THE ROOTS OF WELFARE REFORM

"The social Forces Underlying the Wisconsin Learnfare Program

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ABSTRACT

Over the past six decades, public assistance for the poor, i.e., Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Food Stamps, has grown tremendously, particularly in the wake of the New Deal and Great Society Programs of the 1930s and 1960s respectively. These programs have long been relatively controversial, and over the past ten to twelve years, a variety of attempts have been made to reform this aspect of the welfare system, beginning with a partial federal retreat from the Great Society programs, and continuing through welfare reform initiatives throughout many states. The American experience with social welfare, like that of other policy areas, has raised many questions concerning the role and relative impact of scientific knowledge, analysis and politics in the development of public policy. This study explores this issue by examining the development of the Wisconsin Learnfare program, one of the better known attempts at reform on the state level. In particular, this study attempts to characterize the process by which policy is developed, and the role of the analyst. To understand the means by which the Learnfare option was chosen, the growth of important ideas is traced, the problem structuring phase of the program’s development is explored, and important actors in the process are identified. The larger objective is to contribute to a greater understanding of the means by which social science knowledge, analysts, and various political actors develop and choose among various policy alternatives.

Two sets of theories are used sequentially in the analysis of the policymaking behind Learnfare. The first series consists of theories of the overall policymaking process, and includes the rational comprehensive, incrementalist, and two models of "organized anarchy" including the "garbage can" and "policy windows" perspectives. The second series focuses more specifically on the role of policy analysis itself within the larger process, and includes models I abstracted from several recent writings on the subject. The task here is to characterize the nature of analysis and the work of the analyst. These models consist of the "anti-analytic" and "analyst subordination" theses, and the perspective of "policy analysis as art and craft". For the most part, both sets of models afforded helpful and distinct insights into the Learnfare policymaking process.

The research here suggests that increased poverty, Reagan’s "new federalism", the growing influence of the
social contract, or "new consensus" approach to social policy and the election of Tommy Thompson to the Governorship in 1986 created an ideal setting for welfare reform and Learnfare in particular. This was consistent with the "policy windows" model of policymaking. The development of Learnfare is best described as a mixture of comprehensive rationality and incrementalism. The early and late stages of program development more closely approximate the rational comprehensive model while the middle stages of the process were decidedly incremental.

Several opponents of Learnfare have argued that the Learnfare program was developed in an anti-analytic context in which policy analysis was not readily used in the planning and decisionmaking that went into the development of the program. Perhaps the most significant finding of this study is that contrary to such charges, analysis was used extensively in the development of the program, albeit, analysis drawing on a policy framework distinct from that to which many in the social welfare and political circles in Wisconsin were accustomed. Clearly, the anti-analytic thesis does not apply to Learnfare. As important as analysis was, it was ultimately subordinate to an ongoing, perhaps neo-conservative political context, and consequently, key analysts had to proceed within this framework. This is consistent with the analyst subordination thesis. The role of analysis within this framework ranged from more technical and data analytic tasks to that of creative argumentation in which key principles of Learnfare, and support for those principles, were forged by linking them to normative precedents guiding social life and public policy. The tasks performed by key analysts who in turn, were most important in shaping the collective role of analysis in the process, were supportive of the perspective of policy analysis as art and craft. However, this perspective is not very useful in characterizing the role of the majority of analysts involved, taken individually.
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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Learnfare Initiative

In the latter portions of the 1980s, a welfare reform program received a great deal of publicity around the state of Wisconsin. In newspapers, on television and on radio, people were talking about new demands that had recently been placed on welfare recipients, designed to reduce rates of long term welfare dependency. It seemed that almost every welfare expert, political leader, and newspaper editor took their stab at the issue. Even various media, experts and political leaders at the national level joined the foray, offering their wisdom along with a voice of support or disapproval.

But what kind of program was this to draw so much attention both nationally and statewide, and how was it able to draw such praise and loathing simultaneously? The program is called the Wisconsin Learnfare program, and as the name implies, it utilizes schooling as a focal point in the attack on poverty and welfare dependency.

Learnfare works as follows: As a condition for receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), teenagers from 13-18 years of age and teen parents up to age 19 who have not completed high school or a GED are required to attend school. The school attendance patterns of this
target group are monitored by school officials in cooperation with the county welfare office. At the six-month AFDC meeting, those students who have recorded 10 or more unexcused absences and who are thus deemed to be suffering from poor attendance are placed on monthly monitoring by the schools in cooperation with the welfare office. School officials forward reports of the teen's attendance record to the county welfare office through the state's computer system. Those recording two or more unexcused absences in any subsequent month are sanctioned, which means the amount which that teen contributes to the family's monthly AFDC payment is removed from the payment of subsequent months until acceptable attendance patterns are reestablished. At the time of sanction, the family is notified of the AFDC loss and is provided an opportunity to challenge the sanctioning decision for up to 45 days after the effective date of sanction. If the appeal is filed prior to the effective date of sanction, the AFDC grant is continued pending the outcome (Department of Health and Social Services Learnfare Information Papers).

In return for making such demands, the state agrees to provide funding for day care and transportation for teen mothers. Those having learning troubles in school are referred to alternative programs as available. The amount lost to the family through the AFDC sanction varies
considerably, but averages roughly one hundred dollars per month for one truant. However, absence with good cause could be established through several exemptions: the state is unable to provide day care and transportation for whatever reason; an AFDC mother with a baby under three months; being kicked out of school, and religious grounds. Moreover, a teen mother's school absence is excused when circumstances beyond her control intervene, some examples being illness, injury, or an emergency within her family or a transportation breakdown. Only dependents living with at least one natural or adoptive parent could be held to learnfare's requirements (DHSS; Pawasarat and Quinn, 1990; Corbett and associates, 1989; Corbett, 1990).

History of Learnfare

Learnfare had developed fairly rapidly from its inception in 1986, gathering strong momentum as it moved from idea to proposal to enacted legislation, and finally, to fully operational program. In all, fourteen months passed between the establishment of the concrete proposal and start-up. The Thompson Administration initially hoped to implement the program for the start of the 1987-88 school year but missed the deadline as the original waiver for Learnfare was not approved by the federal government until October of 1987. They did manage to get it implemented in March of 1988 by agreeing to limit it to thirteen-and-
fourteen-year-old dependents of AFDC households. In September of 1988, the full program went into effect, extending the coverage of Learnfare to all AFDC teens ages 13 through 19. The state bureaucracy moved quickly through the entire process, securing the cooperation of four hundred school districts and seventy two county administered welfare offices (DHSS; Corbett, 1989, 1990; Pawasarat and Quinn). Additional case management funding from the state and federal government along with modifications of case management and pre-sanction verification activities came during 1990.

The Controversial Program

While the Learnfare idea drew quite substantial controversy from its very inception, most of the public attention it drew came after implementation was underway. Thomas Corbett, Director of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin argues that in the haste to push the program through, impressionism and commonsensical notions took the place of informed planning and reasoned calculation. A relatively closed policy forum excluded many relevant advocacy groups. He maintains that an additional shortcoming was the failure of the federal government to require experimental evaluation as a precondition of granting the waivers. Consequently, he maintains, the data from which to calculate the impact of
the program are sketchy at very best. Furthermore, there are no opportunities to compare its effects through the use of a control population. Much of what might have been learned through the first year is lost as a result (Corbett, 1989, 1990; Pawasarat and Quinn).

Sylvia Jackson, Administrator, Division of Economic Support for the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) disagrees with such arguments on several fronts. First, she argues that many of the provisions in the Learnfare program are there because of input from advocacy groups. Secondly, she maintains that a rigorous experimental evaluation was required by the federal government. She also disagrees with the suggestion that support services are inadequate, pointing out that provisions are made for alternative education, daycare and transportation. Furthermore, in some counties, outreach and support services are available through other programs (Jackson, 1989).

**The Mass Media War**

One thing for sure is that the floodgates of controversy and confrontation were opened and the media became a common battleground.

In September of 1989, the state DHSS released revised figures, lowering the percent of those sanctioned who returned to school from 70 to 40 percent (Milwaukee Sentinel, 9/29/89; Education Week, 9/89). Carol Weidal, DHSS
research analyst placed the figure at 37.9 percent (Capitol Times, 9/30/89). A public hearing before the Assembly Committees on Urban Education and Children and Human Services in Milwaukee in early October brought additional controversy to the fore. At issue was the proposal to expand the program to six-to-twelve-year-olds, and the responses cut across some of the schisms surrounding the program. A university researcher voiced support for the idea for increased learning among students, but doubted the capacity of learnfare to significantly increase attendance rates.

State Representative G. Spencer Cogs of Milwaukee questioned the expansion of a program which may not be working, to which Diane Waller of the DHSS responded; "We do know the program is working and have been told by school officials that learnfare should include younger children". Sylvia Jackson, also of the DHSS, added that expansion of the program would achieve greater penetration and help prevent attendance problems at an early age. State Representative Susan B. Vergeront agreed, claiming early intervention would reduce the 40 percent dropout rate for the Milwaukee public schools. Thomas Corbett of the University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty countered that the program was brought in much too quickly, and the available data did not measure its impact (Milwaukee Sentinel, 10/7/89).
Over the next few months, the debate over the various learnfare issues continued through the media.

Item: A university study found high attendance rates among grade schoolers and argued that the monitoring costs involved in the expansion of the program down to six year olds would overshadow any gains (Education Week, 10/18/89).

Item: Sylvia Jackson acknowledged that the data base for evaluation remained inconclusive, but voiced her overall optimism (Christian Science Monitor, 1/03/90).

Item: Charles Murray, the well known conservative social policy critic paid a visit to Milwaukee during which he labeled the national workfare experiments as disastrous attempts to force people to work, and linked learnfare to it (Milwaukee Sentinel, 12/89).

Item: An assistant principal at a school for teen parents argued that learnfare was actually reducing enrollment. Students came to see school as the agent that would turn them in, rather than their helper. Many became angry and quit (Mil. Sentinel, 1/03/90).

Item: A Christian Science Monitor editorial voiced support for the notion of the social contract which was to be the basis of learnfare, but argued that by failing to provide adequate support services (counseling, workstudy, remedial work), the state was not holding up its end of the deal (1/03/90).
Item: Sylvia Jackson of the DHSS cited figures suggesting that learnfare case managers paid by the state returned 3,200 dropouts to alternative education programs.

Item: To some extent, the divisions over learnfare are down party lines. The Wisconsin Women's Council, a bipartisan group established by the state legislature to promote gender equality did not support the proposed expansion of the program because of a tied vote. They were unanimous however, in their support for increased family counseling and non-traditional education for truants (Milwaukee Sentinel, 3/06/90).

Item: Learnfare was among 75 nominees out of 1,552 entries to be selected for a national award in the 1990 Innovations in State and Local Government Awards Program, sponsored by the John F. Kennedy School of Government and the Ford Foundation (Milwaukee Journal, 4/17/90).

Item: To date, 3.4 million dollars have been saved in taxpayers money by learnfare, while program administration and support services such as day care and transportation cost 8.7 million, according to one report (Milwaukee Journal, 4/17/90).

Item: Tim Cullen, secretary of the Governor's Commission on Welfare Reform urged that limitations be placed on how long welfare benefits may be withheld from a family; that more money be provided for alternative forms of education
for unmotivated students, and that the program not be expanded down to six to twelve year olds (Milwaukee Journal, 4/28/90).


Item: The limited evidence available of program performance as of spring, 1991 was not encouraging. In Milwaukee, the drop out rate in 1987-88, the year before implementation was 10.2 percent. It rose to 14.7 percent over 1989-1990 (Washington Post Weekly Edition, 6/17-23/91).

In addition to the controversy the program generated, there were also a number of ambiguities that threw quick and easy interpretations to the wind:
- Schools might turn a blind eye when a poor person cuts class, knowing what a sanction will do to family income.
- Many of the lifted sanctions come not from returns to the classroom, but from successful appeals.
- Other programs designed to improve attendance were ushered in during the general learnfare period.

A variety of ethical dilemmas emerged:
- Is it fair that only teens of AFDC families be monitored and sanctioned? Is learnfare's selective monitoring system a new form of class war?

- Will the threat of sanctions give wayward teens a new weapon, thus producing a destabilizing force within the family?

- Is it unfair to punish an already troubled family for the transgressions of one member?

For better or for worse, learnfare certainly marks a important initiative in state policy towards the poor. With the federal waiver now extended through 1994, the program is here at least for the immediate future. In the meantime, the nation is watching Wisconsin closely to determine whether the program should be adopted by other states or at the federal level. As such, it would not be an overstatement to suggest that learnfare is potentially a sign of things to come for the nation's war on poverty.

The purpose of this research is to explore the process by which the Learnfare program was developed, this including the political and intellectual forces which launched the program. As such, my focus is on the initial policymaking process, and I will not attempt to evaluate the extent to which the Learnfare program is ultimately accomplishing its objectives of increasing school attendance and high school graduation among the AFDC population. The final judgement of
the success or failure of Learnfare, I leave to other researchers. Although initial reports overall have not been very favorable, one only has to look to a well established and reasonably successful program such as Head Start to find a very similar story. Original evaluations from the first several years of Head Start were unfavorable. For one thing, there was some disagreement over the proper dimensions of evaluation. And secondly, there were a variety of ways to restructure the implementation of the program that had substantial impact on effectiveness.

Although the focus of this dissertation is the process developing a social program, some of the concerns of evaluators working in retrospect do enter the discussion here at times when they deal with issues as to how planners should go about designing a program. After all, policy development and evaluation do ultimately form a larger circle of design and feedback, however inadequate or incomplete this flow of information may be at times.

Research Questions

The purpose of this dissertation is to use the Learnfare experience as a case study in the development of social policy. In particular, I am interested in tracing the origins of public policy, and determining where the ideas came from, and how they came to assume such an important role as opposed to other ones. As a social scientist, I have
been heavily involved in two distinct, but related areas. First, I have examined large amounts of research on various social problems. A focal point has been issues of poverty and social stratification. Secondly, I have also examined large amounts of research on public policy itself. And in this case, I have placed special emphasis on social welfare policy.

What particularly fascinates me is the patterns of dialogue (and at times, non-dialogue) between social science knowledge and public policy. For example, an examination of the literature on poverty, along with the American response to poverty through public policy, reveals that at various times, certain theories of poverty seem to be used far more heavily than others in guiding public policy. In fact, the increased acceptance of a particular theory of poverty among researchers does not necessarily mean that it will be used to guide antipoverty strategies. The research task for me has become that of better understanding the relationship between social science knowledge and public policy. Towards these ends, two basic research questions guide this dissertation: First, on a more general level, how can we best characterize the policymaking process? That is to ask; which theoretical models of the policymaking process are most and perhaps least useful in explaining the development of the Learnfare Program? Is the process best characterized
as political, intellectual, or perhaps one of technical fine tuning? Secondly, and somewhat more specifically, what is the role of policy analysts in the process? Again, which theoretical models are more and less useful?

I will study the development of the Wisconsin Learnfare Program in an attempt to provide part of the answer to these questions. Through an examination of the process by which the Learnfare idea emerged and was eventually developed into a welfare reform program, the overall structure of the policymaking process will be explored as well as the role of analysis within it. There are three classes of phenomena within policymaking circles that are of primary concern. First, the knowledge of, and general attitudes towards poverty and the poor among key players - their conceptualization of poverty and welfare; second, their initial policy preferences and reasons for this; and third, the factors contributing to the selection of the Learnfare option as we know it today.

This particular program was selected because it marks a bold initiative embodying the political and intellectual spirit of contemporary reform. Moreover, the Learnfare program was developed in a state with a long tradition in policy activism, and is being watched with great interest by other states and the federal government as a potential strategy against poverty.
The extent to which the Learnfare experience is generalizable remains to be seen. Welfare reform proposals in other states coupled with the larger intellectual trends embodying the 'new consensus' (for example, Mead, 1981; 1982; 1986) suggest links with broader national trends in social welfare practice and neo-conservative thinking. On the other hand, it may turn out that events or situations within Wisconsin were central, and it is thus more generalizable to localized social and political conditions.

The general ontology guiding this research is a firm belief that social scientific knowledge about, A) the nature of social problems and B) the various means by which the problems can be ameliorated or "solved", should be used as extensively as possible in developing public responses to these problems. In essence, I would see a greater effort to incorporate social scientific knowledge into the problem-solving process.

I have chosen the case at hand out of a long term concern with the issue of poverty. And here I must stake out a normative claim that will guide this study, namely that widespread involuntary poverty itself - whether due to lack of education, unemployment, underemployment or low wages - leaving individuals and entire families unable to meet basic needs or participate productively in the community is a social problem, and as such, demands a governmental
response. Therefore, it is an important task of this study to ask why particular perspectives on social welfare and poverty are chosen by policymakers over others in the formation of social policy. Too often, these issues have not been properly explored.

**Theoretical Perspective**

The general theoretical framework underlying this study is a synthesis of Durkheimian and Weberian perspectives, of which a basic cornerstone is the recognition of mutual causation between the consciousness, i.e. the norms, values and attitudes that guide people in their everyday lives, and the structure of societal institutions. Broadly speaking, beliefs and values impact institutional structure and vice-versa (Berger, Berger and Kellner, 1974, Abrams, 1982; Durkheim, 1984; Williams, 1960). As such, the approach taken here attempts to move away from the tendency of some sociological work to dichotomise between the individual and social structure. From Durkheim comes the emphasis on community that lies at the heart of this study; the norms, values and collective conscience which makes society as we know it possible. Yet within these general boundaries, society is full of conflict, particularly during periods of relatively rapid social change as our own. The Weberian perspective, in particular, his theory of bureaucratic domination, is used in highlighting the social conflict
arising from such turbulence. In an industrial capitalist democracy, such as the United States, conflict centers along class lines and between various political and interest groups. This is to say that conflicts stems from any combination class, status and organizational interests. Government itself is the forum in which much of the conflict is played out, and this ranges from legislative and judicial battles to conflict within and between governmental agencies at the federal, state and local levels.

An important aspect of this theoretical approach is the synthesis of functionalist and conflict theory, drawing to some extent on the framework used by Ramesh Mishra (1981, 1990) where the social change and social conflict surrounding the development of social policy is driven by a combination of social class interests and societal values which are not closely related to material conditions. Interest group divisions and shared values; conflict and consensus - each is seen as playing an important role at various times, occasionally merging in relations of persuasion, influence and ideational diffusion that are not easily categorized as exclusively one or the other.

It is essential that any sociological study of American public policy be firmly rooted in the distinct system of norms, values and social institutions found here. Stated in general terms, dominant American values include an
emphasis on hard work, individualism/personal autonomy, a strong and independent family structure, fairness and dignity (Williams, 1960; Ellwood, 1988). The ethic of individualism is very deeply rooted in American society, which in the case of poverty and social welfare is manifested in the relative dominance of perspectives on poverty that hold individuals largely responsible for determining their stations in life. Historically, the poor have often been seen as suffering from some form of personal deficiency, be it laziness, moral failure or low intelligence. At times, poverty has been (and continues to be) attributed to a lack of skills and training - perhaps some combination of individual and structural factors (Feagin, 1975; Patterson, 1986; Bobo, 1991). Several social factors account for the prevalence of individualistic explanations of poverty; the first two are of an historical nature.

First, the American frontier experience and westward expansion promoted a social structure favoring self-reliant, rugged individualism. Secondly, the Protestant ethic played a central role in the lives of the nation’s founders, and still exerts considerable force today (Feagan, 1975; Weber, 1958; Williams, 1960). Third, as Max Weber noted, capitalist society assumes a social dynamic of its own in the form of the hardworking, individualistic, entrepreneurial spirit.
which picked up where the religious aspect of the Protestant ethic left off. And fourth, the relatively greater power of the business and political elite in the political process is expressed in welfare policies tending to reinforce individualistic perceptions of poverty. While the first two highlight the importance of value systems in shaping society, the latter two, stemming from Weber’s theory of bureaucratic domination, point to the importance of social cleavage along class lines played out within institutional structures.

A final element contributing to the prevalence of individual explanations of poverty in the United States is the role of the racial and ethnic diversity of American society in shaping social structure. This diversity is manifested in a marked increase in social distance and conflict between groups at the expense of the cohesion that might serve as a basis for a stronger labor and social welfare coalition. Tracing the impact of each of these factors on American attitudes towards poverty would be very difficult and lies beyond the scope of this discussion. Suffice it to say that the predominant American attitudes towards the poor shape, and are shaped by, institutional and political structures which have historically produced social welfare policies placing greater emphasis on changing poor individuals themselves, than on changing structural factors.
such as unemployment, sub-employment and low wages that also contribute to poverty.

**Intellectual Synthesis**

As apparent from the intellectual sources of the hypotheses, this dissertation spans theoretical traditions based in social theory and policy studies. And such interlinkage is not accidental, for a central task of this study is to explore the phenomenon of 'problem structuring' - very important to both fields, but not adequately addressed by either. Theoretical synthesis is a necessary means by which the problem-structuring phase of policymaking can be recognized as an important social force shaping the dimensions of inequality and the life chances of the poor. The increased focus on public policy here, as elsewhere in social science, does carry a limitation in that the factors that are most important in shaping a social problem or condition, in this case socioeconomic position, are largely outside of the policymakers control or only amenable to long-term incremental change. From the opposite vantage point, however, knowledge of such limitations demand all the more attention to those factors which actually can be reached through public policy. This underscores the critical role of problem structuring in the societal response to poverty. As Robert Reich recently argued:
we have been struck by how much the initial definition of problems and choices influences the subsequent design and execution of public policies. The act of raising the salient public question—how to overcome welfare dependency—is often the key step, because it subsumes the value judgements that declare something to be a problem, focuses public attention on the issue, and frames the ensuing public debate" (1990, p.5).

Historically, social stratification and public policy studies have usually been separate, non-interacting spheres, separated by institutional boundaries and intellectual purpose. Consequently, they have built largely distinct forms of knowledge. Social stratification draws heavily from the core social sciences to build 'etiological' knowledge—that which is concerned with the origins and causes of problems, in this case poverty. By contrast, public policy studies and the 'helping professions' such as social work emphasize 'epidemiological' knowledge—which in this case focuses attention on the mechanisms controlling the incidence and trends of poverty. The argument I make here is that the two spheres are mutually enhancing; effective sociological analysis demands that neither be subordinated to the other. Effective public policy towards the poor is unlikely as long as policy is built on theories of poverty which are either erroneous, or unidimensional, and consequently ill-equipped to address the heart of the condition. But even the best of theories are of limited use when unaccompanied by an understanding of the complex
dynamics of public policy.

I build on a variety of works that have come out of the policy sciences primarily since the 1960s, which attempt to come to an understanding of the American effort to bring scientific knowledge to bear on public problems. To summarize these efforts, it was those experiences that were the most painful and humbling to experts involved in the Great Society social policy efforts that were most the most important in spawning the intellectual maturation within the policy sciences (deLeon, 1990). Far from killing off the "social engineers", the disappointments brought only a period of retrenchment and soul searching which in turn produced a vastly increased awareness and analytic capacity within the policy sciences. Two of those leading the way in trying to make sense of these experiences were Thomas Dye (1976), in a reflective account of the role of policy analysis in government, and Henry Aaron (1978) from the Brookings Institution in his discussion of the Great Society experience as seen through the interaction between important scholars and the policymakers. More recently Peter deLeon (1988), Hank Jenkins-Smith (1990) and Walter Williams (1990) whose writings have been incorporated into the theoretical models to be examined here, have attempted to further our understanding of the role of policy analysts in the development of public policy. And finally, James Allen Smith
(1991) outlines the remarkable growth of the policy sciences and their impact on the governmental process.

In light of the insight these studies provide, sociology must modify its intellectual traditions if it is to effectively sustain the enlightenment ideal of bringing scientific knowledge to bear on human problems. But this will require a discipline that is more responsive to forces shaping contemporary society. We live in a world increasingly deluged with various laws, regulations, distributional mechanisms and other modes of public policy, a crucial trend recognized early in the century by Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. In the late twentieth century, it is no longer desirable, and perhaps impossible, to sustain the wide intellectual gulf between etiological and epidemiological - core and applied - social science knowledge. Through this study, I argue that a concrete understanding of social stratification and social forces demands an appreciation of the important role of contemporary social policy in shaping the life's chances, social power and basic living conditions of the various social strata; in this case, the welfare poor. In this study I will attempt to forge linkages between these distinct ways of knowing by tracing the origins of ideas, key assumptions and justifications of public action, and the means by which the establishment of the analytical context shapes the
ensuing policy.

**Overview**

Part One of this study, i.e., Chapter Two, consists of an overview of the American experience with public assistance to the poor, focusing on the major developments and more enduring issues. This includes discussions of the growth of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and related programs, the dilemmas raised, and a variety of strategies discussed and/or adopted to increase the effectiveness of the system in fighting poverty. The discussion will provide the basis for the study of the development of Learnfare itself.

In Part Two, beginning with Chapter three, I examine the theoretical and methodological strategies guiding this research. In Chapter Three, two series of models of the public policy process are discussed. In the first series, I examine several classic models of the policy process. The first of these is the Rational Comprehensive model, developed several decades ago which portrays the process as a programmatically rational one in which planners begin with broad goals and set about to develop public policy that best allows them to be realized. Here we draw on the model provided more recently by Robert Mayer (1985). The second is Incrementalism, launched by Charles Lindblom in the late
1950s, characterizing the process as a series of marginal adjustments within a more specific policy framework over which there is substantial agreement (1988). The third approach examined is Organized Anarchy, in which policymaking occurs within an environment characterized by varying degrees of disorganization and randomness. Two models of Organized Anarchy are discussed. The first is the Garbage Can model (March, Cohen and Olsen, 1972) in which policy decisionmaking is determined by the random interaction of "problems", "participants", "solutions" and "opportunities for choice". The second, more orderly version of Organized Anarchy is the Policy Windows model from John Kingdon (1984) which focuses on the interaction of "problems", "politics" and "policies" as determining if and when certain policies are raised up onto the public agenda.

Within the policy sciences recently, there has been considerable effort by many scholars to better understand the role of the analyst(s) specifically in the development of public policy as compared to understanding the policymaking process as a whole. Consequently, the second series of models discussed in Chapter Four are not particularly well known, but attempt to address this issue. The first of these is the Anti-analytical Thesis: Top level decisionmaking uses an anti-analytical strategy, building policy with little or no input from policy experts because
such analysts are regarded as a threat to political prerogative; the result being a lack of policy analytic capacity within decisionmaking units by which to address substantive social problems. The term anti-analytical here, is not meant to imply an absence of calculation or forethought in policy development; in fact, advisors are most likely relied on extensively. The key here, is that it is political advice, rather than policy advice, thus aimed towards political objectives. Policy advice, while ultimately political in some sense of the word, is distinct in its primary orientation to a substantive social problem at hand. I adapted the Anti-analytic thesis from the writings of Walter Williams (1990) on the declining analytic capacity within the Executive Branch of the federal government.

The second model in this series is the Analyst Subordination Thesis, which I adapted from the work of Peter deLeon (1988) and Hank Jenkins-Smith (1990). Here, analysis is widely available to political decisionmakers, and can play an instrumental role in the development of public policy, but it always subject to the veto power of these political actors, and consequently must proceed within a framework they find suitable. That is to say, advice from competent policy experts is available, but requires the mutual consent of those within political circles. In making
actual policy decisions, governors and legislators act more on the basis of the political preference, political philosophy and any number of idiosyncratic forces than on the specific advice of analysts.

The final model to be utilized in the examination of the role of analysis is drawn from the writings of Deborah Stone (1988) and Giandomenico Majone, (1989) which characterize analysis as performing functions more closely resembling a legal argument than that of fact finding or data gathering. The central tasks of analysts is to work creatively with rhetorical skills and devices of persuasion to develop policy arguments that will move a decisionmaking body towards a particular policy choice. The task is to galvanize support for a given decision rather than prove a point. From this perspective, analysis and politics are inherently interwoven, for analytic work can only be effective by interacting heavily with a particular sociopolitical environment.

In Chapter Four, the methodological approach guiding this study is presented. The general approach I take is to seek an understanding of the social reality experienced by those I study, that is to reconstruct the norms, values, symbols and other subjective meanings that compose the social context in which these people operate (see Geertz, 1983). In this research, I attempt to understand the
policymaking process through the experiences of important actors in the process. This approach is distinguished from paradigms which impose an external relevance structure on subjects, whether this be the positivistic approach, using quantitative methods within the natural science tradition, or the critical praxis in which some aspect of social life is studied as a problem or crises to be addressed within the researcher's stated political framework. The specific research strategy I utilize consists primarily of interviews with important players in the development of the Wisconsin Learnfare Program. The style of interviewing used here is termed the "focused interview" in which the researcher selects certain people to be interviewed, not randomly, but on the basis of their particular relevance to the study, thus allowing certain research issues to be addressed. With this approach, the researcher attempts to answer particular research questions, but conducts the interview with enough flexibility to permit additional or unexpected information to be discussed and additional research questions entertained (Merton and Kendall, 1946). Chapter Four also includes a general outline of the means by which the theoretical models being used will be integrated into the analysis of data.

In Part Three, the actual development of the Learnfare program is provided through a descriptive narration,
consisting of an indepth account of the process which will serve as an invaluable data base. In Chapter Five, I examine the rise of the analytic framework in 1986 from which reform would eventually emerge, and trace the initial development of the Learnfare idea and its role in the successful gubernatorial campaign of Tommy Thompson. In Chapter Six, I track the development of the Learnfare as it was transformed from an idea to a concrete proposal, to an enacted piece of legislation to a fully operational program.

In Part Four, I analyze the development of Learnfare through the theoretical models discussed above, and identify the overall implications of the study for social scientific understanding of the policymaking process. In Chapter Seven, the various strengths and shortcomings of each of the theoretical models are identified, based on the prior chapters account of the Learnfare Programs development. In Chapter Eight, I summarize the research findings and offer a model of the relationship between analysis and politics based on the observations in this study. Following this, I take a step back, and place the Wisconsin social policy experience of the 1980s, highlighted by Learnfare, into a larger theoretical account of the role of the policy sciences in the structuring and maintenance of community in the wake of industrialization and the division of labor.
CHAPTER TWO: INCOME MAINTENANCE AND SELF RELIANCE

To understand an important development in social policy such as the Learnfare program, it is crucial to understand the larger trend in American social welfare policy which preceded it. This chapter explores the development of public assistance and the dilemmas it raised, and discusses the efforts undertaken by the federal, and more recently, state governments to reform the system in a fashion that encourages or requires work and self sufficiency efforts on the part of recipients.

American society places great emphasis on individualism and hard work, and it should come as no surprise that issues concerning the balance of public aid and work have played a defining role in the development and reform of American welfare. These issues have historically emerged during and immediately after major welfare initiatives, and more recently in the wake of slower rates of economic growth and recession which have hurt public revenues and increased the size of welfare rolls.

A brief comment concerning the general structure of the American welfare system is in order here. Compared to their western industrial counterparts, Americans have historically demonstrated reluctance when developing a large system of social welfare to meet the needs of vulnerable populations and address social problems. Whether the issue is poverty,
health care, unemployment and the protection of workers, child care or other, American social programs have generally been slow in their development and modest in their goals, when taken in a cross-national perspective. Welfare systems can be placed along a continuum. On one end, is the Institutional model, the ideal typical "welfare state", providing cradle-to-grave protection and support of many forms to all citizens of the nation. Here, the social welfare system serves a central main-line role in society assuring universal access to social programs. By virtue of citizenship, and by belonging to certain population categorizations, the individual is provided everything from a guaranteed income to universal access to health care to generous maternity leave benefits. Moreover, full employment is a top national priority, attained through such measures as countercyclical investment strategies, worker representation on boards of directors and public sector job creation as necessary. Some examples of nations whose welfare states approximate the institutional model are Sweden, Denmark and Austria. (Marshall, 1970; Gilbert and Specht, 1986; Esping-Anderson, 1990; Mishra, 1990).

At the opposite end of the continuum from the institutional model is the Residual model of welfare state, in which social programs are only used as a stop-gap measure of last resort. Social programs are not regarded as central
components of society, but rather, specific interventions which are modest in design and intent, whose task is to afford protection or support to very specific populations. The welfare state exists only as a safety net, affording basic protection only from the more urgent misfortunes which can strike individuals in industrial society. Programs are selective, rather than universal in scope, as would-be recipients are subject to means-tests and otherwise required to document their need to a given social welfare agency. Public assistance, unemployment compensation and health care programs are modest at best in their generosity. The welfare states of the United States, Australia and to a lesser extent, Great Britain provide examples of systems coming closer to the residual model (Marshall, 1970; Gilbert and Specht, 1986; Esping-Anderson, 1990; Mishra, 1990). Such themes were clearly present in the development of the American welfare state, particularly in earlier years. First, it was a belated, often reluctant welfare state. Secondly, it’s growth transcended the original visions of many, if not most of it’s creators. And third, despite such growth, strong and persistent themes remain in both the structure of policy and dominant intellectual backdrop.

Early Reformers

Although official records were sketchy by modern standards, there is evidence of very substantial levels of
poverty in eighteenth and nineteenth century America, in terms of numbers of poor and degree of deprivation. Those who wished to challenge the problem faced a formidable task in the wake of laissez-faire individualism (Patterson, 1986; Feagin, 1975).

The predominant attitudes of the time largely conformed to the individualist perspective of poverty, seeing the condition largely as a consequence of individual deficiency. One strain of this came in the form of 'social darwinism', a popular application of the prominent scientific theory. In this view, the poor represented physically and/or mentally deficient elements in the population that must be left to flounder for the sake of the majority, as decreed by natural law. Others saw the poor as morally deficient, lacking the work ethic. Popular writers portrayed the poor as "lazy, apathetic, childlike and sensual" (Patterson, 1986, p.21). An economics professor heading the census bureau in 1897 claimed pauperism to be voluntary most of the time - a character trait.

The late nineteenth century pioneer of social work, Robert Hunter was surely a lonely voice when he claimed the biggest problem facing the poor was insecurity from unstable jobs and low wages. Early social workers concentrated on casework methods, focusing on the problems of individual families, which unintentionally diverted attention from any
important structural factors (Patterson, 1986). Even the anti-poverty strategies of the progressive reformists of this early era were guided by the 'Gospel of Prevention', an ethic which made limited reference to environmental factors while pursuing strategies that were largely individualistic. And there were also the settlement workers who focused on attacking urban environmental blight and instilling middle class aspirations in the poor. They generally did not propose social welfare policies of a more fundamental nature. Among charity workers, the elite school of thought wanted more expert casework rather than social reform. But, the recognition that the urban social environment faced by the poor might enhance or prolong poverty marked some movement away from the purely individualist, victorian approach (Patterson, 1986).

The development of public aid was slow and under heavy public suspicion at that. By the 1920s, the move to provide public relief to mothers with dependent children had reached most states, Patterson notes. Termed 'hardship relief', program recipients had to pass a stringent means test that excluded all but poorest widows. Legislators were quick to add provisions to the statute to keep assistance from women deemed mentally, physically or morally unfit. The very notion of welfare remained disagreeable to most Americans, for it seemed to deny the rugged individualism, volunteerism
and political decentralization that was at the heart of their cultural fabric. People had heard of the European welfare states, but it struck a sour chord with many.

The New Deal

The crash of the stock market and the great depression of the 1930s sent shock waves through the United States that forced change. With massive unemployment and falling wages, the public demanded action, but very few, including president Roosevelt, had a clear idea of what form it should take. The market crashed induced precipitous drops in farm prices, and agriculture led a long line of industries into the depression.

But the legislation that is most famous and most consequential in the long run was the Social Security Act of 1935 which laid the foundations of the contemporary welfare system. T.H. Marshall (1970) notes that Roosevelt may have deliberately blocked earlier social security legislation because he wanted a more unified program which would combine old age pensions with a general social security program. As passed, the legislation consisted of:

A) General relief, funded by states and localities for unemployables - Mothers with children.

B) Work relief, federally funded for employables - able bodied adult males.

C) Categorical Assistance - for the needy blind, aged and
dependent children. This included the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program which became Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

D) Social Insurance - pensions to retirees and temporary compensation for the jobless.

The planners of the New Deal programs - Roosevelt's "brain trust" who launched Aid to Dependent Children (ADC, and later retitled AFDC) drew on several themes; first, a strong public sympathy for the plight of children suffering in poor families through no fault of their own. And secondly, the economic devastation of many families in the wake of the Great Depression. Publicly at least, Roosevelt's planners presented ADC as a short-term measure to help the impoverished back to their feet. And the planners expressed substantial confidence that an economic upswing would pull many out while the rest would be absorbed into Survivor's Insurance under Social Security. While ADC marked a major initiative, a persistent disparity remained between need levels and actual transfers. An important reason for this was the moral ambiguity surrounding programs for the American poor, combined with a fair amount of genuine uncertainty regarding the causes of poverty. These doubts and ambiguities effectively kept the issue of poverty off the agenda for lengthy periods of time in subsequent decades. Not surprisingly, several decades passed before the
poverty issue reemerged on the national agenda again. (Conkin, 1975; Paterson, 1986).

