETA was reauthorized. This reauthorization led to the eventual extinction of the program when the Reagan Administration came into office and created the JTPA in 1982. The interesting thing about JTPA, with regards to the recipients of the program, is its focus: "...to the most disadvantaged which, according to the evidence from the past, is the most effective targeting device for allocating scarce employment and and training dollars" (Danziger 1987: 149). The difficulty is found in evaluating the program, which is not only rather new, but also more private sector oriented than past programs. In fact, Laurie Bassi, in her article found in Fighting Poverty: What Works and What Doesn't, states that JTPA is too new to research properly. While this may be true, it has not stopped many individuals from commenting on the program.

One remark which could be made about the program is that it provides no jobs, just training and subsidies to businesses. Therefore, because there is no specific job made available, the competition factor will "crowd-out" the truly disadvantaged, unemployed worker. Logically, this should make sense. If there are only so many jobs available in the private sector, and both disadvantaged and skilled workers are vying for these jobs, then why should an employer hire
the disadvantaged worker? Granted, hiring that individual may offer some form of compensation or subsidy to the business, but it does not guarantee the business a productive, reliable laborer. Given this factor, the question then arises as to which programs (if any) are better: make-work or private sector oriented?

MAKE-WORK, THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND POVERTY

MAKE-WORK- The make-work jobs created by workfare programs such as WPA, CETA, MDTA, the Work Incentive Program (WIN), etc. are targeted specifically at the disadvantaged, unemployed worker. The reasoning behind policies such as these, with reference to the "make-work" scenario, is that there are not enough low-skilled jobs in the private sector to alleviate the unemployment/poverty problem (Gilbert 1986). This reasoning is not universally accepted by all, for there appears to be two distinct schools of thought when it comes to make-work programs.

One attitude is that make-work programs are necessary because they promote a productive and dependency reducing attitude among the participants. This means that those individuals who become involved in a workfare program and who receive a job through the program will become less dependent upon the government than they would be if they relied strictly on government transfer benefits (Morris 1987: 15). This concept is appealing to both conservatives and liberals: it allows the able-bodied to work for what they receive. All that is relevant is that it is a job, regardless of its nature (Morris 1987:15).
This philosophy also maintains that the individual in the program will experience a feeling of self-confidence and responsibility when asked to work for his paycheck. Therefore, "...from this perspective there is nothing necessarily undesirable about individuals being assigned to menial, dead-end jobs as a condition for receiving assistance" (Morris 1987:14). It would be admirable if it were true that people would be content performing government-assigned duties as long as they were receiving a paycheck? This appears too optimistic. People in the private sector who have found their own job and are earning their own paycheck are not universally satisfied; why should participants in government programs be? Of course, the argument goes beyond happiness and self-worth, as is seen in Arie Nadler's and Ofra Mayseless' report, "Recipient Self-Esteem and Reactions to Help."

This report, as well as many others, presents the other school of thought towards make-work programs. The research is excellent, for it uses models and statistics to discover what relationship exists between self-esteem and make-work.

The key factors in this research are: 1) the conceptualization of a model which portrays the threat of aid to self-esteem; and 2) the issue of consistency vs. vulnerability. The model which details the threat of aid to self-esteem as constructed by Fisher et al. can be found in Figure 3.1. This model breaks down into two parts which show the possibilities of recipient reactions to aid. As should be noted, the model is explicit in its balance of potentially positive and negative reactions to aid (Fisher 1983:75). It is important to note here that this model serves merely as a facilitator of interpretation for research which must be conducted.
The research which has been conducted concludes that recipients' reactions to make-work is more likely to create a decline than an increase in self-esteem. Data supports Fisher's claim, which concludes that recipients of aid would possess a lower self-esteem if given aid than not (Fisher 1983:185).

If make-work programs were discontinued, however, two options would remain: 1) A new, different program can be created to replace the old programs; or, 2) the federal government can discontinue work incentive programs all together and simply pay out transfer payments with no expectations placed on the recipient.
THE PRIVATE SECTOR - There is an old saying, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime." While many of the make-work programs included training programs, there were often discrepancies in the training effectiveness when it was to be used for a menial job which was only temporary. To solve this problem, the Federal Government created JTPA (National Commission Report 1978).