It would be a mistake to think that such legislation settled easily with people. Many conservatives, particularly those most partial to the dominant views of business circles had terrible visions of impending socialism. Certainly Roosevelt’s personal charisma and reassuring style soothed many a frayed nerve. But even he and his close advisor Harry Hopkins were not without some misgivings; they worried that a large outpouring of public relief could destroy the human spirit. For all the ripples created by new public assistance programs, the truth is they were greatly underfunded, reaching less than half of those in need. For example, unemployment insurance, a hallmark of the welfare state, reached only 20 percent of workers in 1940, and the levels of poverty remained substantial. Moreover, the work relief programs had all been terminated by the early 1940s (Patterson, 1986; Conkin, 1975).

As it turned out, Roosevelt’s planners were wrong to some degree in their optimistic predictions that public assistance would be a transitional system of support which would be rendered unnecessary by economic rebound. Increased rates of divorce, out of wedlock birth, and the persistence of substantial pockets of poverty in urban, small town and rural areas brought continued growth to the ADC program. The
growth increased during the 1960s, growing by an average of 200,000 a year from 1963–66 and accelerating to 600,000 a year between 1966 and 1967 (Paterson, 1986).

Despite the rapid growth of the American welfare state through the New Deal and Great Society legislation, more fundamental social values and attitudes were slow in changing. The compassionate and egalitarian aspects of American society may recede in the company of values of hard work, self-reliance, and the autonomous nuclear family. To understand this, it is essential to realize that while Americans value fairness and equity on many fronts, many have an enduring concern that acts of social redistribution to the poor may encourage or reward laziness or improvidence on the part of the recipient (Ellwood, 1988).

Not surprisingly, the individualistic perspective of poverty continued to play an important role historically in structuring public assistance, and has been reflected on a variety of fronts. One of these was the negative light in which the poor were portrayed in popular magazines. Another was the expectation by the public that a good administrator was one who concentrated on keeping welfare chiselers off the rolls. A related concern emerging periodically among policymakers at all levels of government was that welfare itself spawned dependency. Even if the poor were not individually deficient in any way, the very act of receiving
assistance would destroy initiative, an argument strongly resonating among policymakers (see Conkin, 1975 and Patterson, 1986). There was also a tendency among many social workers to apply a psychiatric model to the poor slums, portraying the problems as a series of individual ailments (Paterson, 1986; Waxman, 1983; Leman, 1991).

A notable development came in the late 1950s when Senator John Sparkman’s congressional subcommittee made steps to bring poverty onto the agenda after a considerable period of neglect. Among the findings of the committee were: that 22 percent of families were poor in 1955; much available employment was low wage; income and resources were highly concentrated nationally, and that millions of families were just above the poverty line, perhaps moving in and out of poverty from year to year (Paterson, 1986).

The early 1960s and the Kennedy Administration brought new stirrings to the issue of poverty. Michael Harrington’s The Other America (1962) is regarded with awe by some as the book that initiated the activity within the Kennedy Administration that was to eventually produce the War on Poverty under Lyndon B. Johnson in the mid-1960s. The Other America provided an account of widespread and persistent poverty just at when America seemed to be heading into the height of its prosperity. It consisted of a poignant account of an entire segment of the population who remained
fundamentally removed from the mainstream, trapped in material and social deprivation throughout urban ghettos, Appalachia and elsewhere. According to Harrington, 20 to 25 percent of the population, or 40 to 50 million people were poor. These figures were substantially higher than the 32 million estimate provided by University of Wisconsin economist Robert Lampman. An AFL-CIO report placed the figure at 41 million. Whatever the disparities in estimates, Harrington, Lampman and economist Walter Heller, all of whom were brought into the Kennedy Administration in advisor roles came to agree that economic growth by itself would not adequately address the poverty problem (Patterson, 1986; Leman, 1991).

There were several notable developments during the Kennedy era relating to public assistance. First, in 1961, the pilot project leading to the Food Stamps program we know today was initiated by executive order. Initially serving only 400,000 people, it was expanded to a national scope with the passage of the Food Stamp Act of 1964. Secondly, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was expanded to two-parent families under federal matching grants, where the head of household was unemployed or worked less than 100 hours per month and whose unemployment benefits had expired; thus AFDC-UP. The program was optional to states and approximately half chose to abstain (Patterson, 1986;
Gilbert and Specht, 1986).

Third, the Kennedy Administration also increased funding for the training of social workers by authorizing federal funding of 75 percent of funding for preventive and/or rehabilitative social services. Essentially, this consisted of a sharp expansion in casework services for the poor, which Congress passed as the Public Welfare Amendments of 1962 (Patterson, 1986; Gilbert and Specht, 1986). Also in 1962, Congress enacted the Manpower Development and Training Act, designed to train the technologically displaced. It was later expanded and redirected towards the hard-core unemployed and presented as a mechanism by which the poor could pull themselves out of poverty (Patterson, 1986). A frequent theme in the discussions of policymakers was the concern that AFDC would promote dependence; that rehabilitation (casework) and job training was what poor people needed most. Gilbert and Specht maintain that the casework emphasis was to a large extent a continuation and professionalization of the individualist perspective of poverty: Implicit here is the theory that poverty is mainly a function of individual deficiencies that can be transformed and alleviated through the casework process" (1986, p.59).

Beyond these changes, income maintenance remained relatively intact for most of the decade. In the mid-1960s
President Johnson made it explicit that the War on Poverty emphasize the creation of opportunity rather than cash transfers to the poor, and consequently, most of the programs initiated, such as job training, were well outside the sphere of AFDC and Food Stamps. However, the rapidly rising welfare caseloads throughout the second half of the 1960s and early 1970s coupled with the disappointing performances of many Great Society programs that were supposed to address poverty soon placed welfare reform high on the domestic agenda (Moynahan, 1969; Levitan and Taggart, 1976, Aaron, 1978; Patterson, 1986).

The Carrot and the Stick

The late 1960s and early 1970s involved a variety of efforts to consolidate or modify the major programmatic initiatives of the Great Society. The stigmatization associated with public assistance declined somewhat during this period as welfare rights organizations and the egalitarian spirit of the times promoted 'the right to welfare' theme, that had appeared much earlier and with greater strength in Great Britain (Marshall, 1970; Patterson, 1986). Even here, more enduring social attitudes and values prevailed as public assistance retained the dubious reputation as the central programs for the poor (as opposed to the blind, the disabled and the elderly), whose character and deservedness always seemed to be in doubt.
among large portions of the public. The very notion of able-bodied recipients on welfare prompted growing concern among some policymakers and some of the public that steps be taken to encourage, induce or require recipients to enroll in job training or demonstrate an active search for work. From the first wave of such concern came the 1967 Social Security amendments establishing the Work Incentive Program - or WIP. Such an acronym, however, seemed to send the wrong message, so the program was subsequently retitled the Work INcentive Program - or WIN (Gilbert and Specht, 1986). And here is found what was to be a cornerstone of state level welfare reform in the 1980s: the Carrot and the Stick. The Carrot consisted of the provision of the traditional AFDC grant and Food Stamps for those with a demonstrated need. But the idea here was to also encourage the able bodied to enter the labor market and see to it that they take steps leading in that direction. As one inducement, the 30-plus-one-third rule was established, allowing the first 30 dollars of each month’s earnings plus one-third of the remainder to be discounted in calculating the public assistance eligibility of participants. But more firm measures were also introduced as the Stick, despite resistance from many liberals and welfare rights groups. These consisted of rules threatening recipients of benefit termination for those not accepting work or training without "good" reason. Gilbert and Specht
(1986) maintain that the work emphasis reflected a common assumption that jobs were out there for the willing and able, that the problems lay in individual shortcomings such as the lack of skills and/or poor work ethic.

It was an interesting idea, but neither the carrot nor the stick was very effective in altering the work behavior, according to evaluations. From the start, the program was plagued by the inability of agencies to place substantial percentages of recipients into employment. Those who were placed generally were 'cream ed' from the ranks of applicants (Joe and Rogers, 1985; Gilbert and Specht, 1986, Gilbert, 1983). Through April of 1970, more than one-third of the 167,000 WIN participants had dropped out of the program, and only 25,000 had actually found work. To make matters worse, there was evidence of substantial amounts of creaming - the more qualified recipients were far more likely to be enrolled in the program, and by far the most likely to obtain employment, people who may well have found work without participating in the WIN program (Aaron, 1978; Levitan and Taggart, 1976; Dickinson, 1986, Paterson, 1986).

Some of the failure may have been due to program implementation. A study of WIN offices in New York suggested that at least some of the failure of the program was due to the manner in which many agencies interacted with the poor. In short, the agencies failing to strongly enforce the work
requirements, and who failed to make a strong effort to convince recipients they could find work experienced very low rates of success. By contrast, agencies enforcing the work requirements, and those who worked closely with recipients to convey the message that work was obtainable had much higher rates of success (Mead, 1981). Also, where job training and case counseling was more intensive, program outcomes were more positive (Dickinson, 1986). Consequently, despite the unimpressive performances for WIN, overall, Mead and others remained convinced that stricter provisions and intensified enforcement efforts concerning the obligation to seek work or job training was the path to follow. In addition to this, the moral dimension of such work related provisions had an intrinsic appeal to much of the general public and many policymakers. The consequences of this was sustained support for work requirements in the many long congressional welfare debates of the 1970s. In the meantime WIN programs continued to operate throughout a variety of states.

The Guaranteed Income

While Nixon had campaigned on themes of less government and greater austerity in welfare programs for the poor, his actual record of legislative initiatives was expansionary. One of Nixon's first moves was to recruit Daniel Patrick Moynahan, the Democratic advisor to President Johnson, who
had a falling out with many liberals over the community action debacle. Nixon wanted a simplification of the welfare system, to which Moynahan responded with the first serious proposal for a guaranteed income. Known as the Family Assistance Plan (FAP), the proposal called for 500 dollars per adult and 300 dollars per child annually, or 1,600 dollars for a two parent family of four. The plan would bring the most relief to the very poor, especially those in the south where AFDC benefit levels were incredibly low. Proposed by a Republican administration, a party usually in opposition to expansive welfare legislation, one might have expected the plan to have smooth sailing. But this was not to be. Critics charged that it would exclude poor people without children, and that it would not be very helpful to the welfare poor in the north who comprised 80 percent of recipients. Others were offended by the work provisions which required adult eligibles to accept work or training or else forfeit the subsidy. Eventually the plan was defeated by an unusual conservative-left wing coalition (Paterson, 1986; Moynahan, 1969).

There were a number of researchers and policymakers who were interested in finding out what would happen if people were provided with a guaranteed income, and the interest in this idea spawned the best known, most comprehensive income maintenance experiments ever in 1970. Known as the Seattle
and Denver Income Maintenance Experiments (SIME/DIME), 44 percent of 4,706 families were assigned to one large control group, with the remainder divided among 11 experimental groups. Guaranteed incomes of $3,800, $4,800 and $5,600, and various taxation rates were provided to the 11 experimental groups.

Initial findings suggested that the provision of a guaranteed income had no negative effect on work efforts, not even for families whose earnings increased until they were no longer eligible for benefits. However, a subsequent study of a more comprehensive nature, utilizing a much larger sample of the SIME/DIME sharply contradicted these early results by finding a significant reduction in the number of hours of worked by families receiving the guaranteed income grant. Studies indicated that a guaranteed income at 75 percent of the poverty line accompanied by a negative tax rate of 50 percent would bring a 6 percent reduction in the work efforts of husbands, 23 percent for wives and 7 percent for female heads of households (Gilbert and Specht, 1986; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1989).

There is reason to believe that these studies actually underestimate the reduction of work effort that would accompany a guaranteed income. First, these experiments may have been vulnerable to the Hawthorne Effect in which the act of participation itself in the program may have
increased the commitment to positive outcomes among the experimental group, thus causing them to exhibit more work-oriented behavior than their natural inclination would have dictated. Secondly, the experiments were conducted over a delimited time period which may have masked the sociopolitical impact of a nationwide program on recipients. In essence, knowledge of the limited program duration may have kept participants from reducing work effort and perhaps losing a job they would need after the grants from SIME/DIME ended. Also disappointing was a drastic increase in the overall rate of marital dissolution among experimental groups to twice the level of control groups, presumably due to the declining economic benefit of the intact family where income is guaranteed (Gilbert and Specht, 1986; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1989). Only limited attention was paid to the possibility of either direct job creation or raising the wage levels of entry level employment to actually change the context in which work behavioral patterns occur.

The Welfare Debates

Welfare programs for the poor remained controversial and politically charged issues over the course of the 1970s. Within policymaking circles, there were a variety of discussions of dependency, benefit levels, work requirements and abuse, but agreements or a mandates for action were seldom produced.
There was persistent concern by policymakers and many scholars alike that AFDC encouraged family breakup. Many argued that welfare encouraged family breakup, citing cases where fathers leave the household so the mother can collect AFDC. And the statistics were very discomforting; over the course of the 1970s female headed households became the majority of poor families, reaching 56 percent by 1980 (Moynahan, 1987). The controversy centered on the locus of change. While many pointed to welfare, subsequent studies indicate that broader social forces such as attitudes towards marriage and divorce and the labor market difficulties of poor males are dominant causes of changing family structure, and that AFDC somewhat marginal impact (Moynahan, 1987; Wilson, 1987; Ellwood, 1988). Since most policymakers did not want a strong system of public support for households with an able-bodied adult male present, they were in somewhat of a quandary. As Levitan and Taggart point out; "...less adequate or no benefits might make marriage more attractive by eliminating an option which improves income and well being" (1976, p.61).

Even if one supports this viewpoint, it does not eliminate the prospect that many recipients, whether due to work disincentives in AFDC, lack of volition, or lack of self efficacy, may not have been taking active steps to establish economic independence. Many policymakers wanted to
cut or even eliminate welfare, but they generally brought more centrist arguments to the congressional debates. Consequently, much of the congressional welfare debates of the 1970s revolved around the issue of dependency, pitting conservatives who regarded the work clauses in the WIN style programs to be inadequate against liberals who criticized the inadequate system of income support in alternative conservative proposals (Mead, 1986).

Underneath the argument was an unspoken ambiguity over the purposes of AFDC. The ultimate intentions of those who created and expanded public assistance are not entirely clear. For the most part, supporters publicly defended AFDC as a transitional source of support to help families through periods of sudden hardship and dislocation while they pick themselves up and move on again. But many policymakers must have been aware that low wages and the lack of education or training of many recipients could leave some in need of longer term support. Nonetheless, support for a program of long-term public assistance to a population with a dubious reputation to the public is difficult to build in American political culture, and so AFDC was presented and defended as a system of transitional support, despite indications that it would serve long-term functions for some.

This ambiguity was reflected in scholarly research and political debates over welfare. Those looking to AFDC as a
system of transitional support were concerned with ballooning welfare rolls in the second half of the 1960s and 1970s as well as evidence that significant portions of welfare recipients were long term. Those comfortable with the idea of welfare as a source of long term support for the chronically needy viewed the same evidence as an indication of success (for alternative approaches, see Levitan and Taggart, 1976; Murray, 1984; Mead, 1986, and Schwarz, 1988).

Over the course of the decade, the basis for an eventual bipartisan and centrist position began to gain support, and was expressed through welfare reform arguments supporting continued access to public assistance by the needy, but with stronger work provisions to accompany the aid. The laissez-faire anti-welfare posture gradually lost strength, to be replaced by the more moderate demand that strong work provisions accompany any serious proposal of welfare reform. The Jobs and Income Security Program (JISP) introduced into congress by the Carter Administration in 1977 carried strong work provisions and would have totally replaced the existing system of income maintenance. Designed to link public assistance to a combination of training, work experience and the actual provision of jobs by the federal government, the JISP proposal languished too long under congressional debate and was eventually withdrawn (Johnson and Schwarz, 1991; Mead, 1986). This should not have been
terribly surprising, for such measures had to pass between conservatives who were the strongest supporters of work related requirements and liberals who tended to emphasize entitlement (Mead, 1986; Paterson, 1986).

For those adhering to a structuralist perspective of poverty such as William Julius Wilson, the substance of the debate detracted attention from some important dilemmas faced by the welfare poor stemming from conditions in the labor market. From the structuralist perspective there simply were not enough jobs for everyone. And the jobs available to the less-educated and less skilled - which includes the vast majority of those who would attempt to abandon welfare for work - were predominately low wage jobs, frequently part-time, offering little or nothing in the way of benefits. In short, the manufacturing jobs offering the 'family wage' were on the decline, to be replaced with service work not offering the resources necessary to sustain a healthy, productive household (Wilson, 1980 and 1987; see also O’Hare, 1985).

From the structuralist perspective, the welfare/work deliberations were essentially hollow, particularly as it applied to families or those thinking of supporting or starting a family, for either situation meant continued poverty. Yet Wilson (1980) argues that the congressional deliberations gave very little attention to the prospects of
broadening public sector employment at a family wage or providing more substantial subsidies to raise low wage employment.

However, the preoccupation with work that was a basis of many of the criticisms against welfare carried a positive side in galvanizing support for the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) passed in 1973. The combination of a downsliding job market and the administrative troubles of manpower training programs within the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) were some precipitating factors. Essentially, CETA was a consolidation of several programs under the Manpower Development and Training, Economic Opportunity and Emergency Employment Acts. Compared to the centralized inflexibility attributed to the over targeting of OEO programs, CETA was locally administered, allowing more maneuvering room. Under this program, participants were given training and employment simultaneously, having an opportunity to build work experience and receive a steady pay check. Cobb, (1985) maintains that the program achieved a respectable 75 percent positive termination rate and a reputation for producing upwardly mobile workers. However, Joe and Rogers (1985) point to administrative problems which were promoted by this very flexibility granted local administrators. In a review of studies, Schwarz (1988) argues that while some CETA programs were abject failures,
the overall picture of both CETA and the Manpower Training Programs is favorable.

Clearly, the CETA program rested to some extent on structural perspectives on poverty, especially in its use of public sector job creation, however limited. The job training and work experience at its core minimized resistance from those who opposed welfare or saw poverty as an individual trouble (although some policymakers faulted it for shielding participants from the real world job market). Jimmy Carter, sometimes skeptical of the potential for many of the Great Society style programs to help the inner city - maintained solid support for CETA throughout his term. The very idea behind CETA of Government playing a more active role in addressing the nation's employment troubles had gained some ground, and stood as one of the more resilient Great Society programs during the 1970s. But for all this, it only constituted 0.02 percent of the federal budget in the 1970s (Kerbo). Even at its height, providing some 750,000 public sector employment jobs in public and non-profit agencies in 1978 (Mead, 1986), it was much too small to meaningfully address the nation's employment troubles.

To those offering more of a structural explanation of poverty like Wilson (1980 and 1987), the underfunding of CETA was truly lamentable, precisely because of its great potential as an important part of the solution to the
welfare impasse. Wilson notes that other proposals to address structural poverty like the Humphery-Hawkins Bill of 1978 were either rejected or hopelessly watered down in passage. A major point of resistance came from the middle class’ unwillingness to tolerate the moderate inflation a large scale public sector jobs program would bring (Wilson, 1980 and 1987).

Another option addressed was to use taxation policy as an additional means of income maintenance. It was the enduring belief of most policymakers that poor people should work and that public policy should reward those exercising this option, that led to the creation of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) by Congress as a temporary measure as a part of the Tax Reduction Act of 1975. The objective of the EITC is to reward those families defined as working poor and who file a tax return by offsetting their payroll taxes through a refundable tax credit (Joe and Rogers, 1985; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1989). Stated alternatively, if a family’s tax liability is less than the tax credit for which they qualify, that difference is refunded by the Internal Revenue Service (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1989). As introduced in 1974, families whose incomes were low enough (far below the poverty line) could receive approximately 740 dollars annually in a check from the IRS, which can amount to as much as 11 percent of annual income. As family income rises,
benefits taper off to zero at the point at which family income is too high to be eligible. Although the EITC became permanent in 1978 and received two modest expansions in the second half of the 1970s and first half of the 1980s, its value eroded quite substantially over this period due to inflation (Joe and Rogers, 1985).

But the individualist elements of the welfare debates of the 1970s were strong, perhaps decreasing the chances that job creation programs or changes in taxation policy might receive more serious consideration as anti-poverty strategies. This reflected more enduring social attitudes of Americans towards poverty and was expressed in the preoccupation of many policymakers with finding ways to reshape the behavioral patterns of the welfare poor and confine AFDC to a system of transitional support. And neither was the individualistic emphasis confined to politicians and the general public. In his study on poverty research appearing in five sociological journals from 1965 to 1975, Harold Kerbo (1983) found a heavy concentration of articles as well as governmental funding on research into the individual characteristics of the poor as opposed to political or economic causes of poverty.

**The Reagan Legacy**

The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 brought important change to American social policy. The Omnibus Budget
Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1981 altered state-federal relations, providing states more autonomy in determining how a variety of programs would be structured and how federal aid would be used. Apart from a general relaxation of administrative guidelines, this involved a relative shift of emphasis away from targeted and categorical forms of assistance to a greater reliance on block grants. Secondly, there was a federal financial retreat from many social programs for the poor. And third, eligibility criteria for public assistance was tightened.

The Transformation of Federalism

The election of Reagan thrust a variety of conservative ideas onto the public agenda, from which three important themes brought fundamental change to the welfare state; privatization, commercialization and a renewed emphasis on decentralization. Drawing on a coalition of conservatives, moderates and others who were dissatisfied with the structure of many social welfare programs, these changes were instrumental in shifting the locus of welfare reform from the federal government to the states (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1989).

The continued move by policymakers to decentralize is most pertinent to our concerns here. Like Nixon’s New Federalism (see Reagan and Sanzone, 1981), decentralization evoked resistance from those convinced that in the case of
social welfare, enhanced local discretion was an invitation to renewed parochialism, intrusiveness and oppressiveness. But it also drew on heavy sentiment among the public and policymakers that the federal government had overstepped its boundaries sometime during the previous fifteen years; that state and local government needed more flexibility in addressing problems. The declining rates of national economic growth over the late 1970s and early 1980s only added fuel to reform efforts.

The Reagan program laid the framework under which the states would operate in the 1980s. Social programs and regulatory policies were cut back, which meant less federal aid to the states, a reduction of revenue sharing from the federal government to the states, the termination of many categorical grants, as well as a consolidation of some of the categorical grants into block grants. In short, the federal government began to withdraw from the states. Similar to Nixon's New Federalism, states were given more flexibility in operating their programs, the difference this time being that the federal retreat was financial as well (Joe and Rogers, 1985; Sims, 1982; Vittes).

Scaling Back the Social Programs

Along with the change in state-federal relations came new federal policy towards labor, the welfare state and the
poor in general. This included, among other things, the reinterpretation of labor laws which formerly protected the rights of workers to strike without being replaced; the Capital Gains Tax, a move back towards a more regressive taxing system, and a reduction in social programs for the poor. The 1981 tax cuts forced congress to enact tax increases to cover some of the lost revenue, thus allowing for the moderation of some of the proposed domestic cuts, and the blocking of some requests for defense outlays. But the change in social policy was substantial anyway, amounting annually to a 15 percent increase in defense, and 12 and 10 percent cuts in taxes and non defense spending respectively by 1984-85, adjusting for inflation (O'Hare, 1985).

The programmatic changes provide a more dramatic picture. For example, child nutrition expenditures fell from roughly $4.8 billion in 1980 to $4 billion in 1982 (Gilbert and Specht, 1986; Joe and Rogers, 1985). Food stamp expenditures fell $2 billion a year from what they would have been, terminating almost one million recipients and cutting benefits for the rest. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, providing funds to schools on the basis of percent of poor students in the local district, was replaced with the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 which distributes funds for compensatory
education for disadvantaged students. The Office of Economic Opportunity as well as the Community Services Administration were eliminated, and the CETA program was replaced with the Jobs Partnership and Training Act - designed to integrate government and industry on an equal basis and promote local efforts to place the poor and unemployed in private employment (O'Hare, 1985). In scope, this amounted to a federal abandonment of what little basis for public employment existed, and a declining interest in job training.

Only the "Truly Needy"

One of the Administration plans was to cut AFDC, by changing the rules so that only the 'truly needy' would be covered. The idea was to cut AFDC funds to families whose total income was above the poverty line. The Senate passed the proposal as a part of the 1981 budget, consisting of the narrowing of federal AFDC guidelines. At this time, the 30-plus one-third rule that had guided AFDC and work, was restricted to four months of any one year period. Beyond this, AFDC was cut by the same amount as income earned. Monthly allowance ceilings of 160 dollars per child and 75 dollars for work related costs were established. Further, states were allowed to count housing subsidies and food stamps in determining family AFDC eligibility. If family income after deduction was as high as the full AFDC grant,
the family lost AFDC and Medicaid eligibility after four months. In 1984, the time period was extended to one year for AFDC and 15 months for Medicaid. The effects of the initial act was to terminate 500,000 low income working families from AFDC and Medicaid, and reduce AFDC benefits for other families. In sum, after adjusting for inflation and unemployment, programs for the poor were cut 57 billion dollars from fiscal years 1982 through 1985 (O'Hare, 1985).

**Workfare**

Responding to charges that bread winners might quit their jobs due to the work disincentives in the OBRAs new AFDC eligibility criteria, the Administration added the Community Work Experience Program (CWEP), known as 'workfare', which would require able-bodied recipients to work off their benefits. This was the most significant welfare reform proposal, coming to symbolize the contemporary new thrust in social welfare thought and legislation. The proposal passed in the 1981 budget after the Senate made the plan optional rather than mandatory to the states (Joe and Rogers, 1985; Patterson, 1986). As of 1983, only twenty two states had chosen to adopt the program, and only six on a statewide basis (Mead, 1986).

Drawing on the increased emphasis on the work stipulations that characterized the WIN program, but without many of its job training features, workfare became the
landmark welfare program of the 1980s. Although some states declined to develop workfare, this program and the social contract principles underlying it gained ground steadily among policymakers, poverty experts and the public. This shift was reflected in the welfare reform position adopted by the National Governor’s Association in 1986-87, recommending mandatory education and job training for able bodied welfare recipients (Rosenthal, 1990).

STATE WELFARE REFORM

The Reagan program brought important change to welfare in the United States. However, some of the most significant reforms developed at the state level, and while in part they may have been a response to the new environment under Reaganomics, the quest for reform acquired its own momentum as state after state became laboratories of reform throughout the decade and into the 1990s. Several factors can be identified which contributed to this flurry of activity. First, Reagan’s new federalism (New Federalism Two) changed the fiscal and administrative context of social policy development. Second, a variety of studies during the first half of the decade indicated rising levels of poverty, thus drawing attention to the extent of suffering and the urgency of the situation. Third, there was a growing consensus among poverty experts and policymakers that welfare dependency itself rather than simply the lack of
money or opportunity per se was a major factor sustaining poverty and ever increasing welfare rolls. This consisted of arguments that A) welfare dependency, i.e., long term dependency, was a serious problem, and B) welfare recipients should be expected to uphold basic performance requirements in return for benefits. And fourth, the policy sciences had reached a level of sophistication far beyond that of the Great Society period. In particular, the institutional analytic capacities within most state governments had grown by leaps and bounds and were thus well prepared for a variety of programmatic undertakings.

**Increased State Responsibility for Social Programs**

Clearly the transformation of federalism in the early 1980s changed the environmental context in which state policymakers worked. The Reagan Administration's first major initiative, the Reagan Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1981, brought a financial and administrative retreat from a variety of social programs for the poor. If state officials had wanted more autonomy in administering social programs, they now needed it, for in effect they had greater responsibilities and fewer resources with which to meet them (Sims, 1982; Wager, 1988; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1989). Eligibility criteria for many of these programs were tightened.

Social programs for the poor were some of the primary
targets of OBRA, as the planned $3 billion budget for 1982 was dropped to $2.4 billion. The targeting of social programs for the poor developed out of some important assumptions of the administration concerning poverty and the poor; these being that welfare itself helped was sustaining poverty by reducing incentives to work, and that the reduction or elimination of benefits would force the poor to work, which in turn would force them to pull themselves out of poverty (Joe and Rogers, 1985; Schwarz, 1988). The primary chosen strategy was to tighten eligibility criteria and reduce benefits to those currently working who were using AFDC and Food Stamps to supplement their income; in effect, to reserve welfare only for what the Administration termed the "truly needy" - that portion of the AFDC population who lacked other sources of income.

This amounted to a series of important changes in the rules governing the administration of AFDC. Some of the most significant ones were; first, while prior to OBRA, states were permitted to discount some of the earnings of recipients in the calculation of benefits - thus the $30 plus one-third rule guiding WIN programs, this disregard was now reduced to the first four months. Secondly, reimbursements for child care and work expenses for working recipients were capped at $160 and $75 respectively. Third, the basis for the earnings disregard was changed from gross
to net income and only honored for four months. And fourth, families were no longer eligible for AFDC when their income exceeded 150 percent of their state’s need standard (which is always below the poverty line and varies radically between states). On top of this came cutbacks in other programs, among these child nutrition and school lunch programs (Joe and Rogers, 1985; Moscovice and Craig, 1984; Schwarz, 1988).

**Increasing Poverty**

A variety of studies indicate rising levels of poverty, beginning sometime during the 1970s and continuing into the mid 1980s. From 1970-1984 the poverty rate rose from 6.8 to 9.1 percent by Census Bureau criteria, indicating an increase in the poverty population by 7 million people over the course of this era. Much of this came during the period of rapidly rising unemployment in the late 1970s and early 1980s. From 1980-1984, the median income for the bottom fifth of the population fell 8 percent while rising 9 percent for the top fifth (for summary see O’Hare, 1985; Moynahan, 1987 and Kerbo, 1991).

One contributing set of factors were structural changes in the economy. Bluestone, Harrison and Baker (1981) point to the destructive consequence of the industrial exodus from the northeast and upper midwest "rustbelt" that gathered momentum over the 1970s and subsequently intensified over
the 1978-1982 period (see also, Harrington, 1984 and O’Hare, 1985). Much of the industrial flight which occurred, took place out of the central city, leaving large pockets of poverty and unemployment along with stagnating or declining tax revenue in many central city districts. To the poor, as well as a variety of people in the working class - many of these being manufacturing workers or single mothers with children - industrial flight accompanied by the proliferation of low wage, part time work, offering few or no benefits spelled a new era of increased hardship (Bluestone, Harrison and Baker, 1981; Harrington, 1984; O’Hare, 1985, and Wilson, 1987).

A second factor contributing to rising poverty was changes in federal policy towards the poor enacted in the early 1980s, as discussed earlier. This consisted of A) federal cuts in social programs which were reflected in reduced benefits, and B) the tightening of eligibility standards, which effectively cut off assistance to substantial portions of various target populations. According to most studies, the consequences of these changes was to push poor families deeper into poverty. Another effect was to reduce the incentive to work for such families, for now their AFDC would be removed if earnings put them over the poverty line. (Harrington, 1984; O’Hare, 1985; Joe and Rogers, 1985; Schwarz, 1988, and Danziger and
Nichols-Casebolt, 1988). However, a study by Moscovice, Craig and Pitt (1987) of Hennepin county, Minnesota, disagreed, suggesting that recipients, on balance were able to compensate for reductions in AFDC benefits by increased work along with support from family and friends. Nationwide, however, this does not appear to have been the case. While some states compensated by increasing their own assistance, they often failed to make up the difference, and many other states did not respond that significantly (Joe and Rogers, 1985). Nationwide, 500,00 fewer children qualified for medicaid, while demand for emergency assistance rose sharply (O’Hare, 1985; Joe and Rogers, 1985, Albelda and Lapidus, 1986; Melendez, 1986; Ruggles and O’Higgins, 1987).

**The New Consensus**

The sociopolitical dynamics surrounding workfare went far beyond the scope of specific evaluations or even the program itself. It was transcended by intellectual, popular and political themes, which had always been present, but had now intensified and become more focused, and which was to shape social policy for a decade or more. Many policymakers and large portions of the electorate had long harbored ill feelings over the moral dimensions of programs like AFDC and Food Stamps. While most acknowledge the need for government to help those who cannot help themselves, there were strong and persistent complaints that many receiving benefits were
not truly needy and that welfare itself had adverse impacts on work initiative.

The idea that welfare itself could be a source of continued poverty crystallized in the 1980s under what I term the welfare dependency perspective. The best known proponent of this view was Charles Murray of the Manhattan Institute, whose 1984 book Losing Ground helped fuel the attack on social programs for the poor. Murray portrayed AFDC as inherently destructive to labor force participation, producing a situation where the rational recipient would choose not to work. The War on Poverty began innocently enough, he argues. Kennedy early on recognized that the welfare check should only be seen as a stop-gap measure, never a long lasting solution. And the premise within his ranks was that most able bodied people would work, given the opportunity - thus job training. But Murray argued, "Huge increases in welfare expenditures coincided with an end to progress" (p.63). In building his case, he points to the strong economic growth that helped reduce poverty rates throughout the 1950s on up until about 1967 when the Great Society programs really kicked in, at which point, the incentives for the poor to remain in the labor market were reduced or removed, and welfare dependency and illegitimacy escalated. For a potential couple, the value of the AFDC and benefits package exceeded that of full time work at the
minimum wage. All of this trouble - labor force withdrawal, welfare dependency and illegitimacy - does not require complex analyses of economic realities, racial differences, a changing work ethic or the spirit of the 1960s, Murray argues. Rather, they are perfectly logical outcomes of the changing incentives system - the carrots and sticks - governing the behavior of the poor (1985, pp.154-155). The poor responded with rational calculation, albeit short term in nature. For young women, the stability of the welfare system replaced the less stable earnings of a husband, promoting illegitimacy and a female headed household.

Despite the galvanizing effect of Losing Ground on conservative reform, Murray's thesis was so controversial and drew such a large amount of empirical criticism, that it ultimately provided little in the way of workable alternatives to the stalemate at that time. For one thing, Murray's argument for the virtual elimination of public assistance as we know it was too extreme to be taken seriously by policymakers. Secondly, his writing drew extensive criticisms from a variety of other poverty experts on both theoretical and methodological grounds (See Harrington, 1984; O'Hare, 1985; Wilson, 1987, Schwarz, 1983, 1988, Beverly and McSweeney, 1987).

While not receiving as much initial publicity, arguments from Lawrence Mead (1981; 1982, and 1986) and
Michael Novak, (1986) came to embody the spirit of the 'New Consensus' social welfare thinking that soon engulfed the states (see Schram, 1991, for summary). For Mead, the question was not more versus less government, but the nature of governmental involvement. And the problem was not simply the provision of welfare as Murray suggested, but rather, the unilateral nature of these transfers requiring little or no reciprocal obligations on the part of recipients. That is to say, the problem is not government or welfare itself, but permissive welfare which fails to hold recipients accountable to meaningful performance requirements.

Lawrence Mead's *Beyond Entitlements* in 1986 entered the scene more quietly than Murray's *Losing Ground*, and offered a more subtle critique that seems to be having a far more enduring impact. Mead criticized the provision of economic assistance without the corresponding obligation for the recipient to make an honest effort to obtain work and remain employed. No meaningful functioning requirements hold them accountable for their behavior like the rest of the population faces in the labor force. Programs like WIN were intended to prevent welfare from becoming a security blanket preventing recipients from making the necessary steps to achieve economic independence. But Mead argues that they contained only feebly work incentive requirements and inadequately enforced ones at that.
In Mead's favor were some important changes in social norms guiding the labor force participation of women. When federal public assistance was enacted in the 1930s and expanded during and after the Great Society, women were not expected to actively participate in the labor force, and thus work obligations for AFDC mothers was not an issue. But all this changed very quickly, and by the 1980s, the labor force participation of women was the norm; in fact mothers with young children generally worked. It became increasingly difficult to exonerate AFDC mothers from balancing the demands of motherhood and work while their middle and working class counterparts struggled along (Gilbert, 1989).

Granted, various policymakers had argued since the 1960s that welfare recipients should be required to work, but writers like Mead and Novak played an important role in transforming these concerns into a formal and compelling argument for reform. And it was not until the mid 1980s that these arguments became fully galvanized in policymaking circles. Mead called for strict measures to require recipients to demonstrate ongoing job search efforts and to enroll in job training programs as needed. In essence, this would hold recipients to standards of civic obligation, thus balancing the altruism of society with individual initiative of the recipient. The balance between the redistributive, (i.e., entitlement) and normative aspects of social policy
he referred to as the civic obligation approach to policy in which welfare is woven into the form of a social contract.

Mead's ideas became the intellectual cornerstone of the 'new consensus' state level welfare reform initiatives of the 1980s, its central tenets being that welfare dependency - rather than poverty itself or the lack of opportunity per se - is an important or primary mechanism sustaining contemporary poverty, and that as a means to rectify the situation, public policy must emphasize restoring reciprocal obligations between the government and the poor (see also Kohlert, 1989).

One of the core issues was the question of whether long-term welfare recipients constituted a large enough percentage of the AFDC population to warrant major reform. Some argued that the vast majority of the welfare population did not fit the welfare dependent mold, despite the resilient public myth of the "lazy intergenerational AFDC families", an argument which drew support from the initial studies from the Michigan Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1986; Skolnick and Currie, 1988). Some recipients were not required to work due to disability or the presence of very young children in the home. Others drew such low income from work that continued support was necessary. And most able bodied recipients were short term. However, new studies
coming out during the early 1980s such as those of Mary Jo Bane and David Ellwood suggested that a very substantial percentage of recipients were in fact long-term, particularly when the study accounts for those who go off of welfare only to return to the rolls shortly after (Moynahan, 1987; Wilson, 1987 and Ellwood, 1988, and Dye, 1992).

A variety of other circumstances only intensified the state level drive for new means of channeling sparse social program resources. Among these were plant closings, particularly in the rust belt of the upper midwest and northeast, self imposed tax and spending limitations (see Sims, 1982), the immigration of poor people needing a variety of services, and inner city decline (see Gurwitt, 1989). Essentially, states were left with greater responsibilities and fewer resources to meet them with. These demands intensified pressures for austerity and fiscal restraint. And these new limitations favored increased emphasis on social programs designed to change the behavior of welfare recipients individually through systems of rewards and punishments and new conditions of aid, because at least in the short run such strategies appear less demanding of governmental resources than direct job creation and the expansion of various forms of public assistance.

**Enhanced Analytical Capacity**

The use of social science knowledge for planned social
change plays an ever increasing role in contemporary society. Almost all areas of life are subject to some combination of administrative, redistributive allocative or legal policy. Unfortunately, public policy is generally less than successful in actually "solving" any given problem and may even exacerbate conditions or bring unintended consequences (Dye, 1976). There is widespread scholarly agreement that during the Great Society flurry of activity, the policy sciences were not generally up to the tasks they undertook. A variety of mishaps stemming from any combination of unclear policy and program objectives, the disappointing performances of many social programs, implementation problems, and disagreement or ambiguity over evaluation criteria collectively testified to the limitations of the policy sciences (for discussion, see Moynahan, 1969 and 1987; Aaron, 1976; Pressman, Wildavsky and associates, 1983; deLeon, 1988, Smith, 1991).

Although there were successes, the many disappointments of the Great Society era effectively contributed to the growth of the policy sciences. For example, the evaluation and implementation dilemmas that arose prompted the growth and increased sophistication of these areas respectively (deLeon, 1988). And the area of public assistance was no exception. By the mid 1980s, analysts could draw on the accumulated wisdom of the past two decades.
The analytic capacity of state governments increased even more during this period. Not only did they draw on the national experience and the diffusion of the policy sciences throughout their universities, but had also greatly enhanced their institutional analytic capacities - partly in response to their increased programmatic responsibilities under Nixon’s new federalism. Most legislatures had professionalized, now containing more and better policy analysts. And the state bureaucracies had also greatly increased their institutional analytic capacities. Reagan’s own version of new federalism which included a financial as well as administrative federal retreat forced additional growth of state level policy analytic capacities (Rossi and Freeman, 1989; Patterson, 1990, and Gray, 1990).

**New Strategies Linking Public Assistance to Employment**

The transformation of federalism, the rise of new consensus social welfare thinking and growing poverty placed welfare reform at the top of the agenda for many states by the mid 1980s. Though varied in detail, much of the state welfare reform of the 1980s as well as more recent reform of the early 1990s share some basic features which can be traced to the New Consensus. While workfare programs were making their marks in some states and localities, other states were looking for new ways to bring the spirit of the New Consensus to bear on their own welfare poor. As reform
was played out in states across the country, the overriding emphasis was renewed efforts to link public assistance more tightly than ever to work, job training and education, a general approach whole-heartedly endorsed by the National Governors Association (Castle, 1987; Clinton, 1988; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1989; Katz, 1989, and Rosenthal, 1990).

However it was not always a case of states simply cracking down on recipients, for some states recognized the barriers posed to economic self sufficiency by low levels of education and job related skills, and the lack of access to transportation and day care. Instead, the intent was to develop policies based on a social contract element in which the state agreed not only to continue to provide public assistance to recipients while obligating them to uphold functioning requirements, but to provide support services to better enable recipients to hold up their end of the line. And this required that the states have more flexibility in tailoring their programs. For example in the early 1980s, 29 states turned away their WIN programs to adopt a federal-state funded program called WIN Demonstration which gave states more latitude in moving recipients into permanent employment, and which was administered by the welfare department rather than state employment offices. As far as the latter change, officials in these states argued that the employment offices were too preoccupied with the number of
people placed which produced a strong tendency towards creaming, whereas the welfare departments could concentrate on more chronic recipients. Further, traditional WIN offices were unwilling and/or unable to enforce performance requirements (Wager, 1988).

Some states chose to retain the traditional WIN program and to try to work more creatively within it. Others financed separate welfare-job training programs which often were more comprehensive than WIN - and similar to WIN Demonstration. And many others took advantage of the autonomy the federal government granted them in designing their workfare programs. In short, the states became separate laboratories of reform as illustrated by the following examples:

**California:** The California Legislature passed Greater Avenues for INdependence (GAIN) in the mid 1980s, designed to provide new job skills and education to help able-bodied long term welfare mothers move into the labor market. The challenge here, as elsewhere, is to provide child care and continued access to medical care to assure the recipients that labor force participation does not bring reduced security (Wager, 1988).

**Minnesota:** In 1987, Priority Access to Human Services (PATH) was created by the Minnesota Legislature, providing approximately twenty seven million dollars per year
providing child care education and job training services to welfare recipients. The program reaches all 87 state counties while WIN was reduced to 10. A factor contributing to the initiative is that the state was not a WIN Demonstration state, and the traditional WIN program does not allow federal funds to be used for job training or education programs (Wager, 1988).

**Ohio:** The Ohio Fair Works Programs was launched by the state department of human services to provide job training and education for welfare recipients. At a cost of twenty million dollars per year, the program is available in 29 of the states 88 counties, while the scope of WIN was greatly reduced due to funding cutbacks (Wager, 1988).

**Massachusetts:** One of the most notable state innovations was the Massachusetts Employment and Training Choices Program (ET Choices). Beyond the federally mandated registration components, the program contained no additional requirements. A central tenet of ET Choices was that the welfare population is diverse in background and in need, and that the most effective program would be one that is sufficiently flexible so as to allow each individual to select the style of participation most suited to his or her needs. This gave recipients the choice of some combination of skills training, career planning, education, job search activities and supported work (Manpower Demonstration...
Research Corporation, 1986). Available evidence suggests the program to be fairly successful - the program places a high percentage of people in jobs of substantial duration; unfortunately the state has not conducted the systematic evaluations needed to contrast this with employment in the absence of the program (Dickinson, 1986).

**Washington**: The Family Independence Program (FIP) is designed to replace AFDC over a five year period. FIP takes an array of services consisting of a variable benefit level, job placement in both subsidized and non-subsidized jobs, education and training opportunities, medical care, transportation and child care, and combines them into one program that is designed to reward work efforts, strengthen families and encourage the support of non-custodial parents. To best accomplish this, the Governor sought an agreement with the federal government authorizing the state to set variable benefit levels, rules of eligibility and categories of assistance. For example, earned income and income support would be combined into an FIP income level that would range from 80 percent to 135 percent of a benchmark income, depending on the cooperation and work effort of the recipient (Wisconsin DHSS, 1987).

Other welfare reform packages, different in detail, but similar in basic emphasis were enacted in New York, Utah, Maine, Virginia, Arkansas and elsewhere (for additional
discussion of such program initiatives, see Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1986). In general, state legislatures and officials took somewhat greater interest in the WIN Demonstration programs, such as Maryland's Employment Initiatives (EI) program, in part because of the greater flexibility they afforded, but also because these programs tend to have catchy or positive sounding names. However, many states such as West Virginia cannot afford to construct anything more than a feeble program, making programmatic success highly unlikely. Despite its popularity with the public and clients, the program will be largely unable to accomplish its mission without more federal support, officials argue (Wager, 1988).

The provision of daycare is one of the most pressing issues faced by states wishing to hold AFDC heads of families responsible for meeting performance requirements (Stermer, 1987). Many realize that to make the implicit (perhaps explicit) threat of sanctions credible, the state needs to hold up its own end of the line through the provision of daycare. Unfortunately, many states have been unwilling and/or unable to commit the resources needed to accomplish this. Florida dramatically increased funds for low-income child care, and California provides child care on college campuses for school aged children of participants in its work program GAIN. Minnesota subsidizes the cost of
child care for low income families on a sliding fee scale. Unfortunately, the increased burden on states, and perhaps a shortage of political will has left the progress in child care very uneven: Only 18 states provided more child care for low income families in 1987 than 1981 while funds dropped during this period in 22 states (Penkalski, 1988).

**Summary Conclusions**

The American experience with public assistance for the poor has been marked with the genuine willingness of policymakers to support families in great hardship coupled with fear and reluctance that such assistance might remove the initiative of the poor to take active steps to achieve economic stability and independence. Consequently, public assistance was slow in coming and benefit levels, though varying widely by state and region, remain quite low — sometimes a fraction of the state need standard.

While public assistance has served as both transitional and long term support, the past couple of decades have witnessed a strong and growing effort to confine it to a system of transitional support. A central feature of this is the increasing work requirements attached to public assistance under the WIN and Workfare programs. During the 1980s, the concern with dependency and work requirements crystallized within intellectual and policymaking circles as a conviction that public aid should carry reciprocal
obligations on the part of the recipient to take active steps to reestablish economic independence. Known as the new consensus, these ideas galvanized efforts to turn public assistance into a social contract between recipient and society via the state.

At the state level, several factors - two supply side and two demand side - contributed to a flurry of welfare reform during the 1980s. On the supply side, Reagan's version of new federalism provided more administrative autonomy and a relative decline in funding for social programs to states. Secondly, studies in the first half of the 1980s showed increasing poverty and deprivation which needed to be addressed. In effect, if states wanted more autonomy, they now required it, for they now had more tasks to do and fewer federal resources to accomplish them.

On the demand side, changes within intellectual and policymaking circles called for new efforts for welfare reform. The new consensus approach to poverty advocated reciprocal obligations between recipient and society through a social contract with the state which would hold recipients to work and job training requirements. And fourth, the policy sciences had evolved tremendously since the Great Society experience, and this was reflected in the vastly enhanced analytical capacity of state governments in the 1980s. Clearly, the stage was set for the widespread state
welfare reform across the nation.
PART TWO

THEORY AND METHODS
CHAPTER THREE: THEORIES OF PUBLIC POLICY

Introduction

The overview of the national experience with public assistance provides a general backdrop against which welfare reform initiatives can be examined. This backdrop will provide an important reference point as we look at the Wisconsin Learnfare Program. What is less visible is the means by which the various programs composing the welfare system were established, and the assortment of ideas and initiatives that may have been abandoned for some reason. We can make a general assumption that policy is derived from a public recognition that some situation represents a problem warranting a concerted public response. But how do decisionmakers determine that a given situation constitutes a "problem"; how do they come to characterize or understand the problem, we decide what constitutes a problem, and through what process do they determine what the probable response will or should be? In essence, how can we characterize the policymaking process? In this chapter, we examine several important theoretical models that attempt to answer some aspect of this question. These models will then be used to provide an analysis of the development of the Wisconsin Learnfare program. This chapter is divided into two parts. In part one, three general models of the policymaking process will be examined. These models include
rational comprehensive, incrementalism and organized anarchy which in turn is divided into two sections, consisting of the garbage can and policy windows models. The second part of the chapter examines the nature of policy analysis itself through a discussion of several more specific models of the role of analysis in the process. This includes the Anti-analytic Thesis, the Analyst Subordination Thesis and Analysis as Art and Craft. It is important to note that there will be a slight change in the sequence between this chapter in which I present the theoretical models and the subsequent chapter in which I apply the models to my analysis of Learnfare. In this chapter, I have arranged the theoretical models in a manner roughly conforming to the order in which they have emerged in the social sciences. And here, the rational comprehensive model was an early and prominent model. For the analysis chapter, however, I have chosen to begin with organized anarchy because this particular sequence allows for a more coherent analysis of the development of Learnfare.

The theoretical models to be discussed contain normative as well as empirical dimensions. Most likely, strong normative arguments could be made, both supporting and rejecting each of these models as prescriptions of how public policymaking ought to be conducted. However, I am not interested in making any such claims here. Therefore, it is
essential that I qualify my use of these models at this time by explicitly stating that I am only interested in the empirical dimensions. I am interested in explaining how policymaking actually is conducted, i.e. the social reality of the process.

The Policy Agenda

Before discussing the various models of the policy process, it is important to give some consideration to the sources of ideas that make it onto the agenda for discussion. Ideas for public policy can come from almost anywhere, and case studies find no consistent origins of proposals. At the federal level, proposals can be traced to senators and/or staff on Capitol Hill, bureaucracies, interest groups, think tanks or some combination of these (Kingdon, 1984; Smith, 1991). Generally ideas develop not as a sudden bolt of lightening, but through borrowing, developing or somehow mixing preexisting ideas. According to Kingdon, a combination of sources is more likely. Consequently, the tracing of ideas leads one into infinite regress.

Even arguments that call attention to some condition(s) as a problem does not mean it will be placed on the agenda. There are several general factors influencing whether or not a problem reaches the agenda (Peters, 1982). One dimension concerns who is affected and how much. Where many are
affected strongly, the issue is more likely to reach the agenda. Secondly, is the condition concentrated or diffuse?: if concentrated, the affected are more visible and more likely to respond as a unit. The AIDS epidemic has tended to be concentrated among Gays and IV drug users in this country. Third, where a problem affects a wide range of people, it is more likely to be placed on the agenda. Again, while AIDS tends to be concentrated, AIDS advocates work to present an image of AIDS as a disease affecting all kinds of people from all walks of life, rather than a plague of certain high risk groups such as gays and IV drug users who traditionally have been somewhat disvalued socially. Where problems are seen as very intense and highly visible, they are more likely to make it onto the agenda. Not surprisingly, interest groups tend to overstate the severity and maximize the public visibility of the problem they are committed to. For example, estimates of the rates of homelessness by advocacy groups soar high above those of the Census Bureau (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1989). And during the 1992 Democratic National Convention in New York City, efforts were made by activists to converge the homeless population on the convention center at Madison Square Garden.

Like many areas of public policy which address problems that are severe enough or relatively intractable, and which
transcend any one particular crisis event, welfare reform moves on and off the agenda in a somewhat cyclical fashion. But it is frequently those events or crises, be it increased unemployment, recession, a change of administration, new fiscal situations - or a combination of these which brings welfare issues to the top of the agenda. As noted in Chapter Two, this is exactly what happened prior to the development of the Learnfare proposal, thus initiating a process of policy development which the models below may help to explain.

SECTION ONE: THEORIES OF THE POLICY PROCESS

Several theoretical models have received substantial attention among scholars and practitioners in the policy studies field. In this part of the chapter, three important theoretical approaches to the policymaking process are examined.

Rational Comprehensive

The conduct of military operations frequently requires systematic planning and the analytic capacity appropriately allocate various resources. Systems analysts and actuarial scientists with the Department of Defense and the Rand Corporation in the 1940s carried out ongoing analytical work that was relatively effective in providing a basis from which many operations could be conducted. For the most part,
the problems they faced were relatively contained and amenable to quantitative techniques. Two decades later and in another arena where the Great Society programs of the 1960s were being launched, a tremendous amount of planning was necessary to identify the parameters of various social problems targeted through the political process. Here, the problems were far more complex, and not readily solved through quantitative analysis (deLeon, 1988; Smith, 1991). But clearly, rational planning played a substantial role in both situations, and not surprisingly, a number of analysts involved subsequently attempted to theoretically conceptualize the nature of this planning process. Their efforts produced the rational comprehensive model of policymaking which portrays the process as a series of stages in which an intervention is designed to solve a specifically recognized social problem in the most outcome-effective manner possible. The expression of broad publicly mandated values by means of goals selected and attained through a process of comprehensive programmatic rationality are the cornerstones of this approach.

One cautionary reminder is necessary here. Perhaps more than any other model of the policymaking process to be discussed here, the rational comprehensive approach features a strong mixture of empirical and normative content that must be made explicit at the outset. Most analysts working
within this framework recognize that rational planning may
not describe the actual process by which policymaking occurs
all of the time, or even most of the time. Many recognize
that political, intellectual and organizational forces may
compete with or overshadow those options capable of
producing the most effective programmatic response to a
particular problem. But even here, proponents argue, the
model is useful for two reasons. First, rational planning
does empirically describe important parts of the policy
process. After all, there is generally a limit to the degree
to which calculations of social conditions and the
consequences of alternative courses of action can be
abandoned. Secondly, it provides analysts with an ideal they
can work to maximize within the given constraint structure.

Robert Mayer's (1985) work in social policy provides an
excellent example of the rational planning process. To Mayer
the process is best seen as a series of nine stages which
can encompass the majority of situations.

1. Determination of Goals. A Goal consists of a state of
affairs that reflects a publicly recognized societal value
which the policy or program is intended to achieve. Goals
are broad and general in nature, providing a framework of
relevance for the intervention being planned.

2. Needs Assessment. The needs assessment involves
determining in some empirical fashion, the extent of an
undesirable condition or the gap between the current and desired conditions.

3. Specification of Objectives. An objective is an operationalization of a goal in the sense that it specifies the desired conditions in a concrete measurable fashion. In essence, this provides the target for planned social change.

4. Identification of Alternative Actions. In this stage the various means or processes by which could be adopted by decisionmakers to achieve the specified objective.

5. Estimation of Consequences of Alternative Actions. Here the positive and negative effects of the various alternatives are weighed against each other. In addition to change in specific conditions, consideration must be given to time, finances, materials, etc.

6. Selection of Course of Action. At this point a basic plan is adopted, usually after some form of public review by government officials, legislators or the public through a hearing or referendum.

7. Implementation. With a course of action adopted, the operating procedures to guide the carrying out of the program are specified. The means by which these procedures are to be held accountable to the plan must also be specified.

8. Evaluation. Once the program is in operation, its
impact on the target conditions must be assessed. Although evaluations differ considerably from each other, many consist of assessing the extent to which the program was successfully implemented, and the actual outcomes produced.

9. Feedback. Once the impact of implementation on the desired outcomes is assessed, the results are fed back to the planners who make adjustments in the program as warranted.

The rational planning model of policymaking is the embodiment of the ethos of scientific rationality taken to the political sphere. Not surprisingly, it holds an intrinsic appeal to scholars from many fields who have a strong desire to bring scientific knowledge to bear on public problems. Established scholars like Rexford Tugwell of Roosevelt's "brains trust", economist Jonathan Keynes, along with sociologist Robert K. Merton were among early proponents of the use of social science knowledge to understand various problems and come up with rational solutions.

In this analysis, I confine myself to the empirical dimensions of the rational comprehensive model; namely, the extent to which this model is useful in explaining the development of the Wisconsin Learnfare program.
Incrementalism

The suggestion by Tugwell and others that the policymaking process is or should be one of comprehensive rational planning helped draw out an inverse perspective portraying the policymaking process as far more narrow and delimited. Under the incrementalist model, policymakers work within a familiar framework to achieve marginal adjustments in the current situation that iron out smaller particular problems as they arise or gradually move a system in the desired direction. Incrementalism turns the rational comprehensive model on its head through an emphasis on short term rather than long term, means rather than ends, and systems maintenance rather than comprehensive reorganization (Mayer, 1985; Kingdon, 1984).

Under the incremental model, social policy evolves slowly through a series of adjustments, additions and modifications of a given program unguided by a grand plan and ultimate values. According to Aaron Wildavsky, the budgetary process proceeds in an incrementalist fashion. Nobody attempts the overwhelming task of reconceptualizing the budget from the bottom up. Instead, modest additions, subtractions and reallocations occur on a regular basis as deemed necessary at the time (see Kingdon, 1984).

A classic of the incrementalist model is Charles Lindblom's essay "The Science of Muddling Through" (1959;
reprinted in Stillman, 1988). Under the rational comprehensive model, when an analyst is given the task to develop a policy in a particular area, he would first survey the universe of values and then the universe of alternatives, then select that alternative which maximizes those values. According to Lindblom, public policymaking proceeds quite differently from this. The more usual scenario is for the analyst to explicitly or unconsciously set a fairly straight-forward, pragmatic objective, disregarding most values beyond his immediate interest. He examines the alternatives available, but lacks a theoretical body sufficiently precise to estimate their various consequences. Moreover, the alternatives themselves combine values and objectives in different ways; for example, one offers price stability while the other offers low unemployment. Consequently, the analysts final policy decision combines the choice of values and choice of means by which these values could be realized, as opposed to a choice of values, followed by a selection of means (Lindblom, 1959).

Rational comprehensiveness might sound good at the outset. It offers clear objectives, explicit evaluation standards, a comprehensive overview and the quantification of values where possible. However, the situations where such procedures are realistic are confined to small-scale, well-
contained problems where the number of variables is restricted, such as operations research. By contrast, the complexity of social problems removes the possibility of rational comprehensive analysis (Lindblom, 1959).

In the empirical world, several factors promote an incrementalist approach to policymaking. First, there is widespread disagreement on values, and even where agreement is reached, there is disagreement over objectives. Secondly, values are not easily ranked, and to further complicate the situation, most proposals combine them in different ways. Third, there are no unambiguous public preferences without discussion bringing the issue to the public's attention. And fourth, social objectives cannot be compared with one another or analyzed on an abstract basis, because they are circumstantial—tied to specific situations.

Consequently, the analyst works closely with a limited number of alternatives, which are bound to the specific situation at hand, past experience, and the means readily available. In making the policy decision, the only values analyzed are the value differences between available alternatives— in effect, marginal difference. In making judgements of "good" policy, it is not a matter of determining whether or not key objectives are being achieved, but instead, a matter of arguing that a given policy is preferable to another. But sometimes there is not
even the analytic basis for making this judgement, in which case, the basis for judgement becomes agreement on policy itself among relevant actors. Lindblom writes:

It has been suggested that the continuing agreement in congress on the desirability of extending old age insurance stems from liberal desires to strengthen the welfare programs of the federal government and from conservative desires to reduce union demands for private pension plans. If so, this is an excellent demonstration of the ease with which individuals of different ideologies often can agree on concrete policy. Labor mediators report a similar phenomenon: the contestants cannot agree on criteria for settling their disputes but can agree on specific proposals. Similarly, when one administrator’s objective turns out to be another’s means, they often can agree on policy (Lindblom, 1959, p. 230).

There are several general features of incrementalism. First, there is a hierarchical separation between planning and political centers, with the former taking orders from the latter. Secondly, there is little or no consensus within the social system as to which values should prevail. Third, lacking value consensus, political leaders are reluctant to push for general goals, the liability and fallout could be massive. Fourth, specific policy objectives are stated in remedial or stop-gap terms, designed to alleviate specific negative conditions or enhance particular opportunities for social or economic gain (Mayer, 1985)

The policymaking of social security exemplifies the incrementalist model. Since its inception as the Social
Security Act of 1935, its various categories of assistance have continuously been expanded in scope and benefit levels. For the most part, this occurred through a continuous series of small adjustments by the Social Security Administration and a select group of Social Security experts in the House and Senate. Seldom, was the Social Security system reconceptualized or placed under a comprehensive plan for the attainment of long term goals. Instead, the programs gradually were extended outward in several directions, encompassing new clientele and assuming new support functions. Those wishing to curtail its growth soon discovered its chameleon quality. It was difficult to make an argument against Social Security because it serves many different purposes simultaneously; contributions-based retirement income, redistribution to the poor, supplemental income, hardship support, and so forth (Derthick, 1979). Its multiple purposes, lack of a clear long term purpose or plan and its adaptive style of planning exemplify the incrementalist model of policymaking. It should be noted that an incrementalist mode of policymaking does not preclude the massive restructuring of a program. Nor does it suggest that policymakers have a weak commitment to solving particular problems. Rather, it refers to the process by which change takes place; a multitude of modest adjustments versus one fundamental reconceptualization. To the
policymaker, fundamental reconceptualization is a political and programmatic liability. The Social Security experience is instructive here. From its outset in 1935 through a multitude of modest adjustments and expansions well into the 1970s, Social Security underwent a fundamental transformation far beyond the intentions of its founders and more recent reformers in the Congress and the agencies (Derthick, 1979).

Robert Mayer provides a brief comparison between incrementalism and developmental planning:

For employment policy, an incremental objective would be to reduce unemployment, whereas a developmental objective would be to create an economy that utilizes the talent of all Americans.

For child welfare policy, an incremental objective would be to reduce child abuse, whereas a developmental objective would be to create an environment for the healthy development of children.

For school desegregation policy, an incremental objective would be to reduce the racial imbalance in school enrollments, whereas a developmental objective would be to create a school system with mutual respect among ethnic groups and social classes (Mayer, 1985).

Ultimately, incrementalism is interwoven with the American democratic political framework characterized by the fragmentation of decisionmaking and multiple political pressure groups. Given the intellectual and political disagreement, ambivalence or disagreement over values, and
the inadequate social scientific knowledge of many if not most social problems within the policy sciences, policymakers have little incentive to strike out beyond the given analytic framework into new territory strewn with unforeseen pitfalls. Instead, analytic energies are concentrated on immediate patchwork and specific isolated programs that meet immediate concerns.

Organized Anarchy

While polar opposites of each other in respect to the degree of inclusion of overarching values and the comprehensiveness attributed to the policymaking process, the two models examined thus far do share the assumption that policy develops in a directioned, intentional fashion that could be described as primarily linear. The difference is one of short term versus long term and marginal versus fundamental change, and the achievement of ultimate values versus an agreeable first step as the focal point. By contrast, organized anarchy assumes none of this. Instead, the policymaking environment is simultaneously filled with several different social, political and circumstantial streams, any or all of which may interact with each other in the policy development and decisionmaking.

The Garbage Can Model

Within the framework of organized anarchy, the Garbage Can model distinguishes itself from Kingdon’s Policy Windows
model by placing greater emphasis on "anarchy" than "organization" in the policymaking process. Since policy is generally developed within some form of organizational context, an emphasis on the decisionmaking dynamics of organizations does shed some light on the process. Since the organizations involved are composed of a variety of separate or opposing ideas, interests and agendas, and are in a constant state of flux, forthcoming decisions tend not to move in a consistent direction to the outside observer — instead reflecting the specific constellations of circumstance surrounding the decision itself.

While we are used to theories of the policymaking process coming from the universities it is an interesting departure to find that one of these models is based on the universities themselves. But such is the case in the Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice from organizational theorists Michael D. Cohen, James G. March and Johan P. Olsen. The authors build on the organized anarchy perspective, noting that it is very common for complex organizations to make decisions under conditions of goal ambiguity and the erratic attention, energy and interests of participants. From this vantage point the authors note that "an organization is a collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired, solutions looking
for issues to which they might be the answer, and
decisionmakers looking for work" (p. 2, 1972). The
reason for this is that organizations contain three
fundamental properties. First, since an organization
operates on a set of poorly defined or competing
preferences, there is no clear set of preferences to produce
decisions which appear consistent to the outsider. Secondly,
organizations tend to make decisions by trial-and-error, in
part because its members do not understand their
organizations own processes. And third, participation in
organizational decisionmaking is fluid - people come and go
at different times and contribute varying amounts of energy
and attention to the problem at hand (Cohen, March and

When viewed this way, the opportunity for choice that
confronts the organizational decisionmaking structure
consists of a garbage can which holds the dumpings of all
manners of problems and solutions generated by participants.
Consequently, policy decisions are the product of a complex
interplay of four basic variables: First, the problems
confronted. These consist of the concerns of those within
and beyond the organization which require attention. Second,
the personnel involved: participants come and go and give
varying amounts of energy and attention. Third, solutions
proposed: These often consist of the pet proposals of
various individuals who work to create a need for their product. And fourth, the opportunities for choice. These consist of the regular opportunities for decisionmaking that arise as the organization meets its various ongoing expectations. The garbage can consists of the decisionmaking process that flows out of the interplay of these four streams (Cohen, March and Olsen, 1972).

For the study of the development of a social welfare program such as Learnfare, the Garbage Can model directs attention to four areas. First, what were seen as the basic problems to be addressed through welfare reform by the Governor and his staff, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Legislature? Secondly, who were the key participants, and how much time and energy did they devote to the development of the program at various stages. Third, the model calls for an examination of the welfare reform ideas circulated by participants. And fourth, the various opportunities for decisionmaking must be examined. To understand the development of the program, an account of these elements must be provided, along with an analysis of the manner in which they interacted.

Policy Windows

The idea of separate streams of people, ideas, decisionmaking opportunities and problems composing a decisionmaking structure taps into some central dynamics of
the governmental process, according to organized anarchy. A multitude of social scientific, historical and personal accounts of political eras point to the variability of these various streams and point to the complexity of inputs into the policymaking process. An attempt to sort this organized anarchy into something more coherent than a garbage can, and yet still account for the series of forces underlying the development of policy is provided by John W. Kingdon (1984).

Kingdon sees the policymaking process as the interaction of three separate streams consisting of problems, politics and policies. As with the Garbage Can model, problems consist of those conditions seen by some combination of elected officials, bureaucrats, the policy community and the public as unfortunate situations meriting concerted public action towards resolution. And of course, they fluctuate greatly. For example, the energy crisis of 1973 and the rising gasoline prices which followed, as well as the increased levels of poverty in the late 1970s and early 1980s called public attention to problems in need of public action. Similarly, major problems such as the Cold War may recede as international circumstances change drastically.

Politics itself fluctuates greatly. The public mood constantly changes, growing more conservative, more liberal, or becoming increasingly distrustful of political insiders.
And so goes the fortunes of political parties, who
themselves undergo continuous change. For example, the
election of Kennedy in 1960 and Reagan in 1980 marked
important eras for liberal and conservative political forces
respectively.

Policies themselves develop, change and pass on into
irrelevance. As Kingdon notes, ideas float around, bump into
one another, combining, recombining and eventually emerging
into new ideas. At various times, particular policy ideas
gain notoriety while others recede. Influential people,
changing social attitudes and new circumstances raise
certain ideas to the fore of discussion while passing others
into the margins.

These three streams all move separately with lives of
their own. For example the poverty rate may increase, but
there may be no proposal held in esteem which is able to
address the situation. Even if there is, the political
constellation may be unfavorable to any concerted action to
address poverty. However, at times, random circumstances or
conscious coordinated efforts may cause the coupling of
these streams, producing a highly favorable situation for a
particular item to rise on the agenda. Kingdon refers to
this as a policy window (Kingdon, 1984). For example, rising
poverty rates may occur during the same general time period
as a change to a political administration which happens to
be favorable to a war on poverty, and at the same time as a particular approach to poverty gains momentum within the policy community. Sometimes, the coupling of two streams - a problem and a political constellation - causes a particular policy idea to be discussed and developed. But a policy window only remains open for a short period of time, as constantly changing circumstances or merely time itself close the window once again.

Like the Garbage Can model, observing and identifying the interaction of these forces is central to understanding why a particular social program developed when it did. Kingdon's policy windows model directs this research on the development of Learnfare to the interplay of three streams: First, the political landscape of Wisconsin surrounding Learnfare; secondly, the trends in State and National income maintenance reform that may have been favorable to the development of the program, and third, the trends in the poverty and welfare dependency problem.

SECTION TWO: THE ROLE OF ANALYSIS

The theoretical frameworks discussed up to this point have played an important role in guiding research on the general structure of the policy process. Within these models are differing degrees of emphasis on the role of politics, planning and analysis in the process. The following three
models focus more closely on the role of analysis itself within the process. The first two are concerned with the role of analysts in the process while the third characterizes the crucial tasks of analysis. While these models do have important implications for the overall policymaking process, they are chosen for the special attention they give to analysis itself, a central concern of this dissertation.

The Anti-analytical Thesis

The Wisconsin learnfare program was developed in 1987 under Republican Governor Tommy Thompson during a period of conservative welfare reform associated with the intellectual spirit of the 'new consensus'. As discussed in the introductory chapter, the program was host to a flurry of controversy that raged through the media. One argument, coming from Tom Corbett of the Institute for Research on Poverty, as well as others, was that the Learnfare program was built on commonsensical notions of social welfare and the poor that were politically expedient. This raised the possibility that the program was developed without a substantial analytical backdrop; that the strong political winds of this conservative period led political leaders to act unilaterally in developing welfare reform proposals without regard to advice from poverty analysts. In essence, competent policy advice was largely absent within the
development of learnfare. It could have been the case that poverty experts were not to be found within key executive agencies; the governor's staff and the Governor's commission on welfare reform - or that those analysts available were marginalized in the process. In this case, poverty analysts could have been regarded with some combination of suspicion, skepticism or mistrust by key decisionmakers, and thus confined to the margins.

This hypothetical possibility is the basis for Anti-Analytical Thesis: Top level decisionmaking uses an anti-analytical strategy, building policy with little or no input from policy experts because such analysts are regarded as a threat to political prerogative; the result being a lack of policy analytic capacity within decisionmaking units by which to address substantive social problems. This scenario was inspired by Walter William's Mismanaging America (1990), which describes this general situation at the federal level, focusing on the declining policy analytical capacity within contemporary presidential decisionmaking circles and the executive branch. According to Williams, the anti-analytical tendency was most profound under the Reagan Administration which saw policy analysis as a threat to prevailing political ideology and politics of imagery - imagery in the sense that political symbolism dominates substantive issues (Williams, 1990).
The term anti-analytical here, is not meant to imply an absence of calculation or forethought in policy development; in fact, advisors are most likely relied on extensively. The key here, is that it is political advice, rather than policy advice, thus aimed towards political objectives. Policy advice, while ultimately political in some sense of the word, is distinct in its primary orientation to a substantive social problem at hand.

In Williams analysis, from 1980 to 1988, there was a 43 percent decline in policy analysis staff within 8 executive branch agencies for which information was available. Policy staffing for congressional offices observed over the same period remained the same. In constant dollars, evaluation funds fell 37 percent, professional evaluation staff 22 percent from 1980 to 1984 (whether this is for the executive branch alone, or the federal government at large is not specified); research and development for defense rose 81 percent between 1980 and 1989 while falling by 20 percent for all other agencies, and funding for studies within the research office of the Health Care Financing Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services fell 43 percent between 1980 and 1987 (1990, pp. 70-71).

According to Williams, the trend is towards an ever-widening gap between the growing complexity of policy problems and the analytical capacity to address them.
Generally speaking, contemporary analysts have become increasingly sophisticated; capable of anticipating emergent problems in any number of potential policy initiatives. Coupled with the analysts second-guessing capacities (and perhaps in response) has been increased centralization of presidential decisionmaking and the politicization of key agencies. Williams refers to this as "a retreat into ideology" (p.27). While the reader may well question whether neutral competence in the sense of the pure administrative technician ever actually existed, Williams' point here is that the political elements of administration have become so powerful as to render such agencies largely incapable of responding to substantive policy problems. In essence, the necessary balance between politics and analysis has been lost at the expense of the latter. The consequence of these changes is a growing ineptitude of executive governance, a factor becoming a major force in public policy, according to Williams (1990). A quick disclaimer here: Since Williams' thesis was developed as an account of the relationship between analysis and politics during a certain time period at the federal executive branch while my own study focuses on a particular State at a certain time, one subject to many of its own forces, I do not employ this thesis as a test of Williams' argument in Mismanaging America. To do so would be a gross ecological fallacy. Instead, since there have been
charges from researchers and Learnfare opponents that the Learnfare Program was built within a milieu that would appear quite similar, I use this Williams’ arguments as a model itself of a particular type of relationship between politics and analysis.

A strong normative argument could be made that anti-analytic strategies subvert democracy and the public interest by removing or marginalizing competent analysts from the civil service Executive Branch and elsewhere whose input is crucial to effective government. Alternatively, it could be argued that in certain situations anti-analytical strategies have the potential to promote democracy and enhance the public interest by removing the policy input of unelected officials who are resistant to change, or who prefer policies which enhance the power or stature of their own agencies at the expense of the public interest. I must reiterate that I make no normative assumptions either way.

The general arguments forming the basis for the anti-analytic thesis are not without precedent in the social sciences; for the past decade, their has been a substantial amount of research on the structure of presidential decisionmaking. There is general agreement among scholars of the White House staff that as the presidency has become an increasingly complex, orchestrated process managed by a large and growing staff, some important trends in the
structure of decisionmaking can be observed. The general
tendency is for a President - regardless of campaign
rhetoric - to confine his decisionmaking to an increasingly
smaller and smaller circle A), as the issues become more
important, and B) as the Presidential term continues.
Increasingly, the President's Cabinet as well as other
actors from the Executive branch and elsewhere in government
find themselves shut out of the decisionmaking process as
the President increasingly relies on an inner circle under
ever-tightening presidential control (Light, 1982; Kernell,
1986; Kernell and Popkin, 1986, and Patterson, 1988). To
Patterson, this is a necessary adaptation allowing
presidential authority to be exercised effectively in a
society of heterogeneous pluralism that is very prone to
gridlock. While not dismissing these arguments, Light's
concern is that this type of decisionmaking structure causes
the President to make highly insufficient use of experts.
This raises some questions that are important to this study:
Is this a common situation at the state level? Were analysts
passed over in favor of an inner circle composed of the
Governor's staff?

The anti-analytical thesis will direct my
interpretation of research data to A) locating welfare
policy experts within the executive branch, legislature,
governor's staff and elsewhere, and, B) determining the
extent and nature of their interaction with decisionmakers. In the ideal-typical sense, it is the absence of policy analytic capacity and advice that would support the Anti-analytical Thesis.