The uniqueness of this program has already been discussed, but it should be reiterated that no jobs were created specifically for the program, and only the disadvantaged unemployed were to be accepted. The program was initiated with the idea that it would solve all of the problems of structural unemployment, while providing individuals with an opportunity to work for themselves. While the initial attitude towards the program was positive, the subsequent problems were not.

To begin with, the program did not recognize that many available private-sector jobs were jobs which demanded comprehensive, complex training which could not be met by an employment program funded by the federal government (Danzinger 1987). This is so for two reasons. First, the federal government has neither the time nor money to train individuals for highly complex jobs. Secondly, the people who receive training in these programs are people who are disadvantaged for a reason. Maybe they are transgenerational impoverished, maybe they are functionally illiterate, maybe they do not have the formal education which is necessary for private sector jobs (The Public Interest 1987:23). Whatever the reason, the answer remains to be found concerning training individuals for jobs which are not there.
Furthermore, it has been noted that training programs which are sponsored by the federal government have in the past had little real impact on the private sector labor force. Statistics show that:

Total business use of employment and training programs for the twelve months ending in 1977 showed only 27% having experience with CETA, 71% with the employment service (ES) and 68% with the private employment service agencies (National Commission 1978).

While statistics are not yet available for the JTPA, it has been suggested that the use of programs is declining rather than increasing (The Public Interest 1987: 17).

Is the JTPA then a waste of government's energy and taxpayers' dollars? Not necessarily. Laurie Bassi contends that while it might still be too early to tell the real effectiveness of JTPA, it still remains that:

because the program does not allow for any stipends to be paid to the recipients and is simultaneously designed to serve only the disadvantaged, it is likely that only those on welfare will be able to "afford" to participate in the program...[and] there is indication that programs intensive with training...have, at least for some groups of the disadvantaged, more than paid for themselves from a society-wide point of view (Danzinger 1987: 149).

While this statement illustrates a slightly more positive attitude towards the program, problems still remain. The level of support for an individual in the program is limited; no direct stipends are available; and length of stay in the program is limited. Given the severe employment barriers that many of the participants face, the possibility of making a recurrent mistake is evident, the mistake of investing too little while hoping for too much (Danzinger 1987: 150).

A dilemma is now apparent given that make-work, training, and combination programs appear to be more of a detriment to the recipient than a benefit. But are the detriments greater than those found in a society with no work programs but only transfer payments? The Protestant Work Ethic as described by Max Weber contends that society is
much better off with people working and being productive, because society encourages a healthy, motivated attitude rather than one which is stagnant (Turner 1981). Unfortunately, there is evidence which disputes not only the essence of the Protestant Work Ethic, but also the existence of work-fare programs of any kind.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY - The connection between poverty and unemployment is certainly not a new one. Charles Murray recognizes this in his book *Losing Ground* when he discusses the effects of unemployment on individuals. He believes that the unemployment prevalent in today's society is not only a direct cause of poverty, but also a serious detriment to society (Murray 1984:69). But not all people would agree that unemployment is bad; in fact, some would contest that it is necessary for the social balance of society, a balance which is disturbed when the federal government intervenes. Hence the debate exists over the existence of unemployment and a rising unemployment rate.

ADVOCATES FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

In the 1930's, the federal government began providing jobs to people to reduce economic and emotional strain they were experiencing. At that time, job creation seemed to be the cure-all for the problem. However, the actions of the federal government then set a precedent for the future when a similar high unemployment situation evolved. According to Walter Williams, the federal government should have never intervened by providing welfare in any form. He argues that prior to the "Great Society" programs of the Lyndon B. Johnson era, poverty
was actually in steep decline (Society 1987). He contends that individuals such as Sar Levitan (a well-known expert in the field of unemployment programs) are only feeding the myth that the programs during the 1960s were responsible for major poverty reduction. Furthermore, Williams states that: "...there is significant evidence that the welfare state leads to economic stagnation, decline, and conflict not only in the United States but in other nations as well (Society 1987).