**The Analyst Subordination Thesis**

It could have been the case that poverty and welfare expertise was in great abundance within the policymaking process behind Learnfare, but when the time came for concrete proposals, decisionmakers ultimately left the analysts far behind - unless the advice they had provided was favorable to political currents. And thus, the second scenario: the **Analyst Subordination Thesis** is drawn from arguments by Peter Deleon (1988) and Hank Jenkins-Smith (1990), that by-and-large, politics dominates analysis. By this we mean that in making actual policy decisions, governors and legislators act more on the basis of the political preference, political philosophy and any number of idiosyncratic forces than on the specific advice of analysts. The idea of analyst subordination is consistent with more broad theoretical traditions from social stratification on bureaucratic organizations and authority. Max Weber, a pioneer in the study of bureaucratic organizations, maintained that it is necessary for an organization which is pursuing given instrumental objectives to maintain control over a staff of people arranged in
separate divisions and in descending levels of bureaucratic authority (Weber, 1947). Public policy is generally made within such an organizational framework, whether one is focusing on executive branch agencies, legislative and congressional bodies as well as the staffs of individual members, the White House staff or the staff of a Governor. The analyst is under the authority of those at the top of the organization, whether that be an elected official, departmental secretary or top administrator. Consequently, analysts work within the framework of these leaders, and thus have limited unilateral power.

In *Democratic Politics and Policy Analysis* (1990) Jenkins-Smith concludes that on the whole, analysis functions primarily as a potential political tool - intellectual fodder to be drawn from when it furthers preexisting preferences of the political leaders. If it does anything very significant, it is often to bring conservative pressure to bear in constraining or blocking political initiatives. Here, the experts were on hand to voice many different concerns - but were only instrumental to the actual program development when their analysis could be harnessed as further ammunition for dominant political objectives. That is to say, advice from competent policy experts is available, but does not play the dominant or decisive role in the policy process. Rather, it is generally
conducted and utilized within the preexisting political framework of decisionmakers. Applied to the case of Learnfare, this model suggests that policy experts favoring a sharply divergent approach to welfare reform may have provided testimony during program development, but decisionmakers - key officials such as the governor and his commission on welfare reform, his political advisors, and the state legislature - only developed those conforming to their preexisting political preferences.

Jenkins-Smith was writing in response to several dilemmas seen by various people to be facing policy analysis; among these are the charges that analysis threatens democracy by installing a technical elite who would change the values and beliefs of political elites or by impeding public involvement in decisionmaking. But he argues that analysis can only have a decisive impact under certain conditions:

"The level of analytic conflict must be low, but somehow still sufficient to mobilize necessary analytic resources to conduct the study; the issue must be highly tractable; the forum in which the issue is debated must be sufficiently professionalized or otherwise restricted to permit common bases for assessment of analytical claims; and analysts must be relatively free of organizational allegiance to clients already committed to a policy position" (p.208).

Such conditions are rarely, if ever present, according to
Jenkins-Smith. Even if the conditions are present in part, the movement of the proposal through a series of stages gives ample opportunity for analyst influence to be neutralized. As far as levels of analysis is concerned, Jenkins-Smith focuses on the structure of relationships between policy analysts and political actors in government in general, without restricting his analysis to federal, state or local structures.

In his discussion of the development of the policy sciences in *Advice and Consent* (1988), Peter deLeon uses the heuristic device of distinguishing between advice, referring to the analytical and problem solving capabilities within the policy sciences and consent, referring to the various political constellations leaving political decisionmakers either more or less willing to seek and or use the advice of analysts. This is analogous to the supply and demand distinctions. There must be a coupling of advice and consent, for policy analysis to play an important and useful role in the policymaking process. This consists of a political receptiveness along with a level of analytic capacity within the policy sciences that is up to the task at hand. deLeon argues that it is not a that advice and consent cannot live without each other, but that the interaction of the two can bring a higher quality of information into the policymaking process. Prior to the
1960s, the policy sciences were often not up to the task (deLeon, 1988).

Peter deLeon notes with irony that despite the great demand for policy analysis, its product is rarely decisive. Even where the coupling of advice and consent occurs, analysis remains subordinate. Analysis provides food for thought and justification for preference, and may convince decisionmakers to support or oppose an initiative. In this sense, it can play a galvanizing role. But it does not produce a mandate for action; only politics can do that. There should be no doubt where the locus of action is: "Politics will dominate analysis. Period" (p.106).

A recent historical examination by James Allen Smith (1991) of the role of all varieties of policy analysts in the governmental process supports the arguments of Jenkins-Smith and deLeon. Smith traces the increased importance of policy analysts, both individually and as groups in the form of think tanks, and acknowledges that they do have an important impact on the process. Nonetheless, their input is rarely decisive and may often be ignored. Smith summarizes: "Arguments that are grounded in substantive expertise are but one aspect in the overall decision-making process and are rarely as important as political and prudential calculations" (1991, p. 230). The primary contribution of experts, he argues, is to slowly build and refine a
knowledge base within a particular policy framework that is geared towards minor change. The consequence is a built-in tendency towards caution among analysts which is occasionally a source of frustration to political leaders. In fact Henry Kissinger, whose role in government varied between that of policy expert and decisionmaker argues that policy experts have often been a barrier to be circumvented by political leaders seeking decisive and constructive action: "Most foreign policies that history has marked highly, in whatever country, have been originated by leaders who were opposed by experts. It is, after all, the responsibility of the expert to operate the familiar and that of the leader to transcend it" (Kissinger, quoted in Smith, 1991, p. 230).

Jenkins-Smith and deLeon do not specifically confine their theories to either the national or state level policymaking. In the case of the Learnfare proposal, the 'Analyst Subordination Thesis' suggests that policy experts may have initially recommended a program quite different from the one finally developed. The analyst subordination thesis will direct my interpretation of research data to A) locating welfare policy experts in the executive branches, legislature, governor's staff and elsewhere; B) determining the extent and nature of their interaction with decisionmakers and C) the nature of the advice they
provided, if there was interaction, and D) the extent to which their advice was heeded.

Should politics dominate analysis? This is an open question, likely to draw normative responses similar to the anti-analytic thesis discussed above. Again, a compelling case can be made on both sides of the issue. I make no normative assumption either way.

The Art and Craft of Policymaking

It is the prevailing tendency of many accounts of policy analysis to sharply dichotomize the political and analytic functions. On the one hand are political actors moving on behalf of political objectives and the interest groups composing the electorate they represent. On the other side is analysis, a scientific and technical undertaking, consisting of developing and reviewing a body of scientific knowledge, which is then translated into a policy proposal to achieve some set of goals or objectives. These may be grand plans expressing long term values towards which Robert Mayer’s developmental planning is geared, or the careful short term adjustments of incrementalism which Charles Lindblom refers to as "the science of muddling through" ( ). Whatever the differences, and they are fundamental, both theories dichotomise the political and the analytical. This emphasis is shared by the policy analysis paradigm, the dominant professional and academic framework for several
decades of analysts in the post World War Two era (for example, see Weimer and Vining, 1989 and Jenkins-Smith, 1990).

More recently, a group of theorists within the policy sciences have begun to challenge this emphasis, arguing that policy analysis is dialectic and creative, more akin to a legal argument and a governmental discussion than the extrapolation of scientific facts and logical demonstration within a given political framework (Stone, 1988; Majone, 1989). A central force driving these new approaches is an emphasis on the power of persuasion and the centrality of two-way discussion in a democracy. From this perspective, the analytical and political functions of policymaking are performed in the same milieu. To some extent, the approach to analysis as art and craft draws on earlier writings which had begun to examine the interaction between public policy and culture. For example, March and Olsen (1984), in addition to their development of the Garbage Can model, came out with a separate article pointing to the importance of symbolic action in the policymaking process. The idea here was that policies are not simply developed in reference to programmatic objectives, nor entirely through the unpredictability of organizational decisionmaking structures. The process of policymaking - and this includes both stated objectives and means of attainment, i.e.,
implementation - have strong symbolic overtones, implicitly recognizing and upholding particular social arrangements and states of affairs at the expense of others. Similarly, Thomas Dye, (1976) points out that the failure of a program to achieve its stated objectives of alleviating a concrete problem does not necessarily mean it is unsuccessful, thereby serving no useful function. Merely implementing such a program carries normative weight serving to publicly legitimize those ideals. Beginning with such writings as these, theorists began to pay more attention to the creative and rhetorical skills used by the analysts to effectively capitalize on the symbolic dimension of public policy. Almost out of necessity, analysts must attempt to develop policy arguments that will compatibly interact with the surrounding political and cultural milieu; sensitized to the necessity for policy to be seen as upholding societal values along the way, regardless of whatever else it does or does not accomplish.

Two important proponents of policy analysis as art and craft are Deborah A. Stone with Policy Paradox and Political Reason, (1988), and Giandomenico Majone with Evidence, Argument and Persuasion in the Policy Process, (1989). Both pick up on the theme that policy is made with intimate consideration of the values and plausibility structures of the audience composing the policymaking community and
decisionmaking structures. The actual task of analysts, they argue, is far more interactive and dependent on the creative use of symbols to construct a compelling argument, than on the presentation of "facts" or the choosing of the best means to achieve given objectives that guide the 'economic model of choice'. As Majone points out; "..in a system of government by discussion, analysis - even professional analysis - has less to do with formal techniques of problem solving than with the process of argument" (Majone, 1989, p. 7).

To understand the art and craft account of policymaking, it is essential to first examine what the policy analyst actually does. First and foremost, the analyst works within the political process, and consequently, must develop a form of analysis capable of tapping into the prevailing political environment in such a way as to move the decisionmaking in a desired direction. And it is crucial to emphasize this, for the policy analysis paradigm and the rational planning model emphasize the specification of goals and means, followed by the selection of the most effective course of action from a number of alternatives. Stone and Majone regard such models as a distortion of what actually occurs. The relative merits and implementability of goals, means and alternative courses of action have meaning only through the political and social
constellations composing the policymaking process.

Cost and benefits, a cornerstone of the policy analysis paradigm, are irrelevant when taken apart from a specific cultural framework. Costs and benefits are based on values assigned to various conditions, circumstances and resources, both material and nonmaterial. Consequently, decisions are highly sensitive to the manner in which costs and benefits are portrayed through words and symbols. Another central pillar of the policy analysis paradigm is efficiency, which often is imputed to be somewhat self explanatory. But according to Stone, efficiency is always contestable, because it can be defined in so many different ways (1988).

An important early stage of policymaking according to the rational planning model is the needs assessment. Presumably, through the right social science measuring instruments, the needs of program targets can be identified. In the actual policy process, Stone argues, need is not determined by standard physical laws, but is politically constructed. Even physical needs such as food, shelter and clothing are defined differently in varying times and places. Further, our definition of need expands as it is satisfied, drawing its meaning from the surrounding social and political context. Stone points out, for example, that western nations have adopted social welfare programs in roughly the same order, following a hierarchy of needs...
(Stone, 1988).

The various problems to which policy analysts give their attention are not simply ‘out there’ in some purely objective form. In a manner of speaking, the world is a mess. Instead, a situation or condition which is to become a policy problem must be categorized and ordered within an intellectual structure by the analysts in order for them to present it to people as a situation warranting action. This is accomplished through the use of metaphors and analogies and other rhetorical and literary devices that are symbolically charged. It must be remembered that symbols themselves are ambiguous, but yet, are a central feature of the policymaking process. The real task, Stone argues, is to manipulate them in such a fashion as to produce a compelling "story" which serves as a catalyst towards particular policymaking decisions. Many people might interject here that any policy argument designed to be taken seriously by decisionmakers will necessarily contain adequate quantification in the problem statement and policy proposal, thus eliminating judgement calls. But Stone points out that the use of numbers is inherently political. Judgement calls are inevitable in decisions as to how data should be organized, defined and categorized, and what conditions should be included or excluded, when declaring some condition a policy problem warranting action (Stone, 1988).
Similarly, Majone maintains that scientific knowledge itself is always somewhat tentative. While "facts" can be evaluated within the canons of science that may be more or less objective, "evidence", by contrast, has to be judged in accordance with factors that are peculiar to a specific situation such as the intended audience, the nature of the case and prevailing rules of evidence in the policy forum. Producing information and data does not constitute evidence. Rather, evidence is that which is extrapolated from this pool at a particular time and place to persuade the audience that a given factual proposition which composes the policy argument is true (Majone, 1989). An example of these techniques is 'issue framing'. Policy arguments are designed in such a way as to focus attention on one section of a long or multifaceted causal chain, purposely detracting attention from other dynamics. And language is creatively used to make one decision choice inherently more attractive than others (see Stone, pp. 198-200).

Consequently, rhetorical and literary skills are crucial to the analyst, play a central role in analysis, and are used in a creative fashion designed to elicit a particular response from the audience, namely the decisionmaking community. Through this process of argumentation, evidence and persuasion are marshalled to declare a condition to be a problem warranting a concerted
response. In this sense, the most important function of analysts is not so much that of setting goals and the means to achieve them, but defining the norms that determine when particular conditions are to be seen as policy problems. In this manner, a dominant function of policymaking is that of norm setting (Majone, 1989). And it must be emphasized that this is truly a constructed process, rather than a given problem amenable to scientific tools. In this manner, politics and analysis are fused. For the categories of thought that constitute a policy argument are themselves constructed through political conflict carried out primarily through reasoned analysis (Stone, 1988, p. 306).

The main job of analysts then, is to produce evidence and arguments to be used in a public debate. At a premium are rhetorical and language skills, along with a keen awareness of the political and cultural context. Seen from this perspective, the dichotomization of analysis and politics is a misnomer, for an analytical argument only becomes within the political culture and decisionmaking community in which it is framed. The dominant function of policymakers is not so much to come up with policies and programs that solve or alleviate problems; problems are rarely solved, and only some of the time alleviated. Rather, the dominant function is that of setting norms through a process of argumentation and persuasion, which determine
which conditions are to be regarded as problems warranting action. Analysis and politics are interwoven, take place within a dialectic discussion, and are always changing.

The approach to policy analysis as art and craft will direct this research to the style of policy arguments made by important players in the process. Although very few written records of actual statements of analysts in the process are available, I will draw out as much as possible from interviews, and from position papers of key participants.

**Summary**

Each of the models discussed here have made a substantial contribution to our understanding of the process by which recognized problems or ideas for reform may eventually be transformed into public policy. The first group of models examined - the rational comprehensive, incrementalist and organized anarchy - have been influential in shaping social scientific thinking about the overall process of policymaking. The second group of models of which there were three, examined consist of lesser known, and generally more recent accounts of the specific role of analysis itself in the policy making process. The first two included the anti-analytic and analyst subordination theses, both of which focus on the role of analysts in the process. The third model of analysis as art and craft focuses more
specifically on how analysis itself can be characterized.
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS

Any public policy that can reasonably be expected to confront an issue or problem must be rooted in some conceptual definition of that problem and the means by which those conditions can be changed. But where do these ideas and information come from, and how are they incorporated into the policymaking process? In almost every public problem area, there are usually many different ways of measuring and conceptualizing a given problem, and numerous ways that the problem might be ameliorated. But how can we characterize the process by which these problems are recognized and "solutions" adopted? Why are some ideas and strategies adopted as opposed to others? These are some of the most fundamental questions concerning the nature of our society.

In the case at hand, we are interested in the fundamental ideas and assumptions of policymakers concerning A) the nature of the poverty and welfare dependency problem and B) the means by which these conditions could be ameliorated if not cured. The central concerns are first, to gain an understanding of the means by which the policymaking community recognizes or defines a problem and proceeds to develop an intervention strategy, and secondly, to better understand the role of policy analysis itself within the larger policymaking process. To explore these processes, I focus on the development of the Wisconsin Learnfare program in 1986 and 1987. Because
Learnfare involved many of the central debates on social welfare policy being played out in other states and because it received a great deal of attention, I believe the study has a fair amount of generalizability.

The methodological task of this research is to reconstruct the process by which the Learnfare Program was developed. This consists of reproducing the important events and stages of policy development, but to do so in a manner which is faithful to the experience of the policymakers themselves. In essence, the challenge is to gain an understanding of the social reality of the policymaking process being studied here. While the theories of policymaking utilized in this study may not be familiar to many of the people I interview, the key processes they focus on should seem relevant to these same people if they were presented in their operationalized form. That is to say, while many of the key players in the development of Learnfare may have little or no background in theories of policymaking, they should be able to identify with the specific conditions or processes these theories address.

Because it is my belief that social science which attempts to understand the policymaking process should be rooted in the social reality of the process, it is essential that methods be employed which permit the beliefs, attitudes and understandings of the policymakers themselves to be
understood. This approach is reflected in writings of those such as Clifford Geertz (1983) who argues that social phenomena is best understood "from the natives point of view", which is to say that social scientist's theoretical and empirical knowledge of the social world should focus on the meanings, symbols, values and beliefs of the people being studied, and should avoid scientific constructs based on a relevance structure that is entirely removed from the social world of the people being studied. This orients the social scientist to the social context which gives meaning to people's action and which provides a means by which that action can be understood (Geertz, 1983).

In an effort to understand the social reality of the policymaking process being studied here, I utilized the "focused interview" approach to data collection as discussed by Merton and Kendall (1946). There are four general features distinguishing the focused interview. First, the people interviewed are those who were actually involved in a particular event or situation under consideration; in this case the development of the Learnfare Program. Secondly, the social scientist has explored the important patterns or phenomena with which he or she is concerned and which provide a basis for hypotheses or research questions to be addressed. In this case, I am concerned with a series of theoretical models of the policymaking process which I discuss in Chapter
Three. Based on the parameters of these theories, hypotheses and research questions, an "interview guide" is constructed to which links these concerns to the type of data to be collected. For this research, this entails developing general interviewing strategies that allow the Learnfare experience to be examined in reference to my theoretical models. And finally, the interviews themselves are based on the subjective experiences of those involved in the situation or event under consideration. This allows the validity of the hypotheses or research questions to be ascertained while also permitting the researcher to address unanticipated responses to the situation which in turn can allow new hypotheses to be generated (Merton and Kendall, 1946). For this research, this is to say that if we are to understand the process by which Learnfare was developed, we must understand the social reality and thus, the context in which the policymaking process was grounded.

Theoretical Models

As noted above, the primary task of this research is to come to a better understanding of the process by which public policy is developed. This consists of an exploration of the overall process as a whole, as well as a look at the role of policy analysis itself within the larger equation. Key tasks will be to explain why and how the particular policy solution we know as the Wisconsin Learnfare program was adopted. A cross section of theoretical models of the policy process are
employed here to allow various dimensions of the policymaking process to be better explored. The first three consist of classic theoretical accounts of the policymaking process as a whole. The second three are not very well known, but are used here because they provide a means to explore the role of the analyst in the process.

1) Organized Anarchy

The first approach to be utilized is that of Organized Anarchy, consisting of models characterizing the policymaking process as the interaction of several different forces that are largely independent of each other.

A. The Garbage Can Model

The Garbage can model portrays policy decisions as a product of the interaction of four streams. These include, 1) the problems recognized by the decisionmaking system, 2) the key participants at various stages of policymaking, 3) the ideas circulating, and 4) opportunities for decisionmaking. According to the Garbage Can model, decisions tend to be made within an organizational context, and organizations are characterized by problematic preferences, the limited knowledge of members of the organization's own processes, and the sporadic involvement of participants in the decisionmaking process. Consequently, the decisionmaking process has a random, ambiguous quality, rather than preceding in a rational comprehensive manner.
B. The Policy Windows Model

Like the Garbage Can, the Policy Windows approach portrays the policy process as a product of the interaction of several largely independent streams. However, the process is substantially more organized here, consisting of the interaction of 1) the problems recognized by the public and the policymaking community, 2) policy ideas circulating in the policy community, and 3) political currents, such as a change in public attitudes towards an issue or a change of political administration.

In the analysis of Learnfare, these models could potentially be used to identify the key forces that allowed such a program to develop. Is the rise of Learnfare better seen through the more chaotic interaction of four streams, or the interaction of the three identified by Kingdon? Did the growing AFDC caseloads reinforce trends in the policy community and political currents to make the development of the program possible or likely, or were none of these developments very important to the process?

2) Rational Comprehensive Model

The Rational Comprehensive model portrays the process of policymaking as a multi-stage series of an orderly nature, in which overarching goals are established, needs assessments conducted, objectives identified, alternatives examined and eventually chosen on the basis of their cost effectiveness.
And finally, implementation and evaluation strategies are planned.

3) **Incrementalism**

The Incrementalist model portrays policymaking as "the science of muddling through" (Lindblom, 1988). Policymaking proceeds as a series of marginal adjustments within an established framework. Conflict over larger goals, combined with the limits of social scientific knowledge produce an analytic pragmatism which is expressed as policies consisting of small agreed upon steps away from the status quo.

The Rational Comprehensive and Incremental models direct the research to the interpretation of the process by which Learnfare was developed. It focuses attention on the degree to which analysts expressed overriding goals, conducted needs assessments, developed objectives, and how they went about actually developing and selecting Learnfare as we know it. Was the policy framework wide or more delimited?

4) **Anti-analytical Thesis**: Top level decisionmaking uses an anti-analytical strategy, building policy on commonsensical terms. There is a deliberate absence of policy analytic capacity within decisionmaking units by which to address substantive social problems.

I will use the anti-analytical model to direct my interviewing towards A) locating welfare policy experts within the executive branch, legislature, governor’s staff and
elsewhere, (Where were the analysts?) and B) determining the extent and nature of their interaction with decisionmakers (What role did they play?). If analysts were not involved, I will proceed to ask C) Why were they not involved. I will then ask D) Who were the key players? and E) Why did they come to play a crucial role? I will raise the following types of questions: Where were the analysts? What role did they play? If they were not involved, then why not? Who were the key players and why did they come to play such an instrumental role in the development of the program?

5) **Analyst Subordination Thesis:** Advice from competent policy experts is available, but often unheeded - unless it conforms to the preexisting political preferences of decisionmakers. Politics dominates analysis.

I will use the analyst subordination thesis to direct my interviewing to A) locating welfare policy experts in the executive agency branches, legislature, Governor’s staff and elsewhere; B) determining the extent and nature of their interaction with decisionmakers and involvement in the development of the program; C) the nature of the advice they provided if there was involvement of any kind; and D) the extent to which their advice was heeded. I will raise the following types of questions: Where were the analysts?; How were they involved?; What advice did they provide, and; How did others respond to their advice?
6) Policy Analysis as Art And Craft

The final model to be used in my analysis which I term here, the Art and Craft of Policy Analysis, portrays analysis as an argumentative process, relying on the use of rhetorical skills and symbolism designed to move the decision-making community in a particular direction. This stands contrasted to the portrayal of analysis as primarily a data-driven process of problem solving.

This model focuses attention on the process by which analysts shaped the policy space, and how support for the Learnfare program developed. What role did various data and empirical studies play in program development? What was the relationship between the development of data and the use of argumentation in securing support for Learnfare? Which aspect was more instrumental and which was more supportive? These are the research questions raised by the model of Policy Analysis as Art and Craft.

It should be noted that these models are not necessarily mutually exclusive. They were selected as important arguments raised recently by those involved in the policy sciences in various capacities whose arguments have drawn some (if anecdotal) support in overviews of Learnfare thus far, such as those of Tom Corbett, discussed in the introductory chapter and at the end of Chapter Six.

Data Sources
Several sources of data were used here to gain an understanding of the development of the program. The primary source was focused and lengthy interviews with 26 people who at the time were important, often the key players in the development of Learnfare, these including DHSS analysts, legislators, legislative staff, the then Secretaries of the DHSS and Department of Administration respectively, key administrators, and a researcher from the University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty. I conducted follow-up interviews with many of them and presented approximately 20 of them with a draft of the chapters where the information they provided was used to describe the development of the program. Many provided additional feedback based on the draft provided. However, I was concerned over the possibility that after reading the initial draft, my interviewees might want to re-shade the interview content to obtain a desired slant. On two occasions, an element of this seemed to be taking place, and I responded bringing in this information only to the extent to which it could be verified by other sources. But the majority of the feedback from the initial draft was focused on correcting factual mistakes and information gaps.

The interviews were conducted in a manner designed to produce a 'snowballing effect' in which information is obtained concerning other important actors to the process.
Kingdon, 1984). The people I interviewed came from a wide variety of stations, but each was selected because they were key players or were in a position that afforded them an intimate view of some portion of the program development process. These positions included Governor Thompson's campaign staff, those working under him in key agencies to develop the program, Department of Health and Social Services analysts and administrators, state legislators and/or staff, people from state interest groups who provided welfare reform ideas and/or who were involved in hearings concerning Learnfare, and a researcher from the University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty.

Various written materials were also used as additional sources of data, as available. One source was newspaper clippings from the 1987-1988 period - predominately from important Wisconsin newspapers such as the Capitol Time, the Milwaukee Sentinel, but also national level newspapers such as Education Week and the Christian Science Monitor when they covered relevant issues. A second source was public documents from the Wisconsin Legislature and in particular, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) pertaining to the development of the program. These proved to be my most extensive and valuable written sources of information. Many of them were provided to me by interviewees, particularly those from the DHSS. I found that policy papers and various intra-
departmental memos circulated on a regular basis, thus corroborating and often extending the accounts obtained through interviews. If there was important information left out of these papers and memos, or if the information they provided was slanted, interviews and input from other sources certainly provided no indication of it. Policy papers and memos were also circulated from state-based social welfare interest groups to the DHSS and these proved valuable as well. Another source was relevant articles and unpublished papers from academicians and think tanks and research institutes, such as the Institute for Research on Poverty and the Robert M. La Follette Institute, both from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute.

Analytical Strategy

The essential questions explored here are; Where did the ideas for the Learnfare program come from, and what accounts for the structure of the program? I explore the process by which individuals, groups or institutions played an instrumental role in shaping the policy space and why they and/or their ideas became so important. The role of analysts was explored as well. The first task was to identify them and come to an understanding of why they became important. If politics dominated analysis, I will want to know how so: who the key players were and why did they come to dominate the
process? As the role of important participants were identified, I asked more specific questions concerning their perceptions of the causes of the poverty and welfare problem, the solutions they recommended, and individuals and groups influencing their perspective.

I conducted the interviewing in a manner allowing the entire sequence of program development to be reconstructed. Each hypothesis will be used to direct the interviewing process towards distinct questions. In this manner, I explored the role of analysts and key players in the development of the program: Were analysts present?; Who were they? What were their ideas and suggestions, and; What role did they play in constructing the Learnfare program as we know it? If the analysts were absent, marginal to the process or simply overruled, then what actors and ideas were important and why?

**Interview Strategies**

The general interviewing task here was to pose questions that lead respondents to identify stakeholders and their relative importance, sources of ideas, key assumptions and decisive events and factors in the process. Some general types of questions raised were: How was the policy problem determined? Who thought they were good ideas and why? Where did they get these ideas and information? Where did the Learnfare idea come from and how was it changed, and by whom, on the way to becoming legislation? Who were the analysts and
who provided expert testimony? How did these analysts enter into the process?, and, what other policy ideas were considered? Of course, the scenario was slightly different with each interview, so I tailored the questions accordingly. The accounts provided by key informants generally were in agreement.

I tried to approach each interview with a particular focus in mind, but enough flexibility as to respond to new leads and unanticipated information. I attempted to get a solid account from each person of the key events and stages of program development in which they were involved, and to avoid loaded questions in the process. But it was also necessary, especially with the key players, to get a sense of how they perceived the welfare issue and how they consequently interacted with others. This necessarily introduces the risk of selective recollection and the favorable reinterpretation of past events by key players. To some extent, these are unavoidable risks. Substantial difference or disagreement arose between interpretations of more controversial events such as the Governor’s line-item veto which expanded Learnfare in Chapter Six. Here I used additional sources to shed light on the disparate accounts. There were two factors which helped to counteract these risks. First, I was generally successful in obtaining corroborating accounts of controversial points, key events and important processes in the development of the
program. Secondly, I was provided with important memos and policy papers that were circulating among key analysts, other key players and DHSS staff during 1986 and 1987 that pertained to welfare reform in general as well as Learnfare itself. These were useful in verifying and extending important parts of my data base - in particular, those sections pertaining to the crucial process of problem structuring, reviewing policy alternatives and developing the Learnfare proposal itself.

Besides establishing the objective nature of the involvement of the people I interviewed, it was also necessary to get a sense of how they saw the issues at the time and what people or events were important to them. Depending on the person involved, I tried to raise some combination of the following questions: First, what did they see as the cornerstones of the poverty and welfare problem? Secondly, what individuals or groups influenced their perspective, and how so? Third, what courses of action did they see as most likely to address the problem, and why? Fourth, what individuals or groups influenced their perspective on the merits of various alternatives? Fifth, what course(s) of action did they recommend, when and to whom were these recommendations made, and how were they received? Sixth, when and from whom did the idea that school attendance of teens of AFDC families be monitored and subject to sanctions in the event of truancy? Seventh, what did they see the system of
monitoring and sanctions as able to accomplish; how would it solve the problem? That is; Why was this particular approach selected over others?

Since the information I needed required me to at some point probe into the assumptions made by important players, a quick disclaimer must be made here to the political scientists. My reference to the assumptions in the case of state legislators is not to suggest that these are necessarily personal assumptions of these individuals. Politicians do not necessarily advocate a given policy because it addresses a particular problem, but rather, because supporting a policy and using a particular rhetoric brings important political dividends, such as enhanced constituent approval, or a political IOU within the legislature (Rosenthal, 1990). In referring to assumptions, I am pointing to the underlying problem sense that drives the structure of a policy proposal. It is important to be aware of this distinction, especially as it pertains to Legislators who are subject to a constant flow of pressures from key interest groups and constituency, often locally based. Compared to the governor, they are subject to more immediate reelection concerns and a short term policy interest. How did pressure from constituencies, reelection concerns and shorter term policy interests impact the response of Legislators to the learnfare initiative?

As I moved into the interviewing, I anticipated
substantial resistance from many key players. Despite such concerns, for the most part I was pleasantly surprised at their willingness to grant an interview, as a large number of them were in high level positions and many had received promotions in the years since their involvement with Learnfare. The biggest challenge was working my way into their busy schedules. For the majority of key informants, it was necessary to schedule at least several days in advance. Sometimes it required persistence and the capacity to persuade them through their secretaries that what I was doing was important, that it would benefit greatly from their input and that I should be granted a personal interview. However, once the interviews got started and they began to recall the important events and experiences, their recollections gained momentum and the conversations lasted a great deal longer than we had been scheduled for. The majority of the interviews were quite lengthy - a one hour interview was commonplace.

I generally used a tape recorder to enhance the accuracy and volume of my data base. This allowed me to reconstruct lengthy accounts of the policy development process and to reproduce statements with sufficient clarity to use quotes as needed. The times when I did not use the recorder included one situation where an interviewee expressed a preference that it not be used, follow-up interviews, and several interviews in the latter stages of the research where the interviewees
were less crucial to the process and the interviews were shorter. I did not transcribe the interviews word-for-word into text form, for it was unnecessary since my task was to draw out information relevant to my data base.

For those who might choose to conduct research in this manner, I can offer a few suggestions. First, in approaching people who have information that would be helpful (or their secretaries) it is essential to anticipate the reservations, even fear they may have in granting an interview. For one thing, it is important to convince them that the research is important, especially as it relates to people with whom they may interact. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, there may be great political liabilities for those whose input is important or even crucial to the research. It is important to identify those liabilities ahead of time and address them in approaching a subject. I also strongly recommend the use of a tape recorder when possible, as it greatly enhances the quality of the data base that can be obtained.

Data Analysis

With the initial interviewing period completed, I compiled the information into a two chapter reconstruction of the development of the Learnfare Program. I added to this a series of supporting documents from various sources, those from the DHSS being the most important. With this data base established, I began to analyze the program in reference to
the theoretical models discussed in Chapter Four.

The initial challenge was the more mundane task of reconstructing the basic sequence of events. This required a lengthy recounting of the political events as well as the various planning and administrative tasks necessary in turning an idea into a proposal and then into an operational program. I felt the focus on the description of important events and procedural details early on would help provide a more concrete data base from which the interpretive process could later draw.

From here, I moved to reconstruct the social dynamics underlying the problem structuring and program development. This eventually led to a lengthy exploration of the means by which top analysts and other key players came to identify the nature of the problem, and how they set about to structure the policy framework from which Learnfare and numerous other initiatives would eventually flow.

**Ethical Considerations**

There are several immediate ethical considerations to be made. First, there is a danger of improperly reconstructing the events that were part of the development of the Learnfare program, thus misrepresenting the actions of important actors, both individual and collective. This could be a source of embarrassment or political harm to the actors concerned and could become a source of misperception of the process on the
part of those who read this research. Where there are important differences in the accounts of events provided by interviewees, the opposing accounts will be identified in the dissertation text.

There is also a potential danger when directly quoting people that their remarks may be inaccurately reproduced or taken out of context, again causing personal or professional harm or embarrassment. In both cases, the use of the tape recorder prevented inaccurate reproduction and made it less likely comments would be taken out of their context, since the discussion was generally played back several times in full detail as I worked it into my text. In addition, as I began interviewing people, I immediately realized that all interviewees should be offered a draft of those chapters of the text where their input was used to reconstruct the Learnfare process, thus affording them the opportunity to respond and point out errors, omissions or other problems. The assurance that they would have a chance to examine my use of their input also made them more receptive to the interview, knowing they could respond to any situation where their input was not used accurately and responsibly. Moreover, in the Informed Consent Form which interviewees read and signed, and at the outset of each conversation, I explained the purpose of the research and the manner in which their input would be used. In addition, when the interviewee perceived the tape
recorder as a source of trouble or discomfort, I honored their request that it not be used. Fortunately, for the sake of my data base, only one interviewee made such a request.
PART THREE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WISCONSIN LEARNFARE PROGRAM
CHAPTER FIVE: THE LEARNFARE IDEA

By the mid 1980s, state governments in many different corners of the nation launched their own welfare reform proposals. Some of these came under the WIN and Workfare programs which allowed the states considerable latitude in shaping their attack on welfare dependency. Many states passed additional reforms out of their own discretion. Clearly, the new consensus ideas, calling for the linkage of public assistance to performance obligations of recipients in the form of a social contract, had garnered tremendous support across the nation.

Nowhere did welfare reform produce greater controversy and receive more attention than in Wisconsin with the development of the Learnfare Program. In this chapter, the origins of the Learnfare idea are traced up unto January of 1987, the point at which it was introduced to the Wisconsin state government as a possible legislative initiative. Following this, in Chapter Six, we trace the development of the Learnfare idea as it passed through the various forums of state government. The information in both chapters comes from indepth interviews with key participants in the development of the program and supporting documents that were circulating throughout the state government at the
time.

The Wisconsin Idea

Questions as to the generalizability of the findings for theories of public policy were raised by the dissertation committee. The problem is, this study only examines the development of one program in one state, and such confinement to one given situation is clearly the limitation of the case study approach. The strength, of course, is that a more rich understanding of that one program is afforded. Nonetheless, the program I have chosen to study was developed in a state whose intellectual and political traditions are somewhat unique. There is no way to actually correct for this. The only viable option is to briefly identify these differences so that the reader is aware them when considering the generalizability of the findings for theories of public policy.

When examining the policymaking structure in Wisconsin from a national perspective, the state’s reputation as a policy laboratory quickly comes to the fore. At around the turn of the century, institutional structures were already emerging in Wisconsin to build the social sciences and provide an avenue by which scientific knowledge could be applied to real world problems. John R. Commons, an economist from the University of Wisconsin was among the
early policy elite during this period who used their academic training in a variety of governmental advisory capacities, most of these at the state and local level. The "Wisconsin Idea" was a legislative reference service created in 1901, linking professors at the University of Wisconsin to the political process by engaging them in research and the drafting of legislation (Smith, 1991). This tradition is alive and well in the state today, and is represented by, among other things, the Institute for Research on Poverty and the LaFollette Institute for Public Affairs, both at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and the Employment and Training Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

As state policymaking goes, it is fair to say that policy analysis and the use of expert advice in the political process play a relatively important role in the policymaking process in Wisconsin. It is important to keep this tendency in mind when applying the findings of this research to other situations.

A Welfare Profile

The state of Wisconsin has a reputation as a "progressive" state in social policy development, in the sense that benefits and services to various populations tend to be higher and more comprehensive than the statistical average state. This is an important point to keep in mind as we discuss the welfare debates which preceded and
accompanied the development of the Learnfare Program. Governmental statistics from 1985, ranking states by welfare effort, show Wisconsin to be at or near the top for all five indicators used. Wisconsin ranks fifth for state welfare expenditures per 1000 dollars personal income, ninth for welfare spending as a percentage of total state general expenditure, sixth for number of AFDC recipients per 1000 population, first for adequacy of AFDC grants and sixth for adequacy of AFDC grants with Food Stamps (Albritton, 1990).

In December of 1986, according to a Department of Health and Social Service (DHSS) study, there were about 95,000 active AFDC cases statewide, with a total recipient population of 290,000. Sixty-three percent of recipients were children and eighty percent of the adult recipients were women. Two-thirds of AFDC caretakers were 30 years old or younger and approximately twelve percent were younger than twenty-one. Only sixteen percent were two-parent households (Tropman, 1987).

The state of Wisconsin also operates a General Relief (GR) program. As federal welfare programs developed for a variety of populations such as the elderly, the blind, the disabled, widows and orphans, and low income single parents with children, General Assistance remained responsible for other needy groups. Some of these include the mentally and physically disabled who do not meet federal SSI criteria,
older persons (50-64) without young children and a large number of young unemployed people, many of these young males. Due in large part to the coverage of the unemployed, a substantial majority of General Relief recipients are male and over half are in the 21-40 year old category (Tropman, 1986).

**The Changing Policy Environment**

Although Wisconsin had, and continues to have, a reputation as a fairly generous state in terms of the benefits it provides to those in poverty, and a relatively liberal posture towards social welfare, it is equally clear that the political climate and policy environment was impacted by the national trends in social policy discussed in Chapter Two. In particular, new consensus social policy ideas emphasizing the social contract and reciprocal obligations were making substantial inroads throughout the state during the mid-1980s.

It is also clear that there were economic pressures facing Wisconsin and other states that were conducive to greater austerity in social policy. A draft of prepared remarks by Governor Anthony Earl to the Wisconsin Social Services Association (WSSA) in June of 1986 highlighted the situation of fiscal stagnation for the State of Wisconsin. The projections at this time, based on economic factors, independent of changes in law, were for very slow average
annual rates of revenue growth. The previous 15 years had seen an average annual growth rate of 9.6 percent while the projections for the 1990s ranged from 4.9 to 7.8 percent. If fiscal problems were not challenge enough, Wisconsin, like most states, had experienced rapid growth in AFDC rolls over the past 15 years. AFDC expenditures statewide rose from $41 million in state/federal funds in 1970 to $560 million in 1985, and had averaged a 5 percent increase annually over the past three years, according to the Department of Health and Social Services documents (1986).

We pick up the story in early 1986 under Governor Anthony Earl. Within the DHSS under the leadership of Secretary Linda Reivitz was Peter Tropman, Administrator of the Division of Policy and Budget, an important policymaking arm of the department, who would be a very important person in establishing the policy framework from which the specific Learnfare proposal could be developed. Tropman would seem to have been ideally suited for the position. With a Masters of Social Work from the University of Wisconsin, three terms in the state assembly during the 1970s where he had been heavily involved in social policy, and then a part time university teacher of social policy, Tropman was more than equipped to respond to the changing tide of social welfare in the 1980s.

Tropman had been a liberal proponent of a strong social
welfare system and had made these issues central features of his years in the assembly. Now in the DHSS in the mid 1980s, Tropman remained intellectually and professionally involved with these issues. But the intellectual and political climate of social policy had changed, and like many other experts nationwide, Tropman began to appreciate the new consensus style of thinking.

Although he remained committed to a strong welfare system, Tropman came to the conclusion that in terms of programs for the poor, the basic structure of the welfare system was flawed. In essence, he saw merit in the societal obligation aspect of conservative thinking and felt it should be incorporated into social policy. According to a former DHSS official, Tropman was also well aware that the public’s attitude towards welfare was also changing - becoming increasingly concerned with welfare dependency and evermore supportive of the idea that welfare recipients should be obligated to take responsibility for themselves. He was reading Lawrence Mead’s *Beyond Entitlement* (1986) discussed in Chapter Two, and was in agreement with Mead’s basic premise that welfare needs to be provided in the form of a social contract linking government’s obligation to provide assistance to the poor to the reciprocal obligation of the poor to take active steps towards economic independence (Mead, 1981, 1982, and 1986). Tropman also felt
that Charles Murray (1984) raised good questions, but regarded his proposals as unworkable.

As noted in Chapter Two, issues of welfare and poverty were receiving considerable attention in the mid 1980s, especially at the state level. And some of the studies being discussed pointed to flaws in the system that were promoting welfare dependency and irresponsible behavior. The crux of the problem to Tropman was research indicating that while perhaps two-thirds of adult, working-age welfare recipients at any one time would be off the rolls fairly soon, the other third were long term dependents. But it boiled down to a question of how one looked at the data. The following is extracted from one of Tropman’s policy papers developed early in 1986, entitled "From the Welfare Mess to Wisconsin Works":

- The answer to how long people stay on AFDC depends on how you look at it.
- If you look at it one way AFDC appears to be a self-limiting disease.
  * Data from a national longitudinal study of AFDC recipients show that, of all women who ever receive AFDC, 57% will do so for less than 3 years and that only 20% will receive aid for 6 years or more.

- But if you look at it another way, for over half of the current caseload, AFDC may be a chronic condition.
  * The same study shows that the caseload at any one point in time is quite different. Only about 20% of the current caseload will receive AFDC for less than three years, while 55% will receive AFDC for 6 years or more.

  * Limited data available in Wisconsin indicates
that while the length of stay on AFDC might be shorter, it is only slightly so. That means that in Wisconsin approximately half of the AFDC-R caseload (40,000 families and 140,000 children) are living off of and being reared on welfare -- in homes in which income is insufficient and the role model is one of dependence rather than independence (Tropman, 1986).

The real tragedy, Tropman adds, is all of the children statewide enduring poverty, stigmatization and social isolation as members of welfare dependent households.

Research from Mary Jo Bane, David Ellwood and others (see Ellwood, 1988 for summary) suggest that 18 months on AFDC is the critical time period - separating the short and long-term recipients. Those still on welfare after 18 months are likely to become long-term dependent. Also likely to become long-term dependent are those who go on welfare before their eighteenth birthday. Having represented a district in the middle of Milwaukee, Tropman had seen first hand that the system did not deem to be working. It was not that welfare was causing the problem for the most part. It was more a sense that it seemed to be exacerbating dependency and irresponsibility.

A television documentary aired in the mid 1980s revealed some of the basic flaws in the system, and reinforced Tropman’s thinking. It was a Bill Moyers documentary on welfare and the family which included interviews with a variety of fairly articulate individuals.
caught up in the welfare system in New York, including AFDC mothers, fathers of AFDC children, mothers of AFDC mothers and so forth. Particularly poignant were the revelations of an articulate man who had been involved in several different relationships with several different women and had fathered children with them in the process. Asked if he felt a sense of responsibility, he replied no, that the welfare system takes care of them. He was then asked what he would do if there were no welfare. At first, he blew off the question. He was asked again, and as Tropman recalls, it was almost as if a terrifying nuclear weapon had gone off in his head and he responded "that would be horrible!" as the enormity of the consequences suddenly hit him. The documentary reinforced what some studies were suggesting; that welfare was reinforcing perceptions among many recipients that society is responsible and that welfare is more of a right or a personal triumph than a temporary means of support in hard times (see Moynahan, 1987 for additional discussion).

Crossroads

For Peter Tropman and others, the evidence seemed to indicate that the welfare system was fundamentally flawed, and Mead's basic argument was right. What struck Tropman, was that if you look to other social programs, there is an implicit social contract. But as AFDC had evolved, the right to welfare was based primarily on continued demonstration of
financial need, regardless of one’s willingness to uphold basic social standards or effort to achieve economic independence. Another thing that struck him was that other programs for various vulnerable populations such as the disabled and the elderly, contained normalization as a central goal. For example, active efforts are made to incorporate the disabled into the labor market. In fact, right within the DHSS at the time (and today as well) groups of the mentally disabled perform menial assembly tasks within the Office of Policy and Budget. With such expectations of the disabled, how could the able-bodied poor be exempted? Moreover, this hurts the poor themselves. Tropman recalls: "It seemed to me that Mead was right; that if you exempt people from the responsibilities of normal behavior of adults, then you by definition say that something is wrong with them."

Tropman remembers that evaluations of the new jobs-tax credit programs supported Mead’s contention. These are programs in which the employer is eligible for a tax credit if they hire a welfare recipient. People who presented themselves as such to prospective employers were less likely to be hired then recipients not under such arrangements, due to the effects of the stigmatization. It would appear that for employers, the negative characteristics attributed to recipients outweighed the attractiveness of the tax credits.
Tropman also observed that an important historical trend has changed societal expectations of mothers with children. From the time when Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) was created in the 1930s, through the AFDC developments of the 1960s, women were not expected to participate in the labor force. But of course, this all changed very quickly and by the mid 1980s, even women with fairly young children were expected to work. Tropman points out that the labor force patterns of women have come to closely resemble those of men. The problem was, welfare had not really changed; there were no strong requirements that AFDC mothers work. In the 1980s, it was no longer publicly acceptable to exempt welfare mothers from the double burden of single mothers in the middle classes.

The question for Tropman became what to do about it. If you are going to target programs to break the cycle of dependency, who should you target? His guiding theory became: You want to target those who are at the greatest risk of joining that one-third of AFDC recipients who are long-term dependent. The return on investment would not be great for the other two-thirds. Specifically, the cost-benefit picture looked best for targeting A) those who go on AFDC before their eighteenth birthday, and B) those still on AFDC after eighteen months.

Working from these intellectual cornerstones, Tropman
circulated a variety of memos and policy papers, (including the one from which the above quote was drawn) on a variety of welfare reform issues to Governor Earl and a variety of DHSS officials, particularly those in the Bureau of Policy and Budget. And through these papers, a variety of issues were raised within DHSS and to some extent throughout state government. In addition to large amounts of analysis of AFDC and the welfare population, a portion of which was examined above, the papers circulated a wide variety of policy proposals, including those dealing with income maintenance, work and job training programs, child support programs and others. Many of these ideas would surface again as recommendations to the Governor’s Commission on Welfare Reform in 1987 through the efforts of Gail Propsam and Bob Wagner of the planning and evaluation office within the DHSS. Two of the dominant themes in these recommendations were the emphasis on performance requirements of AFDC recipients through stronger reciprocal obligations and the provision of stronger support services such as education, training, child care and the extension of Medicaid benefits to help the welfare dependent achieve economic independence (Tropman, 1986).

DHSS Secretary Linda Reivitz was interested in welfare reform and wanted Earl to promote a more work-oriented strategy. She involved Tropman in the effort. Changing
sentiment within the legislature was also evident during this period, reflected in a fairly wide level of support for a freeze in AFDC grant levels. Prior to this, the operating principle had been to raise benefits or index them to state wages.

With AFDC benefit levels frozen, DHSS officials were told to change their emphasis. Tropman, together with Democrat Joe Strol of Racine and another legislator, developed the Work Experience and Job Training (WEJT) Program, a non-mandatory workfare program which was implemented in five counties on a pilot basis, and Earl signed it. Tropman wanted a more comprehensive program that would emphasize the social contract by having the welfare office work with the recipient to spell out a plan for economic independence. The program could combine several elements including job training, public work experience and whatever was needed to address the deficits of the recipient that stand in the way of work.

A major problem was that in order to compensate for the loss of public assistance and Medicaid that come with economic independence, a mother would have to be paid approximately 9 dollars an hour. (This assumes a mother maximizes child care benefits, and actually faces a serious medical problem in which she is forced to draw maximum Medicaid benefits during the time period being measured - an
unlikely scenario. However, even under more normal circumstances, the disincentives that come with benefit termination are real.) Even if she got a job with some medical benefits, they would most likely be less than medicaid. In essence, the loss of benefits that come with independence create a substantial notch effect. And the child care dilemma was real. Tropman felt that many AFDC mothers wanted to work but may have balked when faced with the loss of child care.

The question became how to construct a system in which you are always better off working. One idea Tropman liked was to make day care rather than AFDC the entitlement program, which would greatly reduce the disincentives of moving from welfare into the labor force. For example, the welfare office would provide 300 dollars for child care and make work the benefit to be earned. Moreover, this effectively promotes a "benefit" that society strongly supports. Tropman realized the political trends had begun to move in this direction - the legislature was increasingly interested in cutting AFDC benefits. Moreover, the DHSS was anticipating a modest drop in the AFDC rolls due to changes in demographic structure, which alone would free up some resources. So why not take the lead within the Bureau of Policy and Budget and propose perhaps a 5 percent reduction in AFDC benefit levels and transfer the funds to day care

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and transportation?, he thought. Besides day care and transportation, Tropman also moved on a more general level to advocate a shift of resources towards job creation, education and training; in essence, a shift of emphasis from income support to investment. Included here were recommendations for more rapid and complete development of workfare.

These were some of the ideas Tropman discussed or developed through a series of papers and memos distributed primarily to DHSS officials, especially those in the Bureau of Policy and Budget. He began with what was termed "The Crossroads Papers" which focused attention on the need for broad reform within various human services areas. Tropman began by noting that organizations must change and adapt to their environment, that complacency was dangerous. An important new element in the environment was the successful organization and increased influence of conservative think tanks in the political spectrum, which had resulted in a whole series of conservative policy proposals around the country. In fact, one of the packages Tropman distributed contained Gregg Easterbrook's "Ideas Move Nations" article from the January, 1986 edition of the Atlantic Monthly. Tropman thought it was important for human service professionals not to dismiss these ideas out of hand or try to ignore them. Instead, he urged DHSS officials to examine
these ideas with an open mind and perhaps draw on those that have legitimacy (Tropman, 1986).

For human service professionals, the most important component of this 'ideas revolution' was increasingly influential arguments that many social programs not only fail to solve the problems they were supposed to, but actually exacerbate them. It was Tropman’s contention that while these claims may not actually be true, they do call attention to the fact that many social programs do contain some shortcomings, and that it is essential that human services professionals rescrutinize their programs and be open to new ways of addressing old problems. Most importantly, he warned them of the dangers of complacency amidst a conservative revolution. The term "crossroads" symbolized the urgent need for the human services to grow and change, and find new ways to improve the lives of their clients (Tropman, 1986). The series of Crossroads memos and other policy papers developed and distributed in the first half of 1986 provided a blueprint for reform in a wide variety of areas in an impressive display of rational comprehensive planning.

Most central to our purposes here were recommendations for a new approach to social programs for the poor - in particular, the ideas for new ways to link welfare to programs designed to promote the economic independence of
recipients. At the heart of these memos and policy papers and a central issue in the welfare debate, was A) Tropman’s acceptance of the argument that welfare dependency is a serious problem and B) his support for performance requirements for recipients, both themes demonstrating his acceptance of the cornerstones of the new consensus thinking.

However, the interviews I conducted and the DHSS documents I examined reveal that some people in important positions within the agency disagreed with Tropman’s thesis. One of these was Gerald (Jerry) Berge from the Division of Community Services who circulated a policy paper to Tropman and others such as Secretary Reivitz, countering Tropman’s arguments. In particular, Berge challenged two of the claims made in Tropman’s paper "From Welfare Mess to Wisconsin Works". First, he challenged Tropman’s characterization of welfare as a mess, and took issue with several of Tropman’s arguments. One of these was that benefit levels had contributed to the state’s inability to reverse several undesirable trends among the poor. Berge argued that there was no evidence to support this claim. Berge also argued that Tropman’s methodological approach to measuring length of time on welfare counts any stay during the course of a year as having lasted the entire year. He went on to cite a Michigan study which found that only 8 percent of welfare
recipients stay on welfare nonstop for five years. Berge also pointed out that Tropman's own papers indicate that an increasing percentage of AFDC mothers are actually working, a trend which has corresponded to the growth of welfare - hardly evidence that AFDC discourages mothers from working (Berge, 1986).

And secondly, Berge took issue with Tropman's argument that new consensus style legislation was necessary to forestall more drastic legislation down the road. Berge cited remarks by liberal economist Lester Thurow and conservative George Will arguing that welfare actually does what it is supposed to do, and fairly efficiently. Berge went on to argue that the culprit is not welfare itself, but the societal choices that make welfare necessary - in particular those choices which have increased the disparity between rich and poor over recent years. Berge criticized Tropman's suggestion that a certain portion of public assistance funds be removed through benefit cuts and reinvested elsewhere, namely day care. Current benefit levels are already well below the state definition of poverty. Berge argued that the savings coming from the benefit cut would not begin to cover the costs of day care were it to become the entitlement program (Berge, 1986).

Berge lamented that people have trouble admitting that it is necessary to simply mitigate social problems and
suffering that society cannot actually eliminate. He went on
to make some of his own recommendations. One of these was
stepped-up child support payments. A second proposal was to
allow recipients to retain most, rather than a fraction of,
their earnings - that the current reduction in the AFDC
grant for each dollar earned was far too great, to the
disadvantage of the recipient worker. He also recommended
that the state provide a wage subsidy of one dollar for each
hour of documented employment (Berge, 1986).

There were others, both within and beyond Wisconsin
state government who took issue with Tropman’s proposals,
among these, the Catholic Church. The Social Ministry
Department of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee had received a
copy of Tropman’s paper “From Welfare Mess to Wisconsin
Works” and responded in July with their own statement. In
essence, they argued that Tropman’s proposals were
unrealistic and would impose undue hardships on the AFDC
population. The real problem, they argued is not welfare,
but the economic system which is marked by high unemployment
which guarantees that large numbers of people are forced to
resort to public assistance. Tropman’s proposal for reform
penalizes people who are victimized by circumstances beyond
their control. The real task, the Archdiocese maintained,
was to achieve economic development in the form of job
growth (Archdiocese of Milwaukee, 1986).
Another proposal sent to Tropman and others in DHSS in late February by David R. Riemer entitled "Eliminating Poverty in America", outlined a strategy replacing many of the existing welfare programs with a federally funded, state and locally administrated job creation program. In this plan, companies or other organizations would submit contracts to hire those whose incomes are below 125 percent of the poverty line and put them to work on useful projects which otherwise would not be accomplished. The proposal was based on the assumption that the vast majority of the poor are willing and able to work. Those who are not able to work would be provided a monthly cash payment sufficient to raise the individual’s or family’s income to 125 percent of the poverty line. By reducing the bureaucracy and administrative complexity of the plethora of programs that compose the current system, Riemer argued that his job creation approach would actually be less expensive (Riemer, 1986).

Overall, liberal democrats tended to see Tropman’s and other new consensus ideas as too mean spirited, and interviews as well as DHSS memos suggest that Governor Earl tended to share these views. Tropman’s proposal to cut AFDC benefit levels and shift the resources to day care and transportation never became serious proposals from the standpoint of the DHSS or the Governor during this period in the first half of 1986. And this was a recurring situation.
For all of Tropman's work on welfare reform ideas, and in addition to the conceptual dilemmas that needed to be solved, he was working under an Administration which tended to resist new consensus style thinking. There appears to have been somewhat of an intellectual rift between Tropman and many others in DHSS at the time. A high level DHSS official at the time recalls that Tropman saw the department as oriented towards certain types of assistance which they are very effective in providing - namely sending out checks - thus providing various forms of income maintenance. But they clearly should not be relied on to develop an effective welfare-to-work strategy.

Moreover, Tropman was unable to convince DHSS Secretary Linda Reivitz that the Department should move on his proposals. And as we saw earlier, Tropman had been engaged in an argument inside DHSS with Jerry Berge over these very issues, and from the department's standpoint Tropman did not win. But it is also important to realize that Governor Earl himself had come of age politically during a liberal age where the entitlement concept dominated much of Democratic Party thinking, and he was from a Catholic background - two factors promoting the care of the poor in a relatively protective fashion. Certainly Earl's presence had some influence on the ideological tone of the higher level DHSS officials with whom Tropman was working. As Tropman recalls,
he and a couple others had tried to stick the Moyers tape on Earl in hopes that he would have a change of heart, but the most he ever said about it was "I guess I’ll have to think about this."

The Thompson Campaign

Meanwhile, it was an election year, and Governor Earl faced a challenge from Republican Assemblyman Tommy Thompson. And welfare reform was developing into an important campaign issue; not so much as a question of what should be done, but as a divisive back-and-forth volley between two different approaches. Governor Anthony Earl emphasizing positive investments in human capital while challenger Tommy Thompson calling for greater expectations by society of those on welfare. Tom Corbett of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin refers to this as the "soft" versus "hard" approaches to welfare, the first emphasizing entitlement, the second, emphasizing performance obligations in the tradition of the "new consensus" theme of 1980s social welfare thought.

Polls during the Fall of 1986 had shown Thompson in the lead. Thompson had a conservative voting record in the assembly, certainly to some extent a reflection of his Elroy-Mauston area district. And welfare reform was a centerpiece of his campaign. While Governor Earl was never enthusiastic about new consensus style reform, Thompson
strongly endorsed it as the campaign developed. In fact, in one of my discussions with Tropman, he pointed out that a substantial portion of Thompson's platform for welfare reform - particularly that dealing with AFDC recipients and performance requirements - came out of his own Crossroads papers, although he was unsure as to how the Thompson campaign obtained these papers. A member of Thompson's 1986 campaign staff maintains that the ideas Thompson expressed were very similar to those of Tropman, but came from more general sources - such welfare reform ideas were percolating throughout policymaking and political circles by this time.

However, Tommy Thompson's position on welfare reform was clear from the outset. On a general level, he argued that too much was being spent on AFDC, a conviction reflected in a number of subsequent proposals. An important theme was the "border issue". A variety of people had voiced concerns that Wisconsin was a welfare magnet; that AFDC recipients from other states were moving in to take advantage of the state's relatively generous benefits. A campaign advertisement picked up on this issue, and added to it the slogan "What will Tony Earl think of Next". Thompson advocated a 5 percent cut in state benefit levels and a two-tiered system in which recipients from other states with lower benefits would receive only the benefit levels of their previous state for a period of time. Another campaign
theme, and central to our purposes here, was a proposal that the state enforce much stronger performance requirements of its AFDC recipients. Not surprisingly, the workfare theme was another strong campaign item from the beginning. Although workfare had been implemented in roughly half of the states by the mid 1980s, Wisconsin had abstained until 1986, when WEJT - Wisconsin’s version of workfare was implemented in five counties on a pilot project basis as noted earlier. But Thompson was in favor of developing it much faster. At this point, the social contract perspective, the centerpiece of the ‘new consensus’ of the 1980s, had come of age in Wisconsin politics and was now at the fore of a gubernatorial campaign.

With the exception of support for workfare, the social contract idea remained highly generalized at this point - primarily a conviction that policy changes were needed that would require those on welfare to take more active steps to establish or reestablish their economic independence - that society’s compassion for those in poverty as expressed through public assistance be reciprocated by an honest self-help effort on the part of the dependent.

An ad hoc group of people associated with Thompson’s campaign staff played an extremely important role in developing the campaign platform. The group had weekly or bi-weekly Saturday morning brainstorming sessions, informal
in nature, during which a variety of ideas were thrown out into the ring for discussion. The group consisted of Milwaukee lawyer John Maciver who chaired the meetings, Thompson's legislative assistant Rick Chandler, state legislator Betty Jo Nelsen, Madison lawyer James Klauser, Milwaukee businessman Bruno Mauer, insurance executive Tim Hefty, and Mary Kohler, a Republican campaign activist, and others who would participate from time to time. Collectively they examined policy ideas and issues, deciding whether and how they should be developed. They would then bounce the ideas off of Thompson and a decision would be made as to whether and how they should be worked into the campaign platform.

Learnfare

As the campaign developed, the idea of reciprocal obligations for public assistance broke into new territory. It was during this time period that the Learnfare idea was born as a campaign plank. At some point during the summer of 1986, someone gave Rick Chandler a book discussing the possibility of requiring or encouraging prison inmates to acquire literacy skills in exchange for shortened prison tenures. Chandler liked the idea, reasoning that literacy and other basic skills are essential for one to function productively in the modern world. He threw it into the ring for discussion during a group meeting on welfare reform,
asking whether similar incentives to encourage education could be built into the welfare system. The air was already thick with the workfare theme, and the group entertained the possible blending of the two into a distinctly new idea; in return for welfare, recipients could be obligated (specifically required) to take advantage of educational opportunities. Thompson liked the idea, and the campaign platform was expanded during the summer: In return for welfare, the social obligations of citizenship should not only require job training followed by mandatory work, but also require recipients to become literate and to acquire other basic skills necessary to function in society. Educational requirements would parallel work requirements. This marked a departure from "get rid of welfare" rhetoric and the acceptance of more of the social contract approach, and may have been evidence of another side of Tommy Thompson. Timothy Cullin, former Democratic Majority Leader who would go on to serve in the Thompson Administration recalls that Thompson was more compassionate than his public image, that he cared about little people. Nonetheless, the Learnfare idea at this point reflected primarily the "hard" approach to reform - while AFDC itself was permissible, it must be accompanied by obligations to attend school - or else.

The Thompson Victory

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Tony Earl had been confronted with some difficult circumstances in his term as Governor. Faced with a large deficit when he took office in January of 1983, Earl had raised taxes. He had also antagonized many when he chose to locate a prison in the Milwaukee area. He had gone on record earlier advocating a Waupun location and they had generally supported him in the election, but on further examination it seemed to Earl and some of those around him that Waupun was one of the worst places for the prison - most of the state's prisons were already there, it was difficult to recruit and retain minority staff, and the Milwaukee area had some advantages. But the decision carried substantial political fallout. Politics involves difficult decisions over issues dividing a variety of groups and constituencies and there were some people in and around state government who felt Earl had not mended enough fences along the way. Polls in October showed Thompson with a substantial lead, due in part to some of the negatives faced by Earl. In a fairly close election in November, Tommy Thompson defeated Earl. The victory was a mild upset, as there were some who could see it coming.

During the transition period of six to eight weeks steps were taken to begin to crystallize some of the campaign ideas. Although the Learnfare idea was not the dominant campaign theme most of the way, it had gained
ground, and was among the ideas Thompson decided to move on after the election. A state law stipulates that if a non-incumbent Governor is elected, he or she will be provided with certain resources to set up a transition office to begin work on the next biennial budget. With the election in early November and the introduction of the budget in January, the Governor-elect is faced with a massive task and little time compared to a sitting Governor. People from the budget office along with Thompson's own staff met several times in Thompson's legislative office for briefings, discussion and decisions as to what was to be included in the new governor's budget. Those present included Rick Chandler, who was still on Thompson's legislative staff and who was very active on the campaign staff, members of the civil service state budget staff consisting of Bruce Reines, budget analyst and economic support assistant on the Human Resources team; Mike Hughes, the Human Resources team leader and the appointed Division Administrator in Management Services in the DHSS; Dick Lorang, Deputy Budget Director. Also present were Madison lawyer Jim Klauser who had run the budget office during the transition period, and Camille Stefen, who subsequently joined the Governor's policy staff.

The secretary of the Department of Administration appointed Jim Klauser to head up the state budget office during the transition period and Klauser and Chandler,
assisted by Bruce Reines and Mike Hughes, set about preparing the upcoming biennial budget. Given the time shortage, the first task was to see which elements of the now defunct Earl budget could fit within Thompson’s framework. Some of these included employment training and workfare pilot project proposals – the Earl Administration and Democratic legislature had already been moving towards workfare. Those I spoke with concerning this transition period indicated that Thompson wanted to implement the Work Experience and Job Training (WEJT) program statewide. Within Thompson’s legislative office they set about developing a rapid implementation strategy.

The Push for Learnfare

It was during some of the transition period meetings here that Governor-elect Thompson again pushed for the development of the Learnfare idea – which at this point proposed that in return for benefits, 16-17 year old mothers on welfare be required to stay in school. This was quite a suggestion to some – certainly this had not been done before, and Reines pointed out to Thompson that at minimum it would be necessary to obtain a federal waiver. It was the budget staff’s task to help the governor transform the Learnfare idea to some sort of plan for action, however vague. Faced with the apparent necessity of a waiver together with the shortage of time, they decided to set
Learnfare in the budget in the form of a placeholder, which consisted of general language within the budget authorizing the DHSS to seek a federal waiver and develop a plan for the program, while not providing the specifics at the moment. The only other alternative would have been to delay it a year. As such, the placeholder allowed the learnfare idea to be placed into the budget while it still existed only as a generalized idea. But this was workable, for after the introduction of the budget in January, it would be May or June before it passed through the Legislature and July or August before practical considerations would have to be ironed out. In the intervening months, the idea could be examined, modified or replaced with new ideas.

After campaigning on improving state-county relations, Thompson felt it was important to bring new blood into government and now made the following key appointments which are relevant to welfare reform. Jim Klauser, who had directed the budget office during the transition period was appointed Secretary of the Department of Administration. Rick Chandler, Thompson's legislative aide in the Assembly, who had been an important part of the campaign staff was named State Budget Director. Former Senate Majority Leader, Democrat Timothy Cullen was appointed Secretary of the DHSS. Cullen brought in former legislative aide Al Fish to head up the Division of Policy and Budget. Also in DHSS, Thompson
appointed Jim Meyer, a Columbia county lawyer with an extensive background in child care and related issues, and who had been a legislative liaison for Columbia county to lead the Division of Community Services.

On balance, 1986 brought the beginnings of substantial change within Wisconsin state government. The 1980s new consensus welfare reform ideas made great inroads, for better or worse, into the state's policy network and political sphere. In the first half of the year, new consensus social policy ideas were strongly present within the DHSS, an agency which had been dominated by the entitlement approach to welfare. While the Learnfare idea had not yet emerged, the policy framework from which it was drawn was gaining currency. Welfare reform was also a central issue in the gubernatorial campaign in which challenger Tommy Thompson defeated incumbent Tony Earl on a platform emphasizing new consensus thinking on social policy. The Learnfare proposal, recommending that AFDC recipients be required to attend school in return for benefits, was introduced as a new idea and controversial plank in the Thompson campaign platform. In the transition period following his election victory, Thompson demonstrated the Learnfare idea to be more than a campaign item when he instructed his staff to reserve a place for it in the upcoming 1987-89 biennial budget.

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CHAPTER SIX: FROM IDEA TO POLICY

The election of Tommy Thompson to the Governorship on a platform that included welfare reform as a key item, gave a major boost to welfare reform. Thompson was clearly interested in a cut in the level of the AFDC grant and the reinvestment of the savings into programs promoting economic self-sufficiency among recipients. Within this framework, he was strongly favorable to the idea of holding AFDC recipients to performance requirements in return for benefits. But his overriding interest at this point was to come up with a strong welfare reform package for his first biennial budget. One of the campaign proposals that might be a cornerstone of this was the Learnfare idea, which at the time, called for requirements that 16-17 year old mothers on AFDC be required to attend school. But this was only a general idea, and the task remained to determine whether or not it was a workable idea and how it might be developed into a program. In this chapter, we trace the development of the Learnfare idea into a full fledged welfare reform program. While a great deal of attention is given to activity within the DHSS, it should be remembered that Thompson’s interest in a strong welfare reform package and his enduring interest in the general Learnfare idea was an important catalyst to the development of the idea.
and its eventual passage into legislation.

Thompson's Move

In January, as he prepared to assume office Thompson continued the effort begun during the transition period to explore the possibility for the development of the Learnfare idea. The general idea was placed into the upcoming biennial budget as merely a placeholder. At this time, he took some high level people from the DHSS to Washington, D.C. to visit with top officials in the Department of Health and Human Services to get a sense of the degree of flexibility the state of Wisconsin could be granted in operating its AFDC program. High level federal officials representing the AFDC, Food Stamp and numerous other programs were present.

The general response in Washington was that there was a new flexibility in the air now in the second Reagan term. In more concrete terms, it meant that waivers of exemption from particular federal welfare administrative regulations would now be easier to obtain than in the past where administrations had been noted for inflexibility. As former DHSS official Susan Felker-Donsing recalls:

The new twist under this Administration was; "We are really serious about experimenting with new ways of operating this program (AFDC)...you tell us what you want to do and we're going to be very interested in what you ask us." And they didn't guarantee that they would approve it, but they just said we're going to be very friendly on this one (Interview with Felker-Donsing).
This new flexibility would be well tested in the upcoming period as Wisconsin sought four waivers simultaneously. In addition to Learnfare which by now had the highest visibility, waivers were needed in three other areas which related to Learnfare. First medicaid coverage would be extended from 6 months to one year for recipients who go to work. Secondly there were to be changes in work registration requirements. And third, they prepared a waiver request form that would change what was then the current $30 plus one-third disregard in which AFDC recipients who are employed are allowed to disregard the first $30 of each month's earned income and one-third of the remainder for the sake of the public assistance needs assessment. Under current rules, this consisted of the $30 plus one-third disregard for four months, followed only by a $30 disregard for the remainder of the year at which point the recipient would no longer be eligible for earned income disregards. In essence, the $30 plus one-third disregard was built into the public assistance rules to counteract some of the work disincentives present. The Thompson Administration, in an effort to extend and even-out the income disregard, requested a substitute which would level it off at $30 and one-sixth for a full year.

Felker-Donsing's primary contact person in Washington for the obtainment of the waiver was Nancy Cambell, who provided
the feedback during the daily political, bureaucratic and procedural troubleshooting necessary to obtain the waiver. Reagan’s welfare advisor, Charles Hobbs, was a second contact person who proved influential. For example, Governor Thompson had suddenly announced at a press conference, apparently to the surprise of DHSS officials that he was going to have the federal waiver signed by a particular day — seemingly an impossibility to these officials. When Felker-Donsing placed a quick and worried phone call, Reagan’s welfare advisor reflected the high level of interest and even support from Washington in assuring that everything would be okay. And so the Learnfare idea was placed into the budget in January. Once the Thompson Administration took office, the action shifted over to the DHSS.

One of the crucial developments at this time was Thompson’s appointment of Democratic State Senate Majority Leader Timothy Cullen of Janesville as Secretary of DHSS. Many were surprised that a conservative governor should appoint a relatively liberal Democrat to head up a major state agency. While the appointment probably had an electoral twist to the extent that Cullen was fairly prominent in state politics and a possible gubernatorial challenger to Thompson in 1990, it also represented a bold and accommodating move by the Governor. It sent the message that Thompson was not an ideological right winger and would effectively open up greater
bipartisan involvement in social policy development, thus making legislative approval of proposals far more likely. Cullen had dealt with welfare issues before, but more in terms of process than substance due to his leadership role over the past five years, and at this point he welcomed the opportunity for more substantive involvement. While the acceptance of the position by Cullen was not predicated on his abstaining from the 1990 Governor's race, its ultimate effect was to remove any real interest on his part in waging such a campaign. Cullen's support as secretary of DHSS would prove instrumental in securing the passage of upcoming social welfare legislation.

In January, Cullen brought in another Democrat, Al Fish from Governor Earl's office to head up the Division of Policy and Budget. And this was an important appointment, and crucial for understanding the development of Learnfare, for while there are many Divisions within the DHSS, the Division of Policy and Budget has quite substantial responsibility for developing policies and programs, and thus Fish became a central player. From the standpoint of a policymaking unit such as the Governor's Office or the Division of Policy and Budget within DHSS, Fish was perhaps best described as a highly competent policy generalist at the time of his appointment. Overall, his presence added to the diversity within the Thompson Administration, representing a mixture of
people including Republicans, Democrats and career civil servants with longterm agency experience - all coming together to work on welfare issues.

One of Thompson’s major campaign themes had been welfare reform - a variety of issues had been raised, and it was Fish’s assignment to come up with the specifics of a good welfare reform package. Recognizing that he was not a welfare expert at the time, Fish considered it necessary to pull together a broad variety of theories and studies pertaining to welfare and dependency that were under discussion in governmental and academic circles.

**Welfare 101**

As Fish prepared to look at the welfare reform issue, it turned out that a valuable resource was right at hand. Peter Tropman, former assemblyman from Milwaukee who had since been Administrator of the Division of Policy and Budget under Earl and prior Governor Lee Dreyfus, had been active within the DHSS in promoting a wide variety of welfare reform measures. Ordinarily, with the new Administration, and the appointment of Fish to Tropman’s old post, Tropman would have left as Al Fish assumed his position. But Fish recognized his expertise and kept him on board for a crucial two month period.

As we noted in the previous chapter, in early 1986, Tropman had distributed a series of "Crossroads" memos and policy papers to certain people throughout the DHSS and
elsewhere calling for renewed efforts at innovation and change within the human services. Through these memos Tropman noted the successful organization and increased influence of conservative think tanks, of which an important component was arguments that many social programs not only didn't solve the problems they were supposed to, but had exacerbated them. It was Tropman’s contention that while these claims may not actually be true, they do call attention to the fact that many social programs do contain some shortcomings, and that it is essential that human services professionals scrutinize their programs and be open to new ways of addressing old problems. Most importantly, he warned them against the dangers of complacency amidst a conservative revolution. Through the Crossroads papers, he went on to develop a blueprint for reform in a wide variety of areas. One part of this grew out of his acceptance of the new consensus arguments that welfare dependency was a serious problem that needed to be addressed through new performance requirements for recipients. Tropman had developed these ideas under Earl, who never really warmed up to them. With Thompson, the situation was completely different: He now had his chance.

Over the past 5 years, Tropman had also accumulated a monumental collection of articles, clippings and publications pertaining to the welfare issue which he had read and marked with his own comments. Included were studies examining who is
more likely to get on welfare and who is more likely to stay on welfare, and the key variables in the equation. The literature also included a variety of arguments concerning welfare, ranging from those calling for its radical curtailment and even elimination on the grounds that it inevitably fosters dependency, to arguments for much more generous benefits - that anything less keeps people dependent and is a form of welfare bashing. All manners of studies and arguments were examined - hard to soft, conservative and liberal, newspaper clippings, journal and scholarly articles and theories and federal information. He had nicknamed the collection "welfare 101", and it now became a textbook of sorts as one of Tropman's main tasks was to educate Fish on the welfare issues. Together, over the next few weeks they examined the large body of literature Tropman had accumulated over the past years, and did some brainstorming that involved other DHSS staff such as planning analyst Gail Propsom. It must be emphasized that they had no requirement or obligation to support the Governor's Learnfare idea - that welfare recipients to be required to attend school, there were other options out there.