For many, it is difficult to accept this attitude of "hands-off" or laissez-faire social management. One reason may be that the government has been an inherent part of society for so long that it is difficult to imagine it any other way. There are, however, individuals who support unemployment and support government involvement as well. They claim that evidence indicates government transfer programs are more likely to reduce poverty than is workfare. This research is summarized in the following Table 3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>Predicted Impact</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dismantled Welfare State</td>
<td>Poverty up</td>
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<td>Dependency down</td>
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<td>Workfare</td>
<td>Poverty no change</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dependency down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education and Training</td>
<td>Poverty no change</td>
<td>down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dependency no change</td>
<td>down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generous Welfare State</td>
<td>Poverty down</td>
<td>down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dependency up</td>
<td></td>
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(Social Policy 1987:15)

The question then arises about the poverty/dependency tradeoff issue and which is better for society.
Some economists, sociologists, and other social science researchers promote unemployment as a healthy natural state, claiming that a 6% unemployment rate is to be expected (Social Research 1987:238). There are others who disagree with this, contending that unemployment creates problems in society.

ADVERSARIES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

David Gordon, a professor of Economics and a member of the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research finds the term "full-employment" rather humorous. In his article "Six-Percent Unemployment Ain't Natural: Demystifying the Idea of a Rising Natural Rate of Unemployment", he comments that the federal government will always be at full employment. All the government has to do is raise the natural rate of unemployment, and this is in fact what is being done (Social Research 1987: 238). Michael Harrington demonstrates this in his book The New American Poverty.

In the 1960's, the unemployment rate was set at around 3 percent. As time passed, this rate was allowed to slowly but steadily increase. By 1983, the Council of Economic Advisors had, in effect, raised the old full employment/unemployment rate to 7 percent. That made full employment easier to achieve and also left eight million jobless in the streets in "good times" (Harrington 1984:68).

Even more interesting is that the 6 or 7 percent "norm" is incorrect, for it calculates only structural unemployment, thereby disregarding the disadvantaged worker. Also of the 94 percent who are employed, it is assumed that these individuals are full-time,
above-minimum-wage workers. This is an incorrect assumption, for many of those counted are part-time workers who earn less than poverty line income \(^4\) (Block 1987:21).

Two distinct concerns are now apparent: 1) the unemployment rate is miscalculated with regards to the disadvantaged and disillusioned worker (which makes unemployment an even more significant issue), and 2) unemployment also has an adverse psychological effect on the individual. The question left remaining is: Which is quantitatively more detrimental, unemployment or work/training programs?

Ramsay Liem, in his article on "The Psychological Costs of Unemployment" states that while it is difficult to measure psychological effects of unemployment, evidence clearly indicates that there is an effect and it is negative (Social Research 1987:333). While the research conducted by Liem includes all classes of unemployed, it is very sensitive to the disadvantaged, unskilled worker. The reason for this sensitivity appears more from an awareness that such an individual has less to associate himself with in a positive manner; therefore, he focuses his worth on being able to earn an income and be responsible for himself (Palmer 1986:73-74).

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

It should be obvious by now that there is no overall consensus towards how federally funded unemployment programs affect their target recipients. The success of these programs therefore appears to remain relative to the individual and the circumstance. I found, however, that social policies made to "cure the disease" are often structured according to a particular political or economic ideology. For instance, George
Gilder clearly conveys an attitude which follows Reaganomics. This is supported by his statement that creating jobs (e.g. CETA) will only bring down the economy, while also adversely affecting the structure of society with regard to the family and to the individual (The Public Interest 1987).

It would be refreshing for a conservative politician or economist to recognize the value of a liberal welfare program and vice versa, for it would illustrate a sensitivity of the policy maker towards the needs of a society rather than his own philosophical standing.

With all of the literature, research, and policies which are directed towards this subject, it is unfortunate that one policy has not been able to resolve the problem. But it is rather unrealistic to think that unemployment and poverty problems can be solved by only one policy.

Given all of the theories and research that has been cited, what is the sociological effect of these programs on their target recipients? In order to evaluate this, the specific programs will first be summarized and then a more general overview will be given.

The WPA was a make-work program, and did provide menial, unskilled work. However, as negative and appalling such a program may appear for today's times, individuals during the 1930's gave little attention to what they were doing, but instead recognized their wages as a means to provide food and clothing (Upjohn 1955:122). The WPA may not have been a glorious program, but it provided the community with services, people with money for subsistence, and the government with an idea of making people work for their money rather than having it handed to them. For this reason, the sociological effect of the
program was one of positive development for the society and the individual.

The next program is actually the group of acts created in the late 1960's and early 1970's. These will be evaluated together because in many ways they operated in a similar fashion.

Some would like to speak highly of these programs, but there is little basis to do so. As Segalman noted, the MDTA, EDA, and EEA all had inherent problems which prohibited their proper development. Most noticeable was the overtraining of people for jobs which were not permanent. The result was a surplus of trained workers for jobs that did not exist (Segalman 1983:327).

CETA attempted to remedy this problem of mismatched workers, and in many ways was successful in doing so. Unfortunately, CETA still had the problem of targeting its program to the truly disadvantaged. What resulted was a program which was employing 400,000 people in make-work jobs who were overtrained and over-qualified. Even with the inception of Title IX, which was targeted to meet the needs of the disadvantaged, the result was less than desired.

The sociological effect of CETA on its target recipients was not necessarily negative. The program did benefit the recipients by providing them with an easy paycheck (a la George Gilder), even though the program's effect on society was economically debilitating in that it cost more in administrative and training expenses than in direct transfer payments.

As has been mentioned, the JTPA has not received the extensive research that other programs have despite its six-year existence. Therefore, no extensive data exists regarding the imputed lack of
private sector jobs for the disadvantaged -- even after they have been trained. In retrospect, one could almost forecast a similar destiny for the Manpower Development and Training Act, but such pessimism would appear almost as a premeditated epitaph.

Generally speaking, the programs have been evaluated based on comparisons made with each other and with unemployment. Sociologically, the programs have existed primarily as a tension release during tough times. It is unfortunate that the federal government takes a band-aid approach to a problem of such intensity, but so go the policy makers of this nation.

In retrospect it could be said that the programs have helped some people even if they were not always the intended beneficiaries. And despite some rather condemning statements made against workfare programs, the fact still remains that workfare at least helps people to be more self-sufficient and less dependent upon the federal government for their livelihood (Morrison 1987:14).
FUTURE OF FEDERALLY FUNDED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

CHAPTER FOUR

This final chapter discusses whether there is a future for federally funded employment programs given their negative sociological effect on the recipients. The current trend seems rather tentative in its enactment of a serious workfare program. There is one major factor in creating a new program which surpasses all the programs of the past. There must be the right political environment for such an act and not necessarily a dire need. Policy makers are politicians, and if it is popular for politicians during an election year to promote a job program, then they will.

There should be concern over the foundations and structure of such a program. There are no universal "laws" or "codes" used when constructing a policy. However, there does seem to be some consensus on what is needed for future federally funded employment programs. Many ideas have been postulated with regards to what new programs should contain, however none of them appear to be very conclusive. For example Daniel Weinberg comments on predictions for work and welfare within the next decade without ever really elaborating a specific program. His approach to the future is that of a question rather than of a prediction. He calls for more research to be conducted on the role of work experience within the welfare program in an attempt to meet the needs of the unemployed and impoverished rather than the needs of the policy makers (Weinberg 1987:351).

Although Weinberg's suggestion comes across as ambiguous because it does not define an exact type of research, his suggestion is still a good one, for it focuses on the need for additional evaluation. This
suggestion, along with the ideas of Charles Murray on social policy, would provide an excellent foundation for the future. Murray contends that:

...it is within our resources to do enormous good for some people quickly. We have available to us a program that would convert a large proportion of the younger generation of hard-core unemployed into steady workers making a living wage...It would measurably increase the upward socioeconomic mobility of poor families. These improvements would affect some millions of persons (Murray 1984: 227)

The resources of which Murray speaks are the resources which currently exist as transfer payments in the form of welfare, AFDC, and food stamps. Murray contends that Congress should abolish income-maintenance for the working-aged while promoting better education and training. Admittedly, his ideas are radical and in many ways feared, but as he says "the barrier to radical reform of social policy is not the pain it would cause the intended beneficiaries of the system, but the pain it would cause the donors" (Murray 1984:236).