Among the writings Fish and Tropman examined were those of Laurence Mead who was a visiting professor at the University of Wisconsin during this period. Over the course of this two-month period Fish engaged him in several long
conversations over the theoretical and practical aspects of welfare reform. While he liked Mead's conceptual approach very much, he regarded him as overly punitive concerning the requirements end of welfare. Ultimately, it boiled down to differing assumptions about the poor. Mead's approach lends itself to a view that many of those on welfare want to be there, that they are playing the system to their (short term) advantage. Fish recalls:

...I still think that in his mind of minds he still believes there are a lot of people who are stuck on welfare who want to be there; and I don't agree with that. I think some of them are there because they don't know any better - and they've always lived that way and they think it's (getting off of welfare) just impossible. But that's different from feeling ..."alright, this is what I want to do"...I always had the feeling that in the back of his mind, ...Mead felt that those people were choosing to live that way (Interview with Fish).

While borrowing heavily on Mead's civic obligation approach to social policy and its performance requirements, Fish and Tropman nonetheless wanted to avoid an overly punitive system. The dilemma they faced can be understood in reference to the "soft" versus "hard" approaches to welfare - the entitlement versus reciprocal obligation or carrot versus stick dichotomy discussed in the last chapter. Fish and Tropman decided that successful welfare policy must blend the two, thus providing a somewhat stronger accompanying support structure than Mead seemed to advocate.
But they were also looking out to the political landscape around them and came to the conclusion that both intellectually and politically, the welfare issue had come to an impasse of sorts; neither side recognizing the complexity of the issue or making much effort to entertain the argument coming from the other side of the fence. Neither polar viewpoint seemed likely to ever make a difference; simply pouring more money into benefits without expectations would surely foster more dependency, while cutting benefits and making requirements without any support would throw more people off of welfare and expand the underclass. The hope of training and educating people for work would be lost. Essentially, they reasoned, in both the political and intellectual division over welfare, people were talking past one another. A conceptual breakthrough was needed to break the impasse.

Tropman had pushed for welfare reform in the past. A year before, he had recommended to Earl and to others in the bureaucracy that AFDC benefits be cut and reinvested elsewhere and that recipients should be required to work and go to school. However, he had run into difficulties at this point as he was unable to persuade DHSS Secretary Linda Reivitz to move on these ideas. Moreover, Governor Earl was closer to the entitlement approach to public assistance characteristic of more traditional liberal thought and was thus hesitant to
impose more stringent performance requirements on recipients. But Governor Thompson liked the idea. Now, with a new opportunity in his hands, Tropman became a central figure laying the conceptual basis of what was eventually to become the Learnfare program. Together with Fish, he decided to concentrate first on changing the type of question being raised. As they saw it, the traditional question had too often been "Are you for or against welfare?" The question needed to be "What kinds of programs can we design and what expectations can we make on people who for either temporary or almost permanent reasons have fallen into a state where they can’t have a job and have no means to support their kids, need medical care, day care and training – and they’re stuck?" It appeared that for perhaps half or more of the AFDC population, welfare was working according to the theories of its original designers as a safety net in the sense that the recipients were off of it within a couple of years, having used it as a stop-gap measure during a time of hardship or social dislocation. But there was another sizable group of long term, even intergenerational recipients who seemed unable or unwilling to break the cycle of dependence.

Through their literature survey, the variables of education and marital status came to the fore as primary determinants of long-term dependency. Specifically, research showed that those who were married and those with a high
school degree were less likely to be long-term welfare recipients. The educational element was particularly galvanizing because it seemed fairly amenable to the levers of public policy; you could require mothers on welfare to finish high school.

With the conceptual basis largely established, they set out to draft just such a proposal. At this point, Al Fish took over to transform the idea from the conceptual domain to a concrete policy proposal by sometime in March of 1987, also drawing on the assistance of planning analyst Gail Propsom.

The Commission

Meanwhile, Governor Thompson gave welfare reform an extra push and by creating the Governor’s Commission on Welfare Reform in the late winter of 1987. Former Democratic Senate Majority Leader and newly appointed Secretary of the DHSS Timothy Cullen, was chosen to chair the commission. Also appointed to the commission was Democratic Assembly Speaker Thomas Loftus, Republican Assembly Minority Leader Betty Jo Nelsen, Democratic Senate Majority Leader Joseph Strohl and Republican Senate Minority Leader Susan Engeleiter.

From March into May, the Governor’s Commission on Welfare Reform met every two weeks or so to come up with a series of recommendations in many important areas of welfare reform of which the Learnfare proposal was only one of many. The issues
considered by the commission included prevention, tougher expectations and obligations for recipients, increased emphasis on work, and administrative improvement. The dominant themes coming forth in final recommendations included 'poverty prevention' - getting kids through high school and preventing teen pregnancies; a more clearly defined social contract between recipient and state, and the need for some experimentation with programs.

The forum was public meetings attended by commission members, a few staff people and perhaps a couple of reporters. Primary staff members were Bruce Faulker, Deputy Administrator of the Division of Policy and Budget, Bob Wagner, Director of the Bureau of Evaluation and Gail Propsom planning analyst, both of these positions located in the Division of Policy and Budget. Propsom later assisted in the preparation of the waiver. The staff played an important role, sending in very brief statements of policy ideas which had come from scholarly articles, ideas from other states, recommendations by interest groups, and ideas they had dreamed up themselves, in general, items to get people thinking about different ideas and approaches. Some of these were discussed by the commission while others were abandoned or disposed of within legislative staffs. With so many different brief policy ideas being circulated by the staff, a particular option was not likely to be noticed (and perhaps not even read) unless it was an idea
that a commission member already supported, or one that had been brought to his or her attention by legislative staff. And it was not a process of starting from a blank slate, for as Bob Wagner recalled, most people came into the commission with their own welfare reform agendas.

The Learnfare proposal also differed from many other agenda items in that it was an idea that had received a great deal of attention from Governor Thompson and which had now been supported and developed along more concrete terms by Fish and Tropman of the DHSS Policy and Budget Office. Consequently, in taking up the Learnfare issue, the commission for the most part worked within Fish and Tropman's framework. The task of the commission here was more that of garnering additional bipartisan support, along with some oversight and modification where needed, than debating the basic idea or weighing its merits. As it turned out, the issues like child care, transportation and welfare benefit levels accompanying the program so commanded the attention that the school attendance requirements were not a focal point.

Consequently, Learnfare passed into the recommendations very quickly, but not before undergoing one very important change; the target group was expanded from teen mothers to all teenagers in AFDC families. Many Democrats wanted the program to apply only to teen mothers, but to Cullen and some others, the focus on teen mothers raised an equity issue. It seemed
unfair to sanction a teen mother while her brother’s truancy carried no penalty. And from an effectiveness standpoint, it seemed that if the objective was to keep people in school, it should apply to all teenagers. They decided that the program must apply to all teens from AFDC families.

As it stood now, teens who had dropped out of school, or who were at risk of doing so, would be required to verify attendance monthly. Other teens would provide verification at the six-month AFDC review. Where a teen had failed to meet school attendance requirements, monthly AFDC benefits would be forfeited for each month of noncompliance. However, the state would not hold teen mothers to attendance requirements where licensed or certified daycare was not made available. It was estimated by the DHSS that some 2,600 teenage "caseheads" age 13-18 would be subject to the Learnfare attendance requirements through age 19. At least 1,700 of the 2,600 were not in school at the time. On top of this, another 1,500 teenage caseheads who were 19 years old, but who had not completed school would now be required to do so, or forfeit their benefits. The broadening of the target population to all teens of AFDC families extended the Learnfare requirements to another 34,000 teens, at least 2,000 of which were not currently in school. There was also an unknown, but substantial number of teens who had sporadic attendance.

Some of the other recommendations were to expand the Work
Experience and Job Training (WEJT) program, expand the Community Work Experience Program (workfare) through state money to serve welfare recipients in non-WEJT counties, to expand child care for recipients who leave AFDC for work, the extension of work program requirements to two-parent households and recipients with young children and a variety of other reforms.

Cullen's heavy involvement in the entire process was extremely important to the development of the Learnfare proposal; in the past Democrats had been more inclined to support welfare without strings attached. It is likely that Cullen's acceptance of the idea of reciprocal obligations as now applied to education was enhanced by the diversity of policy advice available to him at the time. One source of input supporting the concept of school attendance requirements came from a DHSS official who pointed out that in some counties active steps are taken to apprehend truants - regardless of their economic background. The official went beyond this to recommend that the administration send a uniform message on the importance of education, and follow the lead of the state of Kentucky where truancy could cost a teen his or her driver's license. This particular idea went nowhere, but the core idea of making school attendance part of a social contract between individual and society was further solidified.
Cullen shared Tropman and Fish's conviction that it was essential for poor people to finish high school and that it was reasonable to mandate it for welfare recipients, but like Fish and Tropman, he too added that it was also necessary for the state to provide child care and transportation along the way. Cullen and Fish also recognized that politically, it would be necessary to provide support services if the proposal was to pass. Through his central role in the process, it become more acceptable for other Democrats to support the idea that there were some reasonable expectations that could be made of welfare recipients; that it is legitimate to require a mother on welfare to attend school - as long as she is provided a support system along the way. In essence, this meant that the state had to make sure that transportation and child care were provided, that her children were old enough for child care, and that medical care be continued after job placement. Because of the public attention school attendance requirements drew, it is easy to understate the importance of the support services. And Cullen was there to stand up and support the program as the absent hand of the missing father.

Consequently, Learnfare became more than an enforced requirement that mothers on welfare attend school or lose their benefits; it became a package of services allowing them to go to school without harming their kids. Moreover, the commission recommended that all teens from AFDC households be
subject to Learnfare attendance requirements. Medical care, transportation and child care expenditures would have to increase sharply. And the package as such helped the program retain the support among most liberals and conservatives; conservatives favored the new attendance requirements, figuring recipients would be more likely to get off of welfare and less money would be spent, while liberals could say that the requirements were reasonable since they were accompanied by an increased package of social services. In this manner the proposal amounted to a repackaging of welfare in that the money saved through the cut in AFDC (Thompson still wanted the 6 percent cut) and sanctions would be transferred to support services. But it was more than that, for the additional child care, transportation and extension of medicaid benefits would far exceed the AFDC cut. And as Cullen maintains, the service package was acceptable to Governor Thompson:

He (Thompson) was comfortable having those services in there. He wasn’t dragged (in) kicking and screaming on those things. He wanted it in there. In fact, he was willing to have Learnfare cost more than the existing process. In other words, he was willing to spend more on services than he ever would recoup in sanctions (Interview with Cullen).

The Administrative Proposal Strategy

It was up to DHSS to actually develop the Learnfare plan as it was in the Governor’s biennial budget, so after Tropman laid the conceptual base, and Fish and his staff developed the
basic proposal, it was now up to several other staffs to work out the administrative details. By now, the proposal was that in return for AFDC support, all teens, not just mothers, must attend school in order to remain eligible for AFDC. The next steps involved operationalizing an endless array of administrative details such as the "must attend" clause, and how that attendance is to be monitored, what is meant by "no longer eligible", and so forth. In this regards, the DHSS faced two general tasks. First, it was necessary to spell out the proposed statutory language changes to the state statute, which in effect, required the department to look more closely at the proposal and come up with the most workable plan. Secondly, it was necessary to develop a federal waiver request, which in effect meant developing all the policies related to the program.

Since the proposal involved changes in AFDC, Medicaid and child care, DHSS budget director Roberta Kostrow developed an ad hoc task force in April, consisting of an interdivisional committee of people from several staffs who were all involved at various points who met weekly. In a meeting, Secretary Cullen said he wanted a welfare reform coordinator to lead these sessions and eventually chose Susan Felker-Donsing. Felker-Donsing worked closely with Diane Waller, Head of the Policy Planning and Evaluation section in the Division of Community Services who joined them in the summer as well as
John Erikson, and together, these three were the central people in the development of the program from this stage on. But they drew heavily on the task force staff representing relevant organizations such as AFDC, Employment and Training, Community Services, Child Services, Budgeting, Evaluation and so forth.

For example, planning analyst Gail Propsom (after they divided up into groups) helped to determine exactly what aspects of federal AFDC and employment and training law had to be waived to implement the waiver package that included Learnfare. They also divided into subgroups to examine particular pieces of the waiver package. Felker-Donsing and her staff in Policy and Budget were given primary responsibility of oversight for developing the final proposal. An important reason for this was the objections of some of the lower level AFDC staff to the proposal early on, that it was punitive, a form of welfare bashing and that it was unfair to reduce what was seen as only a minimal benefit when recipients could not control their own behavior or that of their teenage children. Consequently, there was concern higher up where support was strong, that the AFDC staff might not move effectively on the development of the program.

There were other issues to be worked out, one of these being the question of how quickly the program should be set in motion. Clearly, Governor Thompson wanted to move ahead

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rapidly towards full implementation. But one DHSS official recommended that Learnfare be implemented in several phases, beginning with 13 year olds the first year, 13 and 14 year olds the following year and so forth until all teens were covered. Another possibility was to begin with 15-to-18 year olds the first year and eventually expand it to cover all teenagers from AFDC households. The idea was to give the target population and their families a chance to adjust to the new rules over time. Another issue concerned whether Learnfare was to be implemented as a pilot project or statewide. The commission had recommended it as a pilot project, while the Thompson Administration wanted to go statewide.

One element that surely favored rapid development was the popular support from the public and the press, and DHSS officials knew this. In a sense, it was hard for many people to be against it, because opposition to Learnfare was almost equated with indifference to education. Nonetheless, there was a significant number of people in important positions, among these, many Democratic legislators and some civil service workers within the DHSS who opposed the program. Primary reasons for opposition were arguments that the proposal was harsh, punitive, and with a capacity to place new power in the hands of unruly teenagers of AFDC families.

Building Momentum

It is easy for programs to bog down when political or
bureaucratic support is waveri.g. Despite the support
Learnfare seemed to have from the top of the Administration,
state newspapers and most likely, large portions of the
public, there was enough opposition or mere ambiguity within
both the legislature and the DHSS to potentially railroad the
program. As such, an important task for Division leaders
within DHSS as well as Governor Thompson himself was to keep
things rolling. As a high level DHSS official who shared
responsibility for sustaining the momentum remarked, very
often, it is not actual resistance by the bureaucrats that
takes place, but rather a more subtle desire on their part for
the program to die of its own accord.

An important source of additional legitimacy for the
program came from beyond Wisconsin state government. In April,
several nationally known poverty/welfare scholars from the
University of Wisconsin's Institute for Research on Poverty
gave speeches to the entire Bureau of Economic Assistance,
some 300 AFDC employees within the Division of Community
Services at their annual meeting. This was not surprising
since these experts were regular advisors to policymakers, and
here in Wisconsin the Bureau had a close relationship with the
Poverty Institute. The speakers included Irving Garfinkel,
Visiting Professor Lawrence Mead and Weinberg.

The resounding message from the speakers to the Bureau
that day was that a fundamental change had taken place in
attitudes both in Wisconsin and nationally. The public, and for that matter many of the academic experts, had gone from supporting the concept of entitlement with no corresponding requirement of recipients, to expecting or demanding a concurrent responsibility. Rights and responsibilities should go together, a cornerstone of the "new consensus". Moreover, they tied the Wisconsin experience to national trends where programs like workfare had already taken hold. As an attending DHSS official observed, it lent intellectual credibility to the Learnfare proposal as well as other elements of the Governor’s welfare reform package. Further, it appeared to support what the voters had decided in the polls the past election. Given such political support, the DHSS official acknowledged that it was difficult to determine whether the experts truly supported this change, or whether they were simply adapting to changing political currents.

Because of the increasingly high visibility and controversial nature of the Learnfare program, some argue that it's development did not follow the usual lines. Diane Waller recalls:

This thing took on a life of its own..It didn't go through what would normally be the process for an initiative like this because it had so much visibility. Normally one of the analysts in the section would have the lead on developing it. But because it had so much visibility, there were a group of basically three of us (Waller, John Erikson and Susan Felker-Donsing) who worked on putting this together with the input from many,
many sources, and I think that's a key (Interview with Waller).

Incrementalism in the Legislature

When the Learnfare proposal in the Governor's budget went to the first legislative house outside the Joint Committee on Finance, the Commission also made it's recommendations to them. By the time the Learnfare proposal hit the legislature, it carried substantial momentum. From Thompson's Gubernatorial campaign, to the Policy and Budget staff of the DHSS, and to approval by the commission, the proposal moved into the legislature with passage at least in some form regarded by many as almost a foregone conclusion. To an important degree, any momentum behind Learnfare in the early stages was due to the fact that it was coming from the Governor himself, rather than the Legislature, and being a newly elected Governor, Thompson would enjoy a fair amount of latitude in his first budget.

There were several DHSS people who recalled that to a large extent, the DHSS was more or less telling the legislature what was coming through. A leading legislator I spoke with, however, disagreed, arguing that passage at this point was not a foregone conclusion. There were concerns and outright objections to be voiced, especially among Democrats. If there is disagreement over how much momentum the Learnfare proposal had when it reached the Legislature as a part of
Governor Thompson's 1987-89 biennial budget, the disparity is most likely due to whichever version of Learnfare one is referring to. The reason for this is that within the Legislature, there was not overwhelming support for the proposal as approved by the Governor's Commission on Welfare Reform, and by the Governor himself. In fact there was strong initial opposition among many Democrats who saw it as harsh and punitive. Even some Republicans were concerned about the administrative burdens which might accompany the program. Consequently, within the legislature, the original focus was on a scaled-down approach to Learnfare.

Tom Loftus, then Democratic Assembly Speaker, recalls that when the legislature took up the Learnfare portion of the Governor's budget, the focus was on intergenerational poverty, in particular, the high risk for pregnant teens on AFDC and teen mothers on AFDC to become long-term welfare dependent. Most legislators were aware of literature testifying to this vulnerability. As many legislators saw it, these young women already had two strikes against them: they were living in poverty on AFDC and they were either pregnant or already had children. Not finishing high school would probably be the third strike. Within this confined framework, the basic Learnfare idea might be worth trying as a means to get them a high school diploma. If school attendance was to be required as a condition for receiving AFDC, many felt (especially among
Democrats) that support services such as day care and transportation must be part of the package. Democratic legislators like Loftus realized that Governor Thompson wanted a welfare reform package and that he was likely to get at least a substantial portion of what he wanted, so it was necessary to negotiate some deals that would at least be tolerable to both sides. A scaled down version of Learnfare became the general framework for the dialogue at this point; most did not anticipate the state-wide program or the targeting of all teens from AFDC households as the Governor and the Welfare Commission had recommended.

Because the Learnfare proposal was part of the Governor’s biennial budget, the legislative proceedings took place as public hearings. As one Senator recalls, Learnfare became an instrument of politics in the legislature; the presence of the sanctions had a strong "get tough" appeal to conservatives. And if that wasn’t enough, who could oppose a bill that appeared to symbolize the importance of education for poor people? As one legislator noted, ultimately most legislators were more influenced by the desire to support, or the fear of being seen as opposing, welfare reform, than by specific analytical arguments one way or another. In essence, the majority, for better or worse, were more concerned with political ramifications than the merits of evidence and the persuasiveness of arguments when casting final votes, so it
was important that Learnfare contain elements politically defensible to both Democrats and Republicans.

From a political standpoint, the bipartisan composition of the Governor's Commission on Welfare Reform proved instrumental in sustaining the momentum of the proposal through the legislature, despite the legislature's move to sharply delimit the program. Republican support was already likely, and Republicans Betty Jo Nelsen, the Assembly Minority Leader and Susan Engeleiter, the Senate Minority Leader would both be able to help quell any resistance on that side of the aisle. More importantly, with the Democrats controlling both legislative houses, it was essential to secure substantial support on their part. Assembly Speaker Thomas Loftus and Senate Majority Leader Joseph Strohl, the Democratic commission members were instrumental here. In addition, the very construction of the proposal had been a bipartisan effort with former Senate Majority Leader Timothy Cullen playing an instrumental role as the Secretary of the DHSS and chair of the Governor's Commission on Welfare Reform, and Democrats such as Fish and Tropman playing a central role in conceptualizing and developing the initial proposal.

In addition to the bipartisan nature of the program's development, the new consensus intellectual trends in social policy were also favorable to bipartisan agreement. Overall, the constellation of political and intellectual forces were in
favor of the program, viewing it from the perspective that something needed to be done, and there seemed to be no other immediate alternatives. The support of Republicans and ideologically conservative legislators was almost a given as noted above. The Democrats were somewhat divided. On the one hand was the more conservative wing who supported welfare reform and who were fairly close to Cullen who was instrumental in spearheading the program politically, and on the other hand a liberal wing who were reluctant, but many of whom shared the spirit of the times that it was important to try something new.

Senator Gary George of Milwaukee voiced strong objections to Learnfare which embodied most of the opposing arguments. One argument was that it was bad in principle by going after one class of people for truancy - the welfare poor, while playing hands off to the rest of the teenagers. Secondly, he felt that family members would be unfairly punished for the transgressions of one. Moreover, it might put teens in school who didn’t want to be there, disruptive teens who cause problems for teachers. George also opposed the use of sanctions when alternative education might be more appropriate. Coming from a Milwaukee inner city district plagued with plant closings and low wages, George saw many people who lacked a sense of hope, to which the negative sanctions of Learnfare seemed the wrong response. Moreover,
many of those dropping out of school did so because of pregnancy - how was Learnfare going to address the high rates of teen pregnancy in such areas?

There were mixed feelings about Learnfare among some legislators. Senator Robert Jauch from the northernmost state district, reflected some of the ambiguity on the Democratic side. Jauch, like others, was clearly concerned that the sanction aspects carried the potential to be a new means of punishing poor people. But like many other Democrats by the mid-1980s, he was convinced that the cycle of welfare dependency was a serious problem. And within the Learnfare proposal, he saw a couple of features with some redeeming value in this regard. First, he saw the potential of the support services such as transportation and child care to remove some barriers to self sufficiency. Secondly, he viewed education as the real hope for those in poverty, and thus supported the focus on school attendance. But even here, Jauch was critical of the proposal for its assumption that just keeping teens in school was enough, and that schools would take care of themselves - what was needed was an improvement in the educational environment itself. The proposal contained no provisions for alternative schools or classrooms, tutoring services, or assistance for teachers, in short, nothing to deal with students with special needs or who had behavioral problems.

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I was... one of the last converts who were upset with Learnfare because they didn't put the "fair" in learning. And they didn't put anything in this program to improve the educational environment for the students who returned. They merely created the penalty if you did not send your child to school. And I was upset by this. There were many of us who felt it was just a political proposal that it was very poorly thought out, but felt that it probably could work out. But we all wanted Kids back in school (Interview with Jauch).

Senator Jauch later added:

There was an assumption by the Administration that the schools could take care of themselves, and that students would naturally learn once they returned to school. ...They had simplified the whole issue, and came up with a very good idea, but like so many welfare reform proposals was superficial... they were more interested in sanctions and punishing people than they were in educating people (Interview with Jauch).

Moreover, many Democrats regarded some of Thompson's other proposals such as a 6 percent cut in AFDC benefits as potentially damaging, while Learnfare, despite its downside seemed to have some potential. Clearly, there were some differences in the interpretations of the attendance requirement and sanctioning elements. State Budget Director Rick Chandler argues that the reference to punishment which often accompanies criticisms of Learnfare such as that above is unwarranted, that the guiding theme behind Learnfare was to require people to complete their education for their own good - not to bring punishment to them. But the debate would continue.

In terms of program content, the key ingredient in
securing substantial support among skeptical Democrats was the educational component discussed by Senator Jauch above. Joseph Strohl shared Jauch's conviction that education was the key to improving the lives of the welfare dependent, and these sentiments ran deep in Democratic thinking. Schooling had been a major issue for Democrats in past welfare reform measures. In the deliberation over workfare, a major bone of contention had been Democrats' strong belief that there be no limits placed on welfare recipients for the number of years of schooling they sought or the type of educational program they entered, be it remedial, a tech school or university.

As they took up the learnfare proposal, many Democrats had accepted the idea that individual responsibility is paramount, a central plank of Republican thinking; but they wanted it to be backed up with support services. The educational component had such possibilities. The thinking here was 'Okay, we expect these women to stay in school. That's a great idea. But, we also have the obligation to provide day care and transportation for them along the way'.

There also were some interest groups around the state who were concerned about the ramifications of Learnfare or who actively objected to the proposal. Among these were groups from the welfare advocacy community such as the Wisconsin Nutrition Project, Legal Action of Milwaukee, Family Services of Milwaukee, the Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee, the Arch
Diocese of Milwaukee and the Social Development Commission. They took advantage of the opportunity to express their concerns at the Legislative Council hearings chaired by Tom Loftus. The Legislative hearings consisted of legislators, various other public officials and members of the general public - all appointed by Tom Loftus to hold hearings over a variety of public issues, of which Learnfare was only one. The social welfare network around the state was generally opposed to the Learnfare proposal, but was divided over strategies of opposition. One wing favored opposition to Learnfare in any form, while a second wing, figuring it was going to pass anyway, felt it would be most effective to concentrate energies on promoting a modified version of the program, most likely something closer to what the legislature was considering.

The opposition from the Office for Social Concerns from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee reflected some of the concerns of the groups who testified within legislative hearings. Their objections were based on what they regarded as three fundamental weaknesses of the proposal. First, it singled out truants from AFDC families rather than truants at large, in effect becoming a form of class warfare. Secondly, despite the stated purpose of improving the lives of the poor, they regarded the proposal as a more cynical attempt to save money for the state by shrinking the welfare rolls. And third, the
Archdiocese felt that larger economic forces such as low wages, part-time work and unemployment were primary sources of welfare dependency, and thus it would be ineffective, and perhaps punitive to focus on welfare recipients themselves as the source of the problem. At the hearings, they concentrated on expressing caution, claiming that "self sufficiency" arguments were a fallacy, citing various studies and figures showing a discrepancy between the large number of job applicants in localities and the actual jobs available.

Members of the Archdiocese involved with this advocacy even confronted Governor Thompson directly in face-to-face meetings in his office to express their concerns about the program. But Thompson stood firm in his support for the measure. It finally boiled down to a telling exchange, in which the policy advocate from the Archdiocese said something to the effect of "You can't convince me that it won't hurt people", to which Thompson replied, "You have to convince me it will".

When it became clear that Learnfare was going to pass, the Archdiocese joined forces with other groups to push to soften what they regarded as the most punitive aspects of the program, and to provide additional protections to those who might be sanctioned. A few such changes were eventually added to the program well after it was implemented. For the most part, these groups appear to have been in the minority in
their opposition.

Overall, the prognosis for Learnfare improved as discussion continued within the legislature. First, Governor Thompson and Chamille Stefan from his policy staff demonstrated strong commitment to the program and displayed perseverance in keeping the proposal alive amidst substantial controversy. Secondly, political support from others in key positions was crucial. In developing and promoting the proposal, DHSS Secretary Cullen and Director of the Bureau of Policy and Budget Al Fish worked creatively to anticipate and iron out factions within the legislature. There is almost universal agreement among everyone involved that Cullen's support as a former Democratic leader and now Secretary of the DHSS and Commission Chair was instrumental. Cullen was effective in using his background as a legislator and his credibility as a leader to negotiate the proposal through tough times in the legislature. The same applies to Joseph Strohl. Third, Thompson's recent election gave him a mandate for action. Fourth, the presence of a variety of other items on the agenda, many of these recommendations of the Governor's Commission on Welfare Reform, reduced the concentrated attention given to Learnfare. Fifth, the proposal appeared to produce cost savings, which appealed to some. In this fashion, Learnfare was able to gather bipartisan support.

There were budgetary and administrative modifications to
be made, many of these coming through proposal reviews by the standing committees of the assembly and senate accompanied by attorneys and staff from the Legislative Council, and the Legislative Fiscal Bureau. Neither of these agencies made a practice of partisanship or policy advocacy, instead providing two general styles of analysis. First, they offered specific and highly technical advice and data of a supportive nature. During the hearings, some legislators and others did draw on actuarial estimates from analysts in the Fiscal Bureau, such as anticipated program costs, administration costs, and savings that would result from Learnfare sanctions. Most did not explicitly challenge the information from the Fiscal Bureau analysts, but they sensed that many factors might throw the estimates off. And secondly, the Fiscal Bureau organized opposing or alternative perspectives on a given issue to better enable decisionmakers and others to participate meaningfully.

Learnfare passed through the Legislature in its scaled-down form. First, it was to be introduced as sunset legislation, subject to review. And they supported a phase-in approach as a pilot project, rather than full state-wide implementation. They also limited the program to teen mothers and 13-14 year-olds. As a condition of holding AFDC teens accountable to Learnfare attendance requirements, the state would agree to provide support services such as child care and
transportation would, and would refer teens to the "At Risk" program before proceeding with sanctions. To some, the At-Risk referral was an important source of assurance that families would not simply be dumped. The Learnfare proposal at this point resembled the WEJT program for adults in the sense that those initially failing to meet performance requirements would first be referred to an "At-Risk" program where their situation would be assessed and any extenuating circumstances addressed. Then, if they failed to comply, they would be sanctioned. The At-Risk referral clause was seen by Strohl as a device used by some liberal Assembly Democrats to kill the program, since the At-Risk referral requirement might well nullify the effectiveness of the sanctions. But it remained in the proposal, and this is how the program passed out of the Legislature.

Learnfare passed as a part of a welfare reform package that included Learnfare, the modification of the 30 plus one-third disregard, the extension of medical assistance benefits for AFDC recipients who go to work, and a modification of rules determining who must participate in the WEJT Program. The Legislature approved a 1 percent reduction in AFDC rather than the 6 percent Thompson had wanted, but Cullen maintains that even this was a significant concession for a Democratically-controlled legislature.

The Governor's political will and staff commitment,
strong bipartisan support forged by Cullen and others within the DHSS, and the effort of the DHSS staff putting together of the package, proved to be essential to the support Learnfare garnered and its passage into legislation. Several DHSS people remarked that Learnfare was not really a product of the legislature - the executive branch and/or the DHSS pretty much told the legislature what was going on. The Legislature approved the Learnfare program in part because the Governor had such a large political and intellectual mandate on the program, and lacking a clear alternative, people decided to let him have his shot.

The Line-Item Veto

But the matter was not settled yet. To understand what happened next, it is necessary to understand the awesome legislative power of the Wisconsin Governorship. Wisconsin provides the furthest extension of gubernatorial power in the appropriations process as the state constitution provides for a "partial" rather than "item" veto. This effectively enables the governor to selectively delete words and passages from legislation, and when used creatively, potentially allows the meaning of legislation to be changed. And Governor Thompson demonstrated his complete willingness to maximize this power when he exercised 290 partial vetoes in the 1987-1989 biennial budget (Rosenthal, 1990).

Thompson wanted to use this power to increase the
legislature's 1 percent AFDC cut back to 6 percent again as he initially proposed. The accounts I received during the interviewing process differ as to the support of, or opposition to the AFDC cut among Thompson's advisors. According to one account, Timothy Cullen, along with Jim Klauser, the Secretary of the Department of Administration urged him to leave it at 1 percent. Klauser gave the pragmatic recommendation that the first six months of Thompson's administration had gone smoothly, that his popularity was high and that it was not worth doing something that has the potential to cause great problems. And Cullen, from a philosophical standpoint, thought the 6 percent cut was not a good idea. From a budgetary standpoint, the cut appeared unnecessary, for there was not a deficit situation. Moreover, there was an important programmatic ramification of an AFDC cut: The federal government had a health care program for poor mothers with children (now referred to as Healthy Start), women whose income leaves them ineligible for Medicaid - the working poor who were likely to be in low paying jobs without health insurance. The federal government would provide a substantial percentage of the funding for a health care program for it. However, the federal law also mandated that states who cut welfare benefits were not eligible for the federal money. So Thompson agreed to use state money to replace the lost federal money if he opted for the 6 percent
By two other accounts, the AFDC cut and the reinvestment of the funds was a campaign theme which the Governor and his key advisors intended to follow through on. In fact, one source here - a DHSS official at the time - maintains that virtually every major actor knew the AFDC grant had to be cut. Budget director Rick Chandler argued in favor of the cut, and would not have done so without Secretary Klauser’s support. And Timothy Cullen, for his own part voiced his support for the cut to a staff from one of the DHSS divisions. One source here maintains that it was Cullen’s political persona as a Democratic leader that pushed for him to oppose the AFDC cut, but that he like many other Democrats in the Legislature at the time, privately felt that a cut was in the best interest of the welfare system. In light of these differing accounts, the best interpretation I can offer, is that for the most part, Thompson’s advisors personally and from a programmatic standpoint supported the AFDC cut. But these advisors, individually, were also very concerned with different forms of political fallout that might follow the AFDC cut. Cullen and other Democrats risked alienating the Democratic mainstream, while Klauser and Chandler may have been concerned with the political liability it might pose to the Thompson Administration down the road.

The decision came down to the last couple of days, but
through the line-item veto, Thompson finally opted for the full 6 percent cut and made good on his promise in the next budget to compensate with state money. He also used the line item veto to change and expand the Learnfare proposal. A high level DHSS official at the time marvelled at the ingenuity by which the Governor’s task was prepared by another DHSS official. The sentences that composed these portions of the welfare reform proposal were lined up in such a way that by striking key letters and digits the fundamental meaning of the language could be changed. What was sent over to the Governor was language that read one way, but could be read quite another way through key changes and deletions. And that is exactly what Governor Thompson did. By striking and deleting key words and phrases, the AFDC grant cut was pushed from 1 percent to 6 percent; Learnfare was expanded to all teens of AFDC families; the At-Risk provision that would have intervened between the behavior and the sanction was deleted, and the program was slated for statewide implementation. While funding for the support services such as day care and transportation would still be available, Thompson removed the requirement that the state guarantee access to At-Risk, case management and referral before proceeding with the sanction. The veto substantially changed the terms of Learnfare and expanded the program far beyond what the legislature had envisioned. Essentially, it expanded the program from some
3,000 teen AFDC mothers to 30,000 AFDC teens at large, and carried major administrative implications.

The response to the veto from various corners reveal the fundamental intellectual and political forces composing the policy development here. Many Democrats were angered, feeling their trust had been violated and that the Governor had abused the power of his office. And there were others who charged that the veto was programmatically ill-advised.

Tom Corbett of the Institute for Poverty research reflected that while it seemed that anyone who had any experience in welfare administration should have known this was a disaster waiting to happen, the DHSS plowed ahead nonetheless. The two administration officials who might have seen the political and policy problems the veto would bring were Secretaries Cullen and Klauser from the DHSS and Department of Administration respectively. Corbett maintains that while both were bright individuals, neither had much experience in managing programs within the bureaucracy. He adds that this was part of a larger problem in the Thompson Administration in which the people brought into the policymaking wing of DHSS were legislators and staff from the legislature - political people who lacked experience in the bureaucracy. Consequently, he maintains that this was a real departure from the Wisconsin tradition of having career civil servants in pivotal agency positions, which ultimately placed
political allegiance at the fore of the bureaucracy.

Responding to this type of general criticism, a high level DHSS official pointed out that Thompson did have the input of very competent administrators such as Silvia Jackson from the DHSS, as well as others who had lengthy experience in the agencies. But more fundamentally, the official added, it is crucial to look at the political and intellectual context surrounding Learnfare. First and foremost, the rank and file at the DHSS generally opposed Learnfare, having been bred in the entitlement approach to welfare. And so did many people at the Institute for Research on Poverty, who had been feeding the DHSS entitlement ideas for the past couple of decades. The official further added that in the minds of many of those angered, the only people the Governor should listen to is bureaucrats. Consequently, the appointment of "political" people to key agency positions and the expansion of the Learnfare program were legitimate responses to entrenched resistance.

Al Fish, Director of the Bureau of Policy and Budget at the time, himself a "political" appointee, and who played a major role in getting Learnfare off the ground points out that in some sense, both responses are right. It is true that the Governor made a political decision to expand the program, and he did politicize the agencies somewhat, perhaps reducing the bureaucratic wisdom available to him as he moved to veto. And
there were some reservations among top staff concerning the ramifications of the veto. Yet from a programmatic standpoint, the "political" appointments may have been a necessary tactic to prevent Learnfare from dying or being stripped of its intent in a bureaucracy disinclined to support it. And the reservations among top officials in DHSS over the veto was greatly overshadowed by their general support for the program and their conviction to try something new in welfare reform that might break the quagmire. They knew there would be administrative problems, especially after the veto, but this is a problem in any program.

In looking at the situation in light of the different composition of the target population for Learnfare at various times as it moved from one forum to another, there may be a strong limit on how far one could go in criticizing the veto. The main reason is that by broadening the program to all teens, he was placing the program back in line with the recommendations of his own bipartisan welfare commission. By deleting the At-Risk referral guarantee, he eliminated an item that Learnfare supporter Democrat Joseph Strohl had regarded as a wrench thrown in by liberal Democrats in the Assembly in an effort to kill the program.