Murray's ideas are a good starting point for looking at how social policy needs to take on some dynamic changes. The question still remains about what changes must specifically occur in employment programs supported by the federal government. Unlike Murray, however, researchers and proponents of federally funded employment programs are tentative in addressing the future for such programs.

According to John Palmer, "current policies in the United States heavily favor public employment programs" (Palmer 1978:42). The problem, though, is that these programs are often ineffective because the political economy has too many incompatible social goals for unemployment. Robert Taggert expands on this idea: "The pros and the
The key, then, is to properly evaluate each situation at the micro rather than macro level to insure a comprehensive application. Maybe then the issue can be resolved.

No study I reviewed proposed an outlook for future employment programs funded by the federal government. Suggestions (such as the Upjohn Institute's idea that work should be created in order to get people more involved with their own destiny rather than the federal government painting it for them) are often preempted by disclaimers (Upjohn 1955: 188). Why? Because there is too much fear in our society of change. Another contributing factor may be that people do not want to have their ideas enacted and then have them fail. Whatever the reasoning, these suggestions do not promote a strong heuristic incentive.
SUMMARY

This paper has enforced the idea that poverty and unemployment are an inherent part of the United States socio-economic system. John K. Galbraith states that the reason for poverty in society is due to an emphasis of the private sector over the public desires and needs (Galbraith 1984: 194).

As long as this social imbalance exists, public employment programs and subsidized private sector programs will continue to exist. Galbraith notes that this social imbalance can be solved by discontinuing the emphasis of work as an answer to the economic problems of our society. As he says, "With increasing affluence, we are thus more firmly committed to finding jobs for everyone" (Galbraith 1984:213). But, since this emphasis has been evident since the 1930's, the approach to future programs should be to make the most of what presently exists and to be open to new ideas. Past programs have not achieved the goals they set for themselves, so past practices must be set aside, and new policies must be experimented with.

Sociology has been involved with federally funded employment programs since their inception, and the trend has been to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the various programs, offering both criticism and praise. Today, sociology must take on a more active role by being more critical and introducing more applied analysis. Karl Marx wrote so that his ideas would be read and acted upon, a characteristic that sociologists should consider.
There are problems with today's programs. Some are said to be too expensive, others are accused of being demeaning by the nature of the work they have created, and still others are ineffective in targeting their training programs to the right sections of the private sector. These problems do not have to persist. Rather than continue to criticize the ineffectiveness of employment programs, we should understand that the programs are almost a natural part of society which leaves the solution to be in change, not extraction (George Gilder take note).

Reform may not occur quickly, nor will it be readily accepted, but when it occurs it will be as a result of a government which has taken off its rose-colored glasses and has realized that change is the only answer.

Change may not be immediate, but that should not stop society from meeting the needs of its people. As John K. Galbraith noted in The Affluent Society:

An affluent society, that is also both compassionate and rational, would, no doubt, secure to all who needed it the minimum income essential for decency and comfort. The corrupting effect on the human spirit of unearned revenue has unquestionably been exaggerated as, indeed, have the character-building values of hunger and privation. To secure to each family a minimum income as a normal function of the society, would help ensure that the misfortunes of parents, deserved or otherwise, were not visited on their children. It would help insure that poverty was not self-perpetuating (Galbraith 1984:238).
1. For more information on the types of structural functionalism theory which have been developed, see George Ritzer's text, *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, pages 71-99; and Turner and Beeghley's *The Emergency of Sociological Theory*, Chapter 25.

2. During the course of my research, I discovered a discrepancy in the definition of WPA. In some texts, the definition was given as the Work Projects Administration, while in others it was the Work Progress Administration. While it is not imperative to select between the two, I have chosen to use the Work Progress Administration.

3. Of course, further inquiry into this shows that the length of the jobs was often less than one year.

4. The current national poverty line for a four-person family is listed at about $10,400 in the February 13, 1988, issue of the Oregonian Newspaper from the Associated Press syndicate.
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TEXTS


PERIODICALS


The Public Interest, No. 89, Fall 1987.