The Federal Waiver

After the election, when Thompson showed further interest in developing the Learnfare idea, it was obvious that it
represented enough of a departure from the status quo that it would be necessary to secure a federal waiver. This task fell to Susan Felker-Donsing and her staff in the DHSS.

Felker-Donsing, who had spent 8 years as a legislative analyst, was now in the spring of 1987 the head of the budget development team responsible for welfare programs in the DHSS' Division of Policy and Budget, her primary responsibilities being policy and budget development. At that time, her heaviest involvement was with the community services division who administered welfare programs. Her task was now to lead the effort to obtain the federal waiver for Learnfare and a couple of other components of the Governor's welfare package, and she had several short months to get it, which was not a great deal of time. Felker-Donsing and her staff at the Policy and Budget office along with members of other relevant staffs within the DHSS set about writing up the three waivers, of which Learnfare was clearly the major one. Meanwhile the state's own budget office was involved in getting the statutory language changes necessary to get permission from the legislature to proceed with the program.

While the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) officials in Washington had voiced a new receptivity towards granting waivers for state reform initiatives, the previous era had been one of less flexibility, and while it was theoretically possible for a state to obtain a waiver for an
initiative, few had done so. Consequently, the federal government was caught somewhat ill-prepared by the requests from Wisconsin for the Learnfare waiver. And there were various requirements to be met. The federal Government insisted they demonstrate that the costs of administering the Learnfare program not be greater than the savings from the proposed cut in welfare benefits and changes in the thirty-and-one-third rule that composed the waiver package.

Progress was substantial nonetheless - the DHSS officials worked closely with the federal government, who even came up to Wisconsin to help them understand and meet all of the rules and requirements that were the basis of the waiver construction. But a variety of meetings were necessary along the way.

Delayed in the Detroit Airport

About the time it looked as though the waiver was going to be passed, a major problem emerged. At the last minute, federal Department of Health and Human Services officials brought up the issue of how the Learnfare waiver was to be evaluated, insisting on an experimental evaluation. After all, the purpose of this particular type of waiver is to allow an experimental evaluation to be conducted - where the performance of an experimental program can be compared with that of the standard, or control program and hopefully produce solid enough data to determine whether it is having the
intended effects. Back in Wisconsin, the Bureau of Evaluation in the DHSS had similar ideas, advocating random assignment, involving the random separation of the target population into an experimental group subject to Learnfare and a control group who would not. The idea here was that this evaluation strategy would allow the effects of the attendance requirements and sanctions on the behavior of recipients in a randomly selected experimental group to be compared with that of recipients not subject to them.

While experimental evaluation is the purpose of the waiver, the purpose of the learnfare proposal for the Thompson Administration and top DHSS officials was to launch a new welfare reform initiative and they wanted statewide implementation, which effectively removes the possibility of separating recipients into experimental and control groups. Further, while in principle state DHSS officials supported evaluation, they felt that random assignment would be administratively touchy because in essence, it meant that one person would apply for welfare and be subject to Learnfare sanctions while his or her neighbor would not. This produced conflict not only within Wisconsin and between top state officials and federal Health and Human Services people, but also conflict in Washington, pitting the Department of Health and Human Services against the Low Income Opportunity Board in the White House who advocated welfare reform and did not want
evaluation requirements getting in the way. Through continued negotiations with federal officials, the DHSS tried unsuccessfully to reach a compromise.

As Felker-Donsing and DHSS Secretary Tim Cullen discussed the problem in his office one evening in September, they sensed they had reached an impasse, and placed a call to Reagan's welfare advisor Charles Hobbs, urging an agreement. He responded that if they could come to Washington the next day, he felt people would be ready to work it out. Unfortunately, they had no evaluation plan at the time and Felker-Donsing thought it would be a bad idea to go to Washington in that situation because they would be forced to accept a plan they did not want. But others insisted they go, the stakes were high, the Thompson Administration had a great deal invested in it and it was now in danger of collapsing, so it was essential that the matter finally be settled. They called the other key players to tell them they would have to fly to Washington in the morning, including one who was out west somewhere at the time and wasn't reached until three in the morning.

The group flew out from Madison in the morning, still without an evaluation plan and under heavy pressure to reach a compromise, but as fate would have it, their plane had engine trouble in Detroit. Unexpectedly stranded for several hours, they finally came up with an evaluation plan. The plan
involved making great changes in the state’s computer system which would now enable them to produce some of the data the evaluators wanted without the prohibitive administrative costs usually involved. Arriving in Washington, the plan was well received by HHS officials and was approved shortly. When the evaluation details were completed, the evaluation contract went to the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute.

Establishing Cooperation

Cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction was instrumental in preparing Learnfare for implementation. Since the DHSS had only collaborated infrequently with the department in the past, it was necessary for the Learnfare staff to now forge links with them and keep them abreast of program development. With legislative approval established and the waiver proposal underway, it was Felker-Donsing’s task to travel around the state to explain to school district officials that the program was coming and to provide the procedural details.

While there were some school officials who disliked the idea, many felt that the program should apply not only to teens but to younger school children on the grounds that effective attendance behavioral patterns could best be established very early in life. And there were some bugs to be worked out; it turned out that some of the Milwaukee schools
had not been taking attendance and lacked the machinery to do so. By arrangement of the Cooperative Educational Service Agency within the Department of Public Instruction, Susan Felker-Donsing travelled to the agency's regularly scheduled meetings with school districts to explain to school officials that the Learnfare program was coming and to draw out helpful feedback on the best manner of implementation.

Based on some of the comments provided by the local districts, some changes were made. For example, ordinarily recipients are asked to provide verification of information necessary to maintain benefits of whatever form. Originally, the idea was to have the recipient turn in the attendance information on their teenage child to the welfare office each month. The school districts thought this was a bad idea - they did not like the idea of fifty people coming into their office on the first of each month to get their attendance information, instead opting for an automated system where the schools would provide the information to the county at their request. The DHSS has a statewide computer system that does the eligibility for AFDC, Medicaid and Food Stamps, and at the end of each month the local welfare agency enters information as to who is subject to Learnfare, and at the end of each month, the state DHSS computer network prints a report from that system listing all of the teens in that school district who have a Learnfare attendance requirement. The list goes to
the school districts who fill out the dates of absence and return it to the county. For school districts, the task came down to a matter of filling out a report rather than having a crowd of teens fill their office every month.

Another group the Learnfare staff spoke to was the Wisconsin Social Services Association (WSSA), a statewide organization whose members are scattered throughout the state welfare districts and represent the various areas of a social welfare such as income maintenance, child care and so forth. The Learnfare staff met with them at their various district meetings to draw their comments on the proposal, and made additional modifications as a consequence.

And here too, Felker-Donsing and Diane Waller were instrumental in sustaining the momentum of the Learnfare proposal, not only accomplishing the vital bureaucratic mechanics, but also selling the program to county agencies, some of whom were unenthusiastic. Moreover, Learnfare passed through the DHSS, welfare commission and legislature while retaining all the essential components which Tropman and Fish had included - and in fact had been expanded from a target population of teen mothers to all teens in AFDC families. The high percentage of policy proposals that die in the legislatures and bureaucracies underscore the importance of these strong supporting efforts by Waller and Felker Donsing.

But the Governor himself was pivotal to the survival of
Learnfare, and not simply because it was a campaign theme and a major proposal in his administration, but because he took personal stake in the program, made bipartisan political appointments helping to solidify support in a legislature dominated by the opposing party, and because he was willing to work around the clock at troubleshooting.

Preparing for Implementation

With the waiver request formally approved in October, Governor Thompson had permission to implement immediately. However, the DHSS primary goal at this time was smooth implementation, so after a briefing by Tim Cullen, Thompson agreed to a phase-in approach. In the Fall of 1987, the DHSS began by making day care funding available to teen parents on AFDC, thus removing one barrier to school attendance. In March of 1988, implementation for 13-14 year olds and teen parents got under way.

During the debate over Learnfare, and now as final steps were taken to implement, the geographic distribution of Learnfare entered the picture. A large percentage of those subject to Learnfare lived in Milwaukee where they were concentrated in large low income areas. Consequently, much of the political and administrative turmoil that came with the program centered out of Milwaukee. It was almost as if there was Milwaukee - and then the rest of the state.

It was here in Milwaukee County that the challenges to
achieving implementation could best be seen. Silvia Jackson, then Milwaukee Regional Director of the Division of Community Services, whose task it was to get the program started, recalls the final preparation for implementation. First, administrators created a list of those in the target population – those of AFDC households whose school attendance was required. The county notified schools, who in turn notified teens. However, some of those subject to Learnfare were not in the school records and had to be identified and contacted directly. It was necessary to create a computer system, pooling names and pertinent information from school, county and state records to identify all of those subject to Learnfare requirements, and to pass information from the state to the counties, and then to the schools, and vise versa.

Through this system, the county and state regional office staff directly contacted some 1,500 teen parents by phone and home visits, notifying them of the new requirements and services of Learnfare, and encouraging them to attend school regularly. It was also their task to help teens re-enroll in school and arrange for child care and transportation as needed. So county administrators spent their time matching computer records, mailing out thousands of notices, conducting home visits, training county staff and developing a hotline for AFDC teens to call for vital information about the new program to which they were subject.
The Final Product

Through a long series of forums and administrative sessions, Learnfare grew out of a welfare reform item into a campaign item, a legislative proposal and finally a fully operational program in the Fall of 1988. It was clearly a product of both the broader forces of new consensus thinking and the particular constellation of bipartisan agreement struck between Governor Tommy Thompson and the Democratically-controlled legislature. It was built on general welfare ideas over which there was substantial intellectual consensus, and had different components intended to draw the support of conservatives and liberals, respectively.

The final program dimensions implemented in the Fall of 1988 require all teenagers from 13-18 years old in AFDC households and all teen parents up through age 19 who have not completed high school or a GED to attend school. The school attendance patterns of this target group are monitored by school officials. Students failing to uphold acceptable attendance patterns (defined as 10 or more unexcused absences in a semester) are placed on monthly monitoring by the county in conjunction with the welfare office. Teens on monthly monitoring who record more than two unexcused absences in a given month without good cause can be sanctioned. This means the amount to which that teen contributes to the family's monthly AFDC check is eliminated from the subsequent month's
payment until normal attendance patterns are reestablished. When the family is notified of the AFDC loss, they would have an opportunity to challenge the sanctioning decision.

In return for making such demands, the state agrees to provide funding for day care and transportation for teen mothers. Learnfare also provides case management statewide. AFDC teenagers having learning troubles in school are referred to alternative education programs as available which are funded by Learnfare. The amount lost to the family through the AFDC sanction varies considerably, but averages roughly one hundred dollars per month for one truant. However, absence with good cause could be established through several exemptions: an AFDC mother with a baby under 45 days; being kicked out of school; religious grounds; and the unavailability of daycare or transportation. Only teenage parents or dependents living with at least one natural or adoptive parent could be held to learnfare's requirements (Corbett and associates, 1989; DHSS documents, 1990; Pawasarat and Quinn, 1990; Corbett, 1990).

**The Controversial Program**

If there was a degree of controversy and uncertainty surrounding the Learnfare proposal, it greatly intensified after implementation. The following disagreement provides an example. Thomas Corbett, Director of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin argues that
in the haste to push the program through, impressionism and commonsensical notions took the place of informed planning and reasoned calculation. A relatively closed policy forum excluded many relevant advocacy groups. He maintains that an additional shortcoming was the failure of the federal government to require experimental evaluation as a precondition of granting the waivers. Consequently, the data from which to calculate the impact of the program are sketchy at very best. Furthermore, there are no opportunities to compare its effects through the use of a control population. Much of what might have been learned through the first year is lost as a result (Corbett, 1989, 1990; Pawasarat and Quinn, 1990).

One former DHSS official I spoke with notes that the Institute for Research on Poverty was uncharacteristically passed over for the evaluation of Learnfare, and this may have influenced the intensity of Tom Corbett's remarks. Silvia Jackson, Administrator, Division of Economic Support for the state DHSS also disagrees with Corbett's criticisms on several fronts. First, she argues that many of the provisions in the Learnfare program are there because of input from advocacy groups. Secondly, she maintains that a rigorous experimental evaluation was required by the federal government. She also disagrees with the suggestion that support services are inadequate, pointing out that provisions are made for
alternative education, daycare and transportation. Furthermore, in some counties, outreach and support services are available through other programs (Jackson, 1989).

As we saw in the introduction, there was a great deal more controversy to come. But the program had reached full implementation in the Fall of 1988, and that is as far as we take it here. The events that followed, as well as the ultimate judgements of the program’s success or failure, I leave to other people. One thing that is clear — and which Senator Jauch pointed out in our interview — is that Learnfare changed the conceptual basis of the welfare debate in Wisconsin and garnered national attention. It was regarded as a major innovation from both a policy and a political standpoint.
PART FOUR

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS
CHAPTER SEVEN: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The theories discussed in Chapter Three provide a good cross section of contemporary approaches to public policy. The first series focuses on the nature of the policymaking process as a whole, while the second series concentrates somewhat more on the role of policy analysis itself within the process, which includes obstacles to the use of analysis. Although all of these models are divergent in their approaches, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Each offers insight into certain aspects of the process that might not be touched on by others. In this chapter, I use each of these models in turn to analyze the development of the Wisconsin Learnfare program, drawing on the insight each affords while identifying the limitations, thus helping us to characterize the policymaking process behind Learnfare. Although the Rational Comprehensive model was discussed first in the theory chapter because it represents an early classical approach, I have chosen to begin my analysis with Organized Anarchy because it affords the broadest overview of the development of the basic sociopolitical environment from which Learnfare emerged.

Organized Anarchy

Organized anarchy characterizes the decisionmaking
environment as a product of the varying impact and interaction of several largely independent streams. Here we examine the development of the Learnfare program through organized anarchy as represented by the Garbage Can and Policy Windows models.

The Garbage Can Model

The Garbage Can model characterizes the decisionmaking system as a product of the interplay of four streams; problems confronted, participants involved, solutions proposed and opportunities for choice. Decisionmaking takes place in a situation of high ambiguity, multiple and conflicting definitions of problems as well as preferred solutions, and in a situation where the involvement of most participants is intermittent. At a general level, the Garbage Can model could provide some insight into the development of Learnfare by focusing attention on the particular manner of interaction of these streams that might have brought the program into being.

In general, however, the Garbage Can portrays a policymaking process that is far more random and ambiguous than appears to have been the case with Learnfare. Surely, there was a problem, key participants, proposed solutions and opportunities for choice, but there interaction was considerably more coherent than this model would suggest. The problem here was that poverty and welfare dependency
were increasing and state governments were suffering the
effects of a partial federal retreat from social programs
for the poor. Secondly, key participants were clearly
identified in the description of the development of the
program. There were proposed solutions, particularly those
of the new consensus social policy thinking. And there were
opportunities for choice at various stages of the process.
But the streams identified by the Garbage Can model are more
chaotic than is useful in accounting for the forces
underlying Learnfare. One reason for this may be that the
model was developed primarily to understand decisionmaking
in organizations (universities) rather than entire political
systems. Political systems are likely to be more orderly due
to institutionalized input from multiple institutions,
advocacy groups and constituents. The increased pluralistic
pressure forces a somewhat more orderly policy forum. The
Garbage Can model produces very interesting and reasonable
variables, but is only useful in explaining Learnfare in an
idiosyncratic fashion after the fact.

A far more moderate version of organized anarchy which
retains the strengths of the Garbage Can model would be more
appropriate in explaining the actual development of
Learnfare. No doubt the poverty and welfare dependency
problem was an important factor in bringing attention to the
need for some kind of welfare reform. But the policy
framework was far more enduring, the goals of various actors more clear and their participation more consistent, and the opportunities for choice less random than that of the Garbage Can Model. The Garbage Can Model was developed more in reference to organizational decisionmaking as noted above, and while some of its elements are useful in drawing attention to different factors influencing policy development, it sheds more heat than light in providing a useful account of the development of Learnfare. By contrast, the Policy Windows approach is very useful, and demonstrates how the Garbage Can model overemphasizes the randomness and ambiguity of the policy process in this case.

Policy Windows

John Kingdon (1984) builds on the general premise of organized anarchy, but with greater emphasis on the 'organized'. Here too, policymaking stems from the interaction of separate, largely independent streams, but is less characterized by disorganization and ambiguity. In his discussion of agenda setting and the policy process, Kingdon identifies "problems", "policies" and "politics" as three forces that are crucial in determining when and how public policy develops. The coupling of these separate streams occurs when a situation is recognized as a problem, some "solutions" are available in the policy community and a political alignment favorable to such solutions emerges.
either through the election of a new administration or changing political preferences (Kingdon, 1984).

In the discussion of the Garbage Can model, I acknowledged that there were separate streams that converged in a manner favorable to the development of the Learnfare program. But the important forces at work are much better identified through Kingdon’s model of the coupling of a problem, an emerging policy framework and a new political environment.

The issue of poverty and welfare dependency as a "problem" drew increased attention during the 1980s, but in contrast to the 1960s, the locus of activity was at the state rather than federal level. Studies indicated that poverty had increased in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and welfare case loads continued to rise. Macroeconomic change, plant closings and a partial financial and administrative retreat by the federal government from social programs for the poor contributed to rising welfare caseloads which left states with greater responsibilities and fewer resources with which to meet them as discussed in Chapter Two. Consequently, welfare reform became a major issue nationwide in the 1980s. As we saw in chapters Five and Six, key DHSS analysts were well aware of these trends in 1986 and 1987.

The "policy" dimension was also in the process of transformation in the early and mid-1980s. After a couple of
decades of domination by the entitlement approach to welfare within the policy community, the 1980s saw the increased influence of the welfare dependency perspective, expressed through writers such as Charles Murray, (1982, 1984), Lawrence Mead (1981, 1982 and 1986) among others. Within this perspective, welfare dependency itself, rather than lack of opportunity per se is seen as a major cause of sustained poverty and the steady increase in the welfare caseloads. The policy component of this called for the establishment of a social contract mandating that in return for welfare benefits, recipients should be held to a reciprocal obligation to engage in work and job training and to take other reasonable steps necessary to achieve economic self sufficiency. As these ideas became more influential and worked their way into state welfare reform packages, they were joined by arguments from more accommodating liberals that if recipients were to be held to performance requirements, the state had the obligation to help remove those barriers present by providing funding for support services such as day care and transportation.

In Wisconsin as well, the policy community changed decisively in the 1980s, when the entitlement approach to welfare was increasingly challenged with new consensus thinking. The experience of Peter Tropman, a key analyst in the DHS5 in 1986 under Secretary Reivitz, exemplified some
of this change. The increased influence of new consensus thinking played an active role in eventually transforming the terms of the welfare debate even though Tropman and others were momentarily unsuccessful. In part, efforts to change the policy framework stemmed from new analysis of empirical studies indicating that welfare dependency was more prevalent than many had previously thought, as well as the development of arguments for the social contract approach to welfare. This process continued in 1987 under the Thompson Administration as Administration officials along with Fish, Tropman and others changed the policy space in a manner favorable to the development of Learnfare.

While the policy community changed in Wisconsin, the "political" stream remained unfavorable to the development of a new consensus program like Learnfare through 1986 and the Earl Administration. Governor Earl came closer to the traditional liberal mold to the extent that he was more comfortable to the entitlement approach to social welfare and hesitant to enforce the social contract. The idea of conditional (regulated) welfare collided with Earl's entitlement orientation, and Tropman's recommendations remained temporarily dormant, except for the initiation of the WEJT program (Wisconsin's version of workfare) on a pilot project basis. That he was not alone in his reluctance was readily apparent by the resistance within the DHSS and
elsewhere in 1986, when Tropman began to develop and circulate a variety of new consensus types of welfare reform ideas emphasizing the social contract.

Tropman's recommendations soon found a home in what seemed like an unlikely place - the gubernatorial campaign of Tommy Thompson where Tropman's type of recommendations became important campaign planks. The Thompson campaign's own idea for Learnfare also emerged during this time period and within this framework. With Thompson's victory in November, the political stream changed fundamentally in favor of Learnfare and other new consensus style reforms. Change at the federal level was also favorable, where the Reagan Administration voiced a new commitment to allowing states more flexibility in the use of their welfare funds.

The political stream became even more favorable when Thompson appointed former Democratic Senate Majority Leader Timothy Cullen as Secretary of the DHSS and Chair of the Governor's Commission on Welfare Reform, and when Cullen chose former staff member Al Fish to head up the Bureau of Policy and Budget. This gave much greater political legitimacy to Thompson's welfare reform proposals. At this point, Thompson had a fairly strong mandate for welfare reform out of the new consensus mold.

The awareness in the policymaking community of the welfare dependency problem, the increased influence of new
consensus social policy thinking and the election of Thompson to the Governorship on a platform favorable to new consensus thinking effectively opened a policy window in 1987. The coupling of these streams produced a situation highly conducive to the development of Learnfare and the series of reforms which passed into law along with it. In this manner, the interaction of the problem, policy and politics streams closely approximates Kingdon's model.

Kingdon's approach allows us to pinpoint the broad forces at work which were conducive to the enactment a social policy initiative like Learnfare. What the policy windows approach does not explain is the means by which politicians and analysts actually took advantage of the situation. It fails to account for the specific reasons and the specific means by which Learnfare itself was developed.

The Rational Comprehensive Model

The rational comprehensive model is useful in describing certain aspects of the development of the Learnfare program. To examine this model in light of the data on Learnfare, it is useful to examine each of the stages of the planning process separately.

Determination of Goals: As Mayer (1985) points out, the determination of goals reflects the greater values the decisionmaking system wishes to express by enacting a policy or program. In the case of Learnfare, there was the
overriding goal among most key players of fundamentally restructuring the welfare system to establish reciprocal obligation as a cornerstone and to place a premium on individual responsibility. The values to be realized were the upholding of human dignity and elimination of the suffering that comes with socioeconomic hardship, without simultaneously creating a welfare system that exacerbates these goals by encouraging dependency. These overriding values, present in the Thompson campaign, were best reflected in the policy papers "Human Services at a Crossroads" and "From Welfare Mess to Wisconsin Works" circulated within the DHSS papers and the variety of ensuing discussions and forums in the DHSS in 1986 and early 1987.

Assessment of needs: I was genuinely surprised at the breadth of analysis of the welfare dilemmas coming from key analysts in the DHSS. There was more than ample evidence that a reasonably comprehensive needs assessment was conducted by Peter Tropman and others in 1986 and by Tropman, Fish and others in early 1987. Within the Crossroads and Wisconsin Works papers, Tropman developed and released throughout the department, there was respectable amounts of data on poverty and welfare in general. These included a look at structural factors such as plant closings and unemployment that cause people to go on welfare as well as specific studies of the causes and extent of welfare
dependency and those factors relating to the risk of becoming a long-term dependent. Moreover, there was evidence of a fair amount of feedback from various people in the DHSS and elsewhere, among these DHSS Secretary Linda Reivitz, and Jerry Berge from a separate division who took strong issue with Tropman's ideas.

Although the Learnfare idea had not yet been produced when Tropman did this analysis in 1986, the analytic work which helped to form the basis of the program was underway. Moreover, it was clearly directed at a well planned restructuring of welfare programs in Wisconsin based on the assessment of the rates of long-term welfare dependency, causal factors behind such dependency, and the differences in needs between various populations on AFDC. To an important degree, Thompson's Learnfare idea was developed out of this framework in 1987 when Al Fish took over in the Division of Policy and Budget. And the analysis utilized was very substantial, producing a fairly sophisticated assessment of need.

Specification of objectives: The data indicate that the specification of objectives occurred very much in the manner of rational comprehensive planning. Overall, the objectives were to restructure the welfare system in such a way as to reward those who pursue education, training and work, and to confine AFDC to a transitional support system, which in
essence meant switching from entitlement to regulated welfare. In the process, there would be a partial shift of funds from AFDC to support services. The primary objectives were to both require and enable recipients to better help themselves, to be accomplished through performance requirements of recipients on one hand, while providing the support services they need to obtain economic independence on the other. The objective was to produce a welfare system fostering support and individual responsibility simultaneously, and thus functioning as a social contract rather than a handout.

The identification and design of alternatives proceeded somewhat along the lines of comprehensive rationality, but the situation is more mixed. There is evidence of a certain amount of expansiveness in the policy development areas both within the DHSS and beyond in 1986 and in early 1987 when a wide range of different and sometimes opposing studies and arguments concerning welfare were examined. There was even the proposal by Tropman of the possibility of making day care the entitlement and work the earned benefit, demonstrating a strong element of comprehensive rationality.

However, the vast majority of the policy alternatives actually examined were incremental in nature, and would fit well into the existing policy and political framework. This incrementalist element generally became more important as
actual alternatives were examined. The incrementalist shift can be seen in the compilation submitted by Gail Propsam and Bob Wagner to the Governor's Commission on Welfare Reform, which consisted of the variety of alternatives for consideration which had been collected over a period of time. So as the program development moved from the specification of objectives to the design of alternative actions, the analytic process took a turn towards the incrementalist model. And Learnfare fit well into the established framework, its basic objectives being to increase the school attendance and school completion rates of welfare teens. As Al Fish pointed out, the failure to finish school is likely to produce problems for anyone, but the effects are most severe for those already coming from an AFDC family. That performance requirements were a legitimate policy lever had been established, and research demonstrating education to be an important variable in the dependency equation gave legitimacy to the idea of using school attendance as one of those requirements. Moreover, within the legislature, the pattern was clearly incremental; many of those who eventually supported Learnfare did so with the understanding that it would be a scaled-down version for teen mothers and pregnant teens that would only come in as a pilot project in a few counties.

Estimation of the Consequences of Alternative Actions:
The evidence available suggests that the estimates of the consequences of policy alternatives was a mixture of the comprehensive rationality and incrementalism. There were very general arguments over the consequences of programs based on entitlement versus reciprocal obligations, as well general discussion of the ramifications of providing or not providing support services for those held to school attendance requirements. But these arguments remained relatively general. There were projections of the costs to be saved by sanctions, reduced caseloads and a cut in AFDC benefits, but these remained far from comprehensive analyses in the ideal-typical sense of elaborately projecting the actual outcomes of Learnfare and the other programs under consideration.

Moreover, there does not appear to have been a comprehensive analysis of the causal chain of intervention underlying Learnfare. Requiring school attendance and sanctioning those who fail to meet these standards has a straight-forward logic that is deceptive. At first glance, the threat of sanctions would seem to provide an immediate and powerful incentive to parents to make sure their teenage children attend school. Once implementation gets underway, a variety of administrative uncertainties and potential unintended consequences enter the picture. The administrative issues revolve around operationalizing and
enforcing attendance requirements and the procedures involved in actually carrying out a sanction. In the development of Learnfare, there was a guiding assumption that regulating welfare as such would induce parents to establish control over their children at various stages. But this could oversimplify the impact of the regulations on family dynamics. For example, parents might not actually be able to control their children as effectively as needed, and the reduction of family income due to the behavior of a wayward teen could have the unintended consequence of turning the teen into a breadwinner of sorts, which in turn might undermine parental authority and destabilize family relationships. These and various other complexities of implementation were eventually to emerge as substantial problems. The apparent limitations of analysis of potential problems may not be due to poor planning and commonsensical policymaking, but the logistical limitations of comprehensive rationality. After all, it was a new program and the details of the causal theory of intervention were probably not very analytically tractable.

The plausibility of arguments and their grounding in established policy precedents were far more important than rigorous forecasting and projections based on data analysis in the discussions of alternative consequences. Thompson, Cullen, Fish and most political actors that were heavily
involved and supportive, realized that the program had to circumvent the political and policy impasse over welfare, and this became a dominant issue. The most important estimates to be made were fairly speculative ones concerning the likely ramifications of sanctions, support services and so forth on recipients and the impact of these intervention plans on the attitudes of various key players whose support was necessary. It was not that analysis was avoided or marginalized, but that it may have been very difficult to establish comprehensive rationality at this point in policy development. The intractability of many of the issues dealing with the consequences of alternative actions as well as the political support to be garnered did not readily permit the ideal-typical model of comprehensive rationality to be realized, just as Charles Lindblom suggests.

Selection of courses of action: According to the rational comprehensive model, the actual selection of a course of action is made by the decisionmaking system on the basis of the relative cost effectiveness of the alternatives. However, it must be held accountable to the political process, usually through some form of public review. The selection of Learnfare as a program to be developed by Fish and Cullen in the DHSS, the Governor’s Commission on Welfare Reform and eventually the legislature is not easily confined to either the rational comprehensive
or incrementalist models of policymaking. The evidence indicates a mixed picture. The data clearly support the idea that the choice to develop Learnfare emerged from a reasonably well accepted problem definition and policy proposal established early on by Tropman and Fish; the former establishing the general policy framework and the latter proceeding to flesh out the Learnfare proposal per se. However, the knowledge of the intervention and implementation aspects were not well developed, and perhaps could not be, and thus the selection among alternative courses of action could not follow the cost effectiveness comparisons suggested by the rational comprehensive model. The primary basis of selection was argumentative and political, meaning major consideration had to be given to contextual circumstances within the preexisting social welfare and political frameworks. The selection of Learnfare as a serious alternative was made possible through the capacity of Thompson, Cullen, Fish and others to convince other decisionmakers such as the legislature that the program was consistent with A) the policy framework established early on emphasizing the social contract, and B) the distinct political imperatives of most conservatives and liberals. This is to say that despite the comprehensive nature of policy development work early on, the actual selection of Learnfare was based on Wisconsin’s version of
new consensus ideas which had become acceptable at least in some respects to a majority of actors, and which did not require a massive overhaul of the existing system. Moreover, the inclusion of support services, in addition to its programmatic logic (which may have warranted far greater support services than actually proposed), was politically necessary to retain enough support among liberals to assure passage. Given this, the actual selection of Learnfare seems better suited to an incrementalist model of policymaking. However, the use of the line item veto by Thompson to expand the program's scope and speed of implementation beyond that approved by the legislature adds a unique twist to the overall structure of program development, once again, pushing it in the direction of comprehensive rationality from a broader standpoint. This is because the line-item veto actually returned the structure and scope of the program to approximate that of its early designers. From the perspective of legislature, however, the line-item veto may actually have removed much of the rationality from that stage in which they were involved.

Implementation and Evaluation: After Cullen and Fish were working to develop the Learnfare idea within the DHSS, active steps were taken in other areas of the DHSS to establish the operating procedures and administrative details by which the program would be carried out. This
included work by Felker-Donsing, Ericksen, Waller and staffs within the DHSS to make the necessary statutory changes needed in welfare law, design a waiver request proposal and eventually set up the operating procedures. And the program development from this point on generally came closer to the rational comprehensive model. The tasks were more technical and less explosive from both a political and policy standpoint when compared to prior stages. The responsibility for ironing out these issues rested primarily with the DHSS staff, but did bring in others such as DHSS Secretary Cullen at important junctures.

However, the conflict between the Wisconsin DHSS and federal officials from the HHS over the evaluation design that delayed the approval of the waiver demonstrates that even at this stage of the policy process, political considerations are interwoven with that which might be considered more technical on first glance. Elaborate experimental design requirements can delay program development and can have the appearance of treating identical welfare cases very differently as we saw in Chapter Six. Not surprisingly, such requirements may be (and were) unwelcome to a new administration wanting rapid program development, and to an executive branch agency wanting to avoid negative public publicity.

Although constrained in its boundaries, the element of
rationality was fairly important in the development of the Learnfare program. But even where the political and policy framework permits a rational comprehensive approach, the limits of social scientific and technical knowledge are such that the best that can be done in terms of being programmatically rational is less than is needed in the ideal sense of the term.

**Incrementalism**

The incrementalist model characterizes the policymaking process as marginal adjustment within an established analytical and political framework. The design and selection of policy alternatives consists of modest steps from point A to point B over which there is agreement, regardless of the uncertainty and ambiguity present over ultimate solutions and the disagreement that would emerge between different groups over long-term goals. Incrementalism is characterized by movement within the familiar and agreed upon, and avoidance of movement into high-risk areas of uncertainty or conflict. In fact, the same initiative might be seen as progress by two different groups with conflicting long-term objectives.

The incrementalist model of the policymaking process fits well with some aspects of the development of Learnfare, but not with others. In the early stages of program development, the survey of data and various studies
pertaining to poverty and welfare, as well as the broad conceptualization of welfare was far more comprehensive than then would be expected within an incrementalist framework. Within the DHSS in 1986, and again in early 1987 as the development of Learnfare got under way, the analysis was fairly broad and comprehensive, including theoretical surveys, reviews of academic studies and the first-hand examination of data pertaining to different aspects of welfare and poverty. Peter Tropman, and later on Al Fish were very effective in moving through a variety of analytical and political frameworks surrounding the welfare issue. Even within the Governor's staff, there is evidence of a substantial amount of brainstorming, and perhaps a willingness to go beyond the familiar and the established.

However, as welfare reform received further discussion in both 1986 under Tropman and in early 1987 under Fish and Tropman, the process shifted towards incrementalism. We can see this shift in the change from the period of examining studies, arguments and data, etc., to that of recommending more specific courses of action. The first step was to establish a policy framework, and we saw this in the Crossroads and Wisconsin Works papers as well as in other dialogue within and beyond the DHSS, where after a survey of various research and data and the definition of the welfare dilemmas, a more specific framework was established.
Although a change of approach to welfare was being recommended, it was built to a large extent through the combination of well established liberal and conservative frameworks. The core of this new consensus framework was that welfare dependency itself is a major contributor to sustained poverty, rather than simply the lack of opportunity per se. General policy arguments have been, A) welfare should carry reciprocal obligations with it on the part of the recipient, and B) in holding the recipient to performance requirements, the state should remove barriers to self sufficiency by providing day care, transportation, etc. The proposals discussed, and those recommended, combined various performance requirements which were much stronger versions of those in the WIN programs of the 1970s, with support services based in the entitlement approach to welfare which had been dominant.

The alternatives considered and the policies ultimately recommended of which Learnfare was one, can be traced to this incrementalist framework, which in and of itself had been developing over the course of the 1970s and had now crystallized in the 1980s. This includes such measures as Workfare, WEXT the extension of Medicaid for AFDC mothers who enter the labor force, the modification of the 30 and one-third rule and proposals to modify the 100-hour rule (recently approved).
Although the statement of goals, the specification of objectives and the needs assessment stages fit reasonably well with the rational comprehensive model, the shift to the consideration and ultimate selection of alternatives saw a sharp delimitation of the process into that which could be drawn from a modification of past frameworks. And here, the process moved decidedly towards the incremental. The overview of what other states were doing and what specific proposals were being recommended in various places by various people quickly moved the analytic process to reforms or new additions of the familiar. The carrot of entitlement was combined with the stick of requirements and an agreement to fund support services such as day care and transportation. The specific idea of requiring teen AFDC recipients to meet school attendance requirements, while a new idea in the immediate sense, drew on a well-established political and intellectual framework already supported by some key DHSS officials and a variety of legislators, a framework that was already finding expression in the workfare programs sweeping across the country. Within the legislature, as noted earlier, the process also moved in an incremental direction. And had the Governor not exercised the line-item veto, expanding Learnfare far beyond that approved by the legislature, thus restoring it closer to the original plan, the overall structure of program development
would have been substantially more incremental.

This is not to say that the incremental nature of policy development at this stage indicates that social policy was not undergoing important change, for it was. It is to suggest that the change occurs in a particular way, namely by building on preexisting policy frameworks by adding, subtracting, reforming and recombining them in ways that bring change, but doing so without abandoning the agreed upon and the familiar. The Learnfare initiative despite apparent controversy, as well as most of the welfare reform proposals it accompanied, drew on a policy framework over which there was substantial agreement. These were policies built on fairly widespread critiques of the welfare system, but constructed in such a way as to offer something worthwhile to both conservatives and liberals and thus attain a critical mass of support.

Learnfare was acceptable to a bipartisan group because it appears to uphold multiple values simultaneously, its components being acceptable to analysts and politicians whose values and political preferences varied. To conservatives, it promised to get tough on AFDC teens who behaved irresponsibly. To liberals, it emphasized the importance of education and provided support services. To oversimplify, it offered discipline to one side and supportive services to the other.
In summary, social welfare policy was reconceptualized and analyzed in a rational comprehensive manner in the early stages of brainstorming in both 1986 during the Crossroads and Wisconsin Works period and in 1987 when the DHSS analysts looked to welfare reform. But very soon, the process shifted towards the incremental as the consideration and eventual selection of alternatives took place. And the process would have become even more incremental had Governor Thompson not used the line-item veto to expand the program. The actual passage of the program was accomplished by tying it closely to preexisting policy frameworks and political preferences. Elements of both comprehensive rationality and incrementalism were clearly present.

THE ROLE OF ANALYSIS

One place where the policy windows, rational comprehensive and to a much lesser extent incrementalist models are somewhat problematic is their dichotomization of politics and analysis. Clearly Thompson had power over DHSS officials, and for that matter the legislature. However, in conducting my research, I was surprised at the extent to which analysts and politicians shared the same general political culture and policy framework, despite apparent differences over specific proposals. From the beginning, Governor Thompson, Timothy Cullen, Peter Tropman, Al Fish
and others seemed to circulate within a similar policy
mileau. Conservatives and liberals came in separate doors
with different stated priorities and preferences, but I was
struck by the extent to which both accepted general
parameters of the 1980s new consensus social policy
framework. And this requires a closer look at the role of
analysis in the process.

The Anti-analytic Thesis

As we saw in the introduction to this study, the
Learnfare program drew a tremendous amount of publicity in
the media and elsewhere after it was implemented in 1987 and
1988. For many months there was a barrage of crossfire
between those heralding the program as the best hope in
breaking the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency, and
those declaring it a new form of welfare bashing and purely
a political coup, and other opinions somewhere in between.
Even the national media such as CBS, PBS and others picked
up on the program in their regular features.

The initial flurry of controversy contained some
charges by Tom Corbett and others that the program was
largely a political coup and was developed in an analytical
void. Underneath some of these criticisms was the collective
suggestion, particularly among those further to the
political left, that whoever developed the program may have
done so by circumventing analysts in order to develop a
welfare program that would appeal to anti-welfare public sentiments. In effect, many opponents saw the development of Learnfare as a "welfare bashing" scheme. My awareness of these charges inspired me to include in my analysis the anti-analytical model of policymaking in which analysts are passed over by decisionmakers who regard their product as a threat to political preference. As Walter Williams points out in his recent study of the executive branch of the federal government, where analysis is seen as a threat to the political preferences of leaders - which is increasingly often these days, due in part to the greater second-guessing capacity of increasingly sophisticated analysis - the analysts are passed over, and their presence in decisionmaking circles declines (Williams, 1990). As I encountered the initial controversy over Learnfare in the media, I came to believe that the anti-analytical thesis might explain much of what had transpired in the program's development.

As I conducted my interviews with the many different people involved in various aspects of the development of the program and reconstructed the policy and political frameworks underlying it, my original hunch proved to be incorrect. Regardless of whether one approves of Learnfare or not, the evidence indicates it was developed in anything but an anti-analytical environment. As chapters Five and Six
clearly indicate, from the outset analysts were heavily involved. While the Governor and his staff appear to have come up with the specific idea of requiring regular school attendance of AFDC teens, the policy framework and policy precedents it rested on were becoming more acceptable during this period to analysts within the DHSS and others in and around Wisconsin state government, having achieved prominence on the national level as well. This is abundantly clear from the interviews as well as supporting documents consisting of the actual memos and policy papers that were circulated around the DHSS and throughout state government in 1986 and 1987. Large amounts of data, scholarly research and policy arguments were explored by key analysts during 1986 and during 1987 when the program was actually developed. In short, the program was developed in an environment far different than I had anticipated as I entered the research. While political forces were extremely important and no doubt decisive, analysis was heavily utilized.

The fact that the anti-analytic model is not borne out by the research here in no way diminishes the general validity of Walter William's central argument based on the federal level in Mismanaging America, which inspired this model. In fact, an anecdotal item from the federal end of the Learnfare experience may be of interest to those
pursuing William's message. As we noted in Chapter Six, the process of obtaining the federal waivers for Learnfare and several other initiatives caused DHSS staff to have many dealings with federal officials. The waiver request process produced conflict not only in Wisconsin but in Washington, D.C. where it pitted federal HHS officials who wanted a more experimental control form of program evaluation against the Low Income Opportunity Board in the White House who prioritized welfare reform itself, and did not think the experimental control evaluation design should be required. While the HHS officials had already explained to Wisconsin officials that they were permitting greater flexibility they were also requiring experimental evaluation initially. The impetus to lift this requirement came from the White House staff. This item may offer some anecdotal support to Williams argument that analysis threatened politics in the 1980s executive branch, for as we move closer to presidential decisionmaking circles, the analytic emphasis appeared to decline.

The Analyst Subordination Thesis

The second model of this series, the analyst subordination thesis is drawn from theorists of the policy sciences who were in part, responding to accusations that the increased reliance on analysis subverts the democratic process. Some of these charges came from conservative
responses to the Great Society initiatives, which undoubtedly included the Community Action Program.

In their discussion of the role of analysis in the policy process Peter deLeon (1988) and Hank Jenkins-Smith (1990) come to the same general conclusion through separate paths that politics dominates analysis. Both portray analysis as a potentially galvanizing force to the extent that it illuminates new alternatives and provides more information as a basis for decision making, and as a conservative force because it is frequently useful in efforts to block policy initiatives. However, both leave no doubt that analysis is subordinate to political preference.

These models focus research on the interplay between analysis and politics (advice and consent, to use deLeon’s terms) in the development of the Learnfare program. Specifically, I will focus on A) locating analysts in and around state government, particularly the DHSS, but to a lesser extent the legislature, the Governor’s staff and elsewhere; B) identifying the nature of their involvement, C) identifying the nature of the advice they provided, and D) identifying the extent to which their advice was utilized.

First, we will identify the important analysts and the nature of their involvement. Policy analysts were present in the DHSS in 1986 and during the initial stage of proposal
development in 1987 with Peter Tropman and eventually Al Fish in the Bureau of Policy and Budget, and Gail Propsam, Bob Wagner and Mary Rowin in planning, and analysts in other divisions such as Jerry Berge. Tropman appears to have combined the role of client advocate and issue advocate. He was a client advocate to the extent that he worked for the DHSS and was ultimately accountable to people higher up such as Secretary Reivitz and Governor Earl in 1986. However, he also exercised considerable professional autonomy in his active support of new consensus welfare policies under a department and administration that was generally entitlement oriented, thus his policy disagreements with Jerry Berge and others. Wagner and Propsam seemed to be a mixture of the client advocate and the objective technician in that their primary functions were to provide support the DHSS in developing policy alternatives and providing the technical expertise to help guide the planning and decisionmaking processes.

Al Fish had already been involved in analysis on Earl's staff when he was appointed to head the Bureau of Policy and Budget in early 1987, but was clearly a generalist. He was very competent intellectually, and under Tropman he rapidly acquired a substantial mastery of welfare issues. In the process, Fish came to play the role of an excellent generalist advisor in Walter William's terms, becoming
unusually adept in both the political and policy domains. Tropman and Fish became the key analysts involved in laying the conceptual base and fleshing out the basic Learnfare proposal respectively, but drew on technical support from Gail Propsam, Bob Wagner and Mary Rowin.

The DHSS also contained the analysts responsible for refining the administrative details of the Learnfare program and developing the waiver proposal, these including Diane Waller, Susan Felker-Donsing and Jon Erickson along with a variety of staff people. Waller and Felker-Donsing assumed the roles of the client’s advocate combined with the objective technician. They were client’s advocates in their diligent efforts to see the proposal through tough periods and their outreach efforts establishing coordination and cooperation. They functioned more as objective technicians in ironing out administrative details and pursuing the federal waivers.

The legislative staffs do not appear to have had many analysts involved in the development of the program, as the action centered in the DHSS. However, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau and the Legislative Council did have analysts who functioned as objective technicians providing details and advice of a technical nature. They also provided briefings on policy alternatives to those involved during the legislative hearings over Learnfare. The Governor’s campaign
staff consisted of generalists who were involved in generating the initial Learnfare idea rather than providing analytical support. After the election, one of the Governor's staff people continued to work to keep activity going on the Learnfare idea. But most of the responsibility for policy development shifted to the DHSS, the Governor's Commission on Welfare Reform and the Legislature, and the analytic involvement from the Governor's staff was not very substantial.

Poverty experts from the Institute for Research on Poverty have often been involved in policy advising in Wisconsin state government, and the initial development of Learnfare was no exception. As discussed in Chapter Six, Irving Garfinkel, Stephan Weideman and visiting professor Lawrence Mead interacted with DHSS analysts on several occasions. They also spoke to 300 DHSS Division of Economic Support people during April of 1987, helping to legitimize ideas of reciprocal obligation and social contract in a department dominated by the entitlement approach to welfare. These analysts would best be described as issue advocates, all three supporting a particular approach to welfare, and whose input was more that of intellectually based advocacy rather than loyalty to an institution or the provision of technical support.

Analysts had a strong presence during the initial
development of the Learnfare proposal. Overall, the interaction between analysts and decisionmakers was very substantial, and can be seen as both indirect and direct. Analysts from the Institute for Research on Poverty interacted substantially with DHSS people who played an important role in developing ideas for political decisionmakers. Similarly, lower level analysts provided some advice and technical support for key analysts in the DHSS like Peter Tropman and Al Fish. In this sense, both groups of analysts interacted indirectly with political decisionmakers.

Tropman, who helped establish the policy framework, and Fish, who launched the initial proposal, and to a lesser extent, Waller, Ericksen and Felker-Donsing who ironed out administrative and implementation details, interacted more directly with political decisionmakers.

In general, the analytic activity was concentrated in the DHSS - in particular the Bureau of Policy and Budget early on - and analysts played an important role in laying the policy framework in which Learnfare would be developed, and were directly responsible for developing the proposal in all of its stages and details. As we saw in chapters Five and Six, the initial activity consisted of the Crossroads and Wisconsin works papers by Tropman in 1986, which consisted of a fairly comprehensive examination of data and
discussion of welfare issues from both the theoretical and practical levels. The recommendations from Tropman were for a fundamental shift of emphasis in social welfare away from entitlement and towards a social contract version developing from new consensus thinking.

The recommendations coming from Tropman in the Bureau of Policy and Budget in 1986 was appreciated by DHSS Secretary Linda Reivitz among others, but much less so by most in the DHSS such as Jerry Berge who opposed Tropman's ideas and offered his own. Moreover, Governor Earl was more favorable to the entitlement approach to welfare.

The situation had changed in early 1987 when Al Fish was appointed to Tropman's position as head of the DHSS Bureau of Policy and Budget, and chose to keep Tropman on hand for a critical period of policy development. Again the effort was underway to establish a new framework for social policy. With Tropman establishing the conceptual framework and helping Fish become well familiarized with the welfare issues, Fish moved ahead with the development of a series of welfare reform proposals of which Learnfare was one of the more noteworthy, drawing as needed on the technical expertise of Gail Propsam, Bob Wagner and Mary Rowin in the Planning Division. Propsam and Wagner also circulated a variety of other proposals, to the welfare commission for consideration, many of these drawing the social contract
policy framework. What is important, is that this time, under a new Administration, the response was more positive as attitudes seemed to be changing. That Spring, poverty experts from the Institute for Research on Poverty spoke to 300 people from the Economic Support Division of the DHSS and provided further legitimacy for the new consensus social contract approach to welfare.

While the DHSS was clearly the focal point of analysis prior to the Learnfare proposal, their recommendations for reform were generally unheeded by Earl in 1986. To put it in deLeon's terms, the advice was available, but there was a lack of consent from political decisionmakers. In 1987, the advice was similar, and now included Learnfare; but this time, the consent was present as well, due to a change of political administration and a growing bipartisan support for new consensus policy ideas. Advice from analytic circles and consent from political circles came together in 1987 and key analysts within the DHSS were able to play an instrumental role in the development of Learnfare and other programs designed to change the incentives and expectations surrounding welfare.

This is not to suggest that politics was not dominant, for it was. Clearly Cullen, as well as Fish, Tropman and other analysts had to work within a political framework and they were well aware of this. The proposal needed to be
acceptable to the Commission, the Legislature and of course, the Governor. Fish developed Thompson's Learnfare proposal out of a new consensus policy framework which in this case meant that continued eligibility for AFDC would be contingent on school attendance for teenagers. But unlike conservative approaches to new consensus reform, Cullen and Fish believed that the social contract would be more balanced if the state would also agree to provide funding for child care and transportation while demanding school attendance. In this manner, analysis was used to break the impasse over welfare that had plagued both analytic and political circles. What made sense programmatically was also a political necessity.

Jenkins-Smith offers additional insight. It is useful to recall his statement concerning the conditions under which policy analysis would play a dominant role in the policymaking process:

The level of analytic conflict must be low, but somehow still sufficient to mobilize necessary analytic resources to conduct the study; the issue must be highly tractable; the forum in which the issue is debated must be sufficiently professionalized or otherwise restricted to permit common bases for assessment of analytic claims; and analysts must be relatively free of organizational allegiance to clients already committed to a policy position (1990, p. 208).

The policymaking process behind Learnfare did not meet these conditions. The level of analytic conflict was
moderate and certainly sufficient to mobilize analysts. And as we saw, there was controversy between many conservatives and liberals in government and statewide over the proper structure of welfare, some favoring entitlement and others either wanting to cut the AFDC grant or favoring reciprocal obligations. The tractability was lower than necessary for analysis to dominate. While many questions concerning poverty, welfare dependency and social policy are at least moderately tractable, more specific questions surrounding Learnfare such as those concerning the impact of sanctions on the recipients were relatively intractable. There was no way to use analytic tools to settle competing claims one way or another. And this was readily apparent when the proposal hit the legislature.

The forum was fairly professionalized early on when DHSS analysts along with some support from university poverty experts developed the initial proposal. But the welfare commission and legislative forum was somewhat less professionalized, and allowed politics to play an important role. In reality, politics was crucial from the beginning, as DHSS analysts designed the program knowing full well how the program needed to be structured to make it through the Governor's Commission and the Legislature while retaining the features essential to the Governor. It would clearly be inaccurate to suggest that DHSS analysts were free of the
interests of the department and especially the Governor. Cullen and Fish clearly came on board knowing the general framework in which they were likely to operate.

In summary, it is clear that analysis was important and undoubtedly influenced people. But it proceeded with an ongoing awareness of the political environment which held veto power, a relationship best described as interactive but subordinate. And it is useful to remember that one of the reasons analysis was as important as it was is because of the coupling of policy ideas with political trends, which was not really the case in 1986, the year before Learnfare.

One additional point needs to be raised here which also prepares us for the final theory. It may be useful to dichotomize between analysis and politics to the extent that it allows both processes to be examined more closely and their comparative input better understood. But in light of the evidence on the development of Learnfare, it is essential to recognize this separation as in part, a heuristic device allowing students of the policy sciences to better grasp the impact of the analytic product. In the course of my research, I was continually struck by the degree to which the political and analytic domains are functionally interwoven. The high level analysts as well as the key political actors I interviewed clearly tended to share a larger political culture and policy framework,
whatever their specific differences of opinion and
careers. Politicians were familiar with analytic
arguments and analysts knew the politics behind each
component of the program. The range of analysts, advisors
and politicians are better described as a policymaking
subculture than separate sets of actors. Mutual influence
appears to be more of the rule than the exception.

To step back and look at the process from a very
general perspective, how could the relationship between
analysis and politics be otherwise? Analysts out of step
with the subtleties of the political process are likely to
be relatively inept outside of primarily technical or
academic functions. Politicians failing to grasp key
analytic claims are likely to be relegated to the margins
very quickly. It is important to remember that even at the
state level, the legislative process is sufficiently
specialized to permit, and more likely demand, that
legislators become relatively conversant in the issues under
the domain of the committees and task forces on which they
serve. The ease with which participants such as Cullen,
Tropman, Fish, Strol, Jauch, and top legislative staff
involved with the program were able to make the transition
from the political to the analytical domains was readily
apparent.
Analysis as Art and Craft

I ended the discussion of the analyst subordination thesis by arguing that the useful heuristic device of dichotomizing between the political and analytical dimensions of policymaking should be consciously recognized as such. Analytic descriptions or theoretical models portraying politics and analysis as vastly separate functions may be reifications of a mere analytical device and thus more reflective of the mode of inquiry than actual empirical conditions. And in the case at hand, the Learnfare data clearly indicate an interconnectedness of the two realms.

It is this very connectedness that is the basis for the final model of policy analysis to be examined here. Drawn from the works of Deborah Stone (1988) and Giandomenico Majone (1989) the perspective of analysis as an art and craft challenges the rational comprehensive model among others, which portrays analytic process as primarily that of scientifically-based and technically-oriented problem solving. Stone and Majone see the crucial task of analysts as primarily argumentative rather than algorithmical. The central demands are not the production of data and facts and establishing scientific causality, for such uncontestable claims are generally unattainable. Rather, the central task involves the use of creative and critical thinking along
with rhetorical skills to construct evidence and produce a persuasive argument. The challenge is not so much finding a solution to a problem per se, as it is to marshall up an argument that will appeal to a certain audience to move towards a particular decision (Stone, 1988, Majone, 1989).

In applying this model to the Learnfare program, Tropman's early arguments in the Crossroads and Wisconsin Works papers demonstrate the effective use of argumentation as a catalyst for the transformation of the policy framework that had guided welfare programs for the poor over the past couple of decades. As we saw in Chapter Five, Tropman began by calling attention to the need for the DHSS as an organization and the human services as a profession to be open to change, to recognize ongoing problems with many social programs and accept the need for a fundamental change in approach to social programs for the poor. As we saw, he had extensive background in both the analytical and political dimensions of social policy and he was very effective in tapping into this as he came out with the Crossroads papers. In essence he saw his task as building a policy framework that could survive in a conservative era and overcome their dominant criticisms while meeting human needs in a more effective fashion.

Although Tropman's arguments drew criticism from Jerry Berge and others within the DHSS as well as people outside
state government, they proved to be an effective mobilizer in the long run. Some of the titles used in his papers such as "Human Services at a Crossroads" and "From Welfare Mess to Wisconsin Works" as well as the arguments themselves relied heavily on rhetorical skills, and the arguments were carefully crafted documents of persuasion in addition to the data skills they utilized. Tropman's basic message at the outset linked the argument that many programs had serious problems and needed a basic overhaul to the humanitarian ideals of the human services rather than to a more cynical conservatism. Resistance by those regarding performance requirements as punitive to the poor was a force that had to be anticipated, and this was a critical barrier that Tropman and other analysts had to circumvent, for initially, the entitlement approach to welfare was dominant among key people and institutions such as the Governor, the DHSS, the Democratically-controlled legislature and the Institute for Research on Poverty. And of course, many of the same skills were utilized by those such as Jerry Berge who opposed Tropman's ideas and offered visions of their own.

Bringing new consensus thinking and the social contract approach to welfare to a dominant position would be necessary to achieve the type of programmatic change Tropman felt was needed. The idea that many people on welfare might be long-term dependent was not necessarily new, although
recent studies had suggested it was a greater problem than had previously been thought. The challenge was to make ideas such as the social contract and an increased emphasis on individual responsibility palatable to liberals and those who would respond sharply to any perceived attacks on the welfare population.

As Fish and others moved to develop the Learnfare proposal Governor Thompson strongly favored, the task was not primarily one of producing data or statistical evidence supporting their efforts, although they did use such empirical evidence. A central challenge was to develop normative arguments drawing on different policy precedents, some established in liberal, and others in conservative circles. For example, they supported the liberal plank that government can and should continue to provide public assistance to the poor on one hand while upholding a neo-conservative ideal that such assistance should be conditional on the responsible behavior of the recipient on the other.

The development of Learnfare required the combining of the "soft" versus "hard" (carrot versus stick) approaches to welfare. The analysts developed arguments that AFDC be conditional on performance rather than entitlement while also proposing a system of support services (day care and transportation) that would make these new requirements seem
to be part of a larger effort to help people remove barriers to economic self sufficiency rather than a new welfare bashing strategy. In this manner, Fish and other key players were effective in building on central precedents of both liberal and conservative thinking. Their general message became "Yes, it is reasonable to require school attendance for teen AFDC recipients. After all, recipients in other social program areas and people in mainstream society must uphold certain behavior patterns, so why should it be any different for the poor? However, in demanding school attendance, it is only fair that the state make sure that funding for day care and transportation is available".

Drawing on established normative precedents from other areas of social life as well as other areas of social policy, and drawing on recent works from new consensus writers such as Lawrence Mead and applying these ideas to Learnfare all were crucial tasks. Several examples are instructive. In 1986, Peter Tropman was struck by the contrast between the expectations and incentives faced by the recipient and those faced by society, as we saw in Chapter Five. In short, most people's income and well being were dependent on their performance in the labor market and elsewhere, and thus, they had to think about the economic costs of various behaviors ranging from work to having more children. Under the entitlement approach, no such
responsibility was necessary or strongly encouraged. Moreover, other areas of social policy required particular behavioral patterns to be upheld as a condition of continued support, the student loan program being one example. Tropman also noted that other programs had the normalization of the target population as one of their central goals, which he saw as a sharp contrast to the entitlement approach to welfare.

Tropman used these contrasts as reference points in building his support for the restructuring of social welfare to bring it back in line with what he deemed to be established standards. Through this, he and others worked, with the support of many nationally-known experts such as Mead to establish a policy framework predicated on differentiating recipients on the basis of work, personal initiative, parental responsibility and planning ahead. In this fashion, he helped develop a policy framework applicable across a range of social policy areas. When Thompson came out with the Learnfare idea during his gubernatorial campaign in the summer of 1986, the policy framework for such an initiative was already being established in analytic circles.

As Fish and others developed the Learnfare proposal, they implied there could perhaps be several sources of welfare dependency, which effectively made the program -
aimed at dependency — more acceptable to a range of political actors. While accepting Mead and Murray’s arguments that dependency was a serious problem, they challenged arguments linking dependency only to built-in disincentives which calculating recipients took advantage of. They entertained other scenarios as well, such as the lack of education or skills, or the possibility that one could be dependent simply because one did not know any better — their mother and their friends were on welfare and they lacked positive role models who might challenge them. By breaking the dependency issue down this way, Fish and others were able to unite a larger political front behind the program, or if nothing else, soften the resistance of some of the liberals.

The educational component as a centerpiece of Learnfare became an effective tool by which the analysts and proponents could bring people of conflicting ideologies together and gain their support. Mandating school attendance for AFDC teens had the "get tough" appeal to conservatives who appreciated requirements targeted at what they saw as irresponsible and apathetic behavior. But the fact that it was schooling that was being required struck a chord of appreciation among liberals, so even if they might have been inclined to see the programs as welfare bashing, their opposition was softened.
Analysis and politics were deeply interwoven in establishing the policy framework that legitimized the social contract approach to welfare, and both were clearly present in the actual development of the Learnfare proposal which drew on these precedents. Again, to reiterate earlier comments, analysis is an interactive process heavily dependent on the surrounding sociopolitical context. The data and social scientific knowledge that must be produced to raise analytic arguments are themselves meaningless and ineffectual when separated from this environment. The contribution of analysts to the development of the Learnfare program came not as new social scientific findings about welfare and poverty, even though they certainly did their share of analysis of such data. The key contribution of analysts was their capacity to combine these data sets with theories of welfare, normative precedents from other areas of policy and other areas of society and emerging political currents, and bringing them together to produce a compelling argument.

On the other side of the equation, key political actors such as Governor Thompson, the DHSS Secretary Timothy Cullen and key legislative leaders who sat on the welfare commission knew the analytic claims underlying Learnfare and were instrumental in establishing a critical mass of support. Consequently, the separation of analysis and
politics should only go so far as to present them as two ends of a continuum. In the case of Learnfare, key players were versed in both the analytic and political domains and would tend to fall towards the middle of the continuum.

From a broader perspective, actors closer to the polar ends of the continuum are less decisive in program development, and their input is less amenable to Majone and Stone's model. In the analytic wing this consists of medium to lower level DHSS staff analysts whose task was to provide primarily technical support in the proposal development as well as upper level administrators whose primary tasks was ironing out administrative details and producing the waiver request proposal. In the Legislature, analysts closer to the polar end consist of those from the Legislative Council and Legislative Fiscal Bureau whose support was primarily technical.

Actors from the political wing falling closer to the political end of the continuum include legislators not in leadership positions and not on committees responsible for social welfare and not involved with the welfare commission. These actors were less likely to know the policy analytic dimensions of Learnfare and more likely to vote as a bloc or as they perceived their constituents would prefer. Their influence in establishing the policy space was minimal at best.
At this point, we can refine our conclusions to say that politics and analysis are interwoven because of the intensity of interaction between the key analysts and key political actors in establishing the policy space. However, this is not to say that the work of all or even most analysts requires conversance with the political domain, nor vice-versa for political actors. In fact, the evidence for Learnfare suggests that a majority of analysts and political actors may not have been fluent in each others domain. Rather, analysis and politics are interwoven in the functional sense. The key to understanding the role of analysis in the Learnfare experience is to recognize that a subset of both the analytic and political communities (a very small minority at that) play a central role in shaping the policy space in any given area. While most analysts in the DHSS are probably not politically versed in this manner, the tasks laid out before them are established by the decisions made by key analysts and political actors who are.

Given the collective interdependence of analysis and politics combined with the apparent differences in the degree to which various individual analytic positions require a mastery of the policy and political domains, it is necessary to qualify our acceptance of the approach laid out by Deborah Stone (1988) and Giandomenico Majone (1989). There is no doubt that the model of policymaking as art and
craft is very useful in understanding the role of analysis in the development of the Learnfare program. The data provide abundant support for the contention that the actual task of policy analysis as a whole is more akin to the legal argument than scientific exposition. However, it is important to note that this is most applicable to key analysts who actually may compose a minority of analysts. The tasks of middle to lower level analysts appear to become more technical and less argumentative than their occupational superiors. Nonetheless, Majone and Stone's approach remains extremely useful since it is the key analysts who are decisive in determining the overall relationship between analysis and politics.

**Summary/Conclusions**

Each of the models explored in this chapter offers some unique insight into the development of the Learnfare program. For the most part these models are not mutually exclusive, although there were portions of the program's development that clearly favored one interpretation over another.

The first set of models came from the Organized Anarchy approach to the policymaking process which focuses on the interaction of several largely independent streams. The first of these examined was the Garbage Can, which provides an interesting and reasonable set of variables. However,
this model portrays a policymaking process that is far more random and chaotic than appears to have been the case in the development of Learnfare. In the case at hand, this model sheds more heat than light and is only useful in explaining program development in an idiosyncratic fashion after the fact.

The Policy Windows approach, the second model derived from the organized anarchy approach, places more emphasis on the organized elements, focusing on the interplay between problems, policies and politics. This model was very useful in explaining the basic confluence of streams favoring the development of a program like Learnfare. The increased awareness of the poverty and welfare dependency problem, the rise of new consensus social policy thinking and the election of Governor Thompson who was committed to addressing welfare dependency through these general ideas provide the fundamental basis for the rise of Learnfare as well as other programs. Kingdon's approach allows us to pinpoint the broad forces at work that were conducive to these initiatives. What it does not explain well, is the means by which politicians and analysts actually took advantage of the situation, and the specific means by which the programs were brought about.

Following this, the Rational Comprehensive and Incrementalist models were examined, and both were useful in
understanding major aspects of the program's development. Although the overall evidence is mixed, the data clearly indicate that the early stages of analysis that proceeded Learnfare contained strong elements of comprehensive rationality. Analysts established general goals early on, and then conducted a large amount of research and analytic work which encompassed the functions of needs assessment and specification of objectives. With the identification and design of alternatives, the evidence is more mixed; there was a relatively wide survey of possible alternatives very early on but the focus soon confined itself to a range of alternatives that were supported in new consensus thinking, but which would not require an overhaul of the existing welfare system. The latter stages of implementation and evaluation are more amenable to the rational comprehensive model, but these findings are not that crucial since the decisive stages of program development had already passed.

Comprehensive rationality was an important element in the development of Learnfare, although its boundaries were constrained. Even where the political and policy frameworks permit such an approach, the limits of social scientific and technical knowledge are such that the best that can be done is less than is needed in the ideal sense of the term.

Although early stages of program development carried a strong dose of comprehensive rationality, the shift to the
consideration and selection of alternatives involved a sharp delimitation of the process into that which could be drawn through a modification of past policies. It was here that the process turned fundamentally towards the incremental. The essential features of the Learnfare program grew out of well-established precedents in new consensus thinking which had already been tried in parallel forms through such programs as Workfare among others. Learnfare became a new form of regulated welfare which was well established in new consensus thinking and which was relatively easy to establish within the current welfare system. The legislative approval of Learnfare was secured by tying it closely to established social norms and preexisting policy frameworks.

A major research objective in this dissertation is to shed light on the role of analysts in the policymaking process, and three additional models were analyzed specifically towards these ends. I first examined the anti-analytic thesis in light of the extensive controversy that developed around Learnfare, in particular, the charges going out into the media and elsewhere that the program was developed as a political ploy lacking substantial input by analysts. This model, as the title suggests, refers to the situation where analysts are bypassed in the process of policy development, their second guessing capacities seen as a threat to political preference.
Contrary to my anticipations in entering the research, the evidence indicates that the anti-analytic thesis does not apply to the Learnfare case, as analysis was heavily utilized in program development. Regardless of whether one supports the program or not, it must be emphasized that the research here indicates analysts played an important role in developing the policy framework on which it was based. Furthermore, the specific components of Learnfare such as the school attendance requirements and support services were developed alongside substantial analytical deliberation, first and foremost among top DHSS analysts.

Although analysis was very important, it would be a mistake to reverse the equation and suggest that it played a dominant role. Although key analysts in the DHSS played an instrumental role both in paving the way for Learnfare and developing the actual proposal, they clearly were subject to the veto power in political circles, and developed the program in full anticipation of these forces. The analyst subordination thesis provides excellent insight in this regards. To use Peter deLeon's terms, both advice and consent (supply and demand) were present as we saw a coupling of policy ideas with political forces in 1987, as opposed to 1986, and thus analysts were able to play an important role. But again, the analysis took place within a political framework.
The final model of Policymaking as Art and Craft is very useful in explaining the overall role of analysis in the process. The most important task for the analysts who were most central to the initial development of the Learnfare proposal was not providing facts and data, but rather a task of effective argumentation. This consisted of building a compelling policy argument out of new consensus thinking and established precedents from other areas of social life in a manner that would appeal to those wanting a strong set of obligations for AFDC recipients enacted, while not invoking active resistance from a majority of liberals who were committed to a strong support system for these recipients. This form of analysis is best seen as an interactive process heavily dependent on the surrounding sociopolitical context.

The high degree of interconnectedness between analysis and politics also raises the possibility that at times analysis could be used as a justification for, rather than an intellect plan for, policy action. This is more likely to occur in situations where analysis is most subordinate to politics, namely in situations where the policy issues are relatively intractable and revolve around core values.

While there is merit to Stone and Majone’s account of analysis as argument and persuasion, such an interpretation appears less applicable to the role of many other analysts
that were somehow involved in the development of the Learnfare program. Middle and lower-level DHSS staff analysts as well as upper-level analysts involved with administration and analysts in places like the Legislative Fiscal Bureau who together account for the majority of analysts, performed tasks that were more technical and analytically narrow. Not surprisingly, these analysts were less attuned to the political dimensions of Learnfare. On the other side of the equation, most political actors were not significantly involved in the policy aspects of the Learnfare proposal.

The key to understanding the relationship between analysis and politics in the learnfare case is to recognize analytic and political functions not as two separate poles but as a continuum. The majority of political actors and analysts fall closer to their respective ends of the continuum. However, a minority of both political actors and analysts fall closer to the middle of the continuum, possessing a substantial capacity to master both the political and analytical dimensions of social welfare policy. And while these people represent perhaps a small minority of their respective occupations, they are the key players in establishing the policy space. Therefore, in arguing that analysis and politics are deeply interwoven and that the most essential task of analysis is more
argumentative than algorithmical to use Majone’s terms, it would be a mistake to suggest that such tasks characterize the work of most analysts. Rather, it characterizes the work of a minority of analysts who perform the critical argumentative functions that shape the role of analysis as a whole in the policymaking process. As we move away from the crucial policymaking circles shared by the key players, whether we move towards the analytic or political end of the continuum, we find a declining capacity to simultaneously master the analytic and political domains. The analysis of Learnfare through this final model, as well as the analyst subordination thesis discussed above suggests that a better understanding of the role of analysts in the process would be afforded by recognizing that analysis and politics are functionally interwoven.
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS

The Learnfare program was clearly one of the major welfare reform initiatives coming from States across the nation over the past decade. A major reason it drew so much controversy is precisely because it cut across many of the key issues that are currently at the center of public policy in general and the welfare debate in particular. These issues revolve around the proper balance between governmental support and individual initiative and the appropriateness of specific governmental demands of the citizens it supports. With such important issues at stake, the Learnfare experience provides an interesting case study in public policymaking and the role of analysis in the process. It provides an interesting look at the relationship between social science knowledge, the policymaking process and the final structure of a social program. We begin by reexamining the central findings of this research, and follow with a broader discussion of the implications of welfare reform for our understanding of the process by which contemporary societies structure themselves.

Summary/Conclusions

The application of a cross section of theoretical models to the analysis here provided insight into several important aspects of the policymaking process. This
consisted of two sets of models. The first series were classic models of the policymaking process including Organized Anarchy, which was divided into the Garbage Can and Policy Windows approaches respectively; the Rational Comprehensive model and Incrementalism. The second series of models had implications for the overall process but were somewhat more focused on the role of analysis in the process. These consisted of the Anti-analytic thesis, the Analyst Subordination thesis and the model of Policy Analysis as Art and Craft.

The first model examined under Organized Anarchy was the Garbage Can model from organizational theory which portrays the policymaking process as the interaction of several separate streams, these being problems, participants involved, solutions proposed and opportunities for choice. Organizational decisionmaking is characterized as a relatively chaotic and organizationally ambiguous process. In general, this model portrays a process far more random and chaotic than is useful in explaining Learnfare. For our purposes here, the most it could do is explain program development in idiosyncratic fashion after the fact.

Learnfare developed out of the coupling of three separate forces, these being problems, policies and politics, providing support for John Kingdon’s Policy Windows model. Welfare dependency and poverty had become an
increasingly important issue in the 1980s. Macroeconomic changes, plant closings and the partial financial and administrative retreat by the federal government from social programs for the poor certainly had an impact on the size of state welfare rolls. From the perspective of many states like Wisconsin, there was increased need levels, but fewer resources to meet those needs. Other factors were present as well. Social science studies indicated a fairly substantial percentage of the AFDC population at any one time was long term. Consequently, poverty and welfare became an increasingly important issue, which was reflected in the Wisconsin DHSS in 1986.

The policy community was also changing over the course of the 1980s. After a couple of decades where the entitlement approach to welfare had been fairly well established, the 1980s saw the increased influence of new consensus social policy thinking, drawing on the works of Charles Murray (1982, 1984), Lawrence Mead (1981, 1982, 1986) among others. Within this perspective, welfare dependency itself, rather than the lack of opportunity per se, is a major cause of sustained poverty and welfare dependency. From the writings of Mead, among others, came the central arguments that a social contract must be established in which welfare recipients, in return for benefits, should be held to a reciprocal obligation to
engage in job training and work and take other necessary steps to achieve economic self sufficiency.

As these ideas became more influential and worked their way into state welfare reform packages such as those of Wisconsin, and they were joined by arguments from more accommodating liberals that if recipients were to be held to performance requirements and thus be required to work, attend school, etc., the state had the obligation to help them remove those barriers present by funding various support services such as day care and transportation.

The changing policy community was reflected in the state of Wisconsin DHSS in the 1980s when analysts recommended a reconceptualization of social welfare and a decisive change in emphasis. Through analysis of data, reviews of studies on poverty and welfare and an examination of various arguments for reform, the groundwork for change in the policy community was established. This change of direction was reflected in interdepartmental memos and policy papers, and eventually proposals for reform. The new emphasis was on the social contract, i.e., the responsibility of welfare recipients to take active steps to improve their situation and achieve economic independence in return for benefits.

Despite the importance of welfare reform as an issue in the 1980s, the political currents in Wisconsin generally
remained unreceptive to new consensus driven legislation through 1986. Governor Anthony Earl was more favorable to an entitlement approach to social welfare, and was very hesitant to build on the recommendations of key analysts like Peter Tropman. Meanwhile, gubernatorial candidate Tommmy Thompson made welfare reform a central campaign theme, which included the general idea that welfare recipients should be required to work and finish school. With his election as Governor in the Fall of 1986, he carried a strong mandate for welfare reform which he took full advantage of in his first biennial budget in 1987. By 1987 a majority of the legislature appears to have a shared his general conviction on the general merits of new consensus style welfare reform.

The interaction of these broad underlying forces opened an opportunity for reform, and provides an excellent example of what John Kingdon refers to as a "policy window"; in essence, an excellent opportunity for welfare reform in general, and Learnfare in particular. In 1987, a series of welfare reform proposals of which Learnfare became the most visible, were passed into legislation. Thompson's personal commitment to Learnfare was very important in keeping the proposal alive when opposition may have brought it to a standstill.

The structure of the policymaking process behind
Learnfare is best characterized as a mixture between comprehensive rationality and incrementalism. The early stages of program development came closer to the rational comprehensive model. Analysts established goals early on of restructuring the welfare state to place a premium on reciprocal obligation, linking strong support from the state to the requirements that recipients take active steps to improve their situation and achieve economic independence. Analysts also established the objectives of reducing welfare dependency, but not at the expense of the well being of recipients. As we look to the identification and design of policy alternatives which are supposed to characterize the next stages of rational comprehensive policy development, the evidence is more mixed. Early on, the consideration of general alternatives was fairly comprehensive, as we found evidence of substantial brainstorming and a wide scope of inquiry. As the process developed, however, the scope of consideration took a sharp turn towards the incremental, as the range of possibilities were increasingly those which could be developed out of new consensus thinking and which could be easily incorporated into the existing welfare system. The analysts' final selection of policy alternatives, (in this case, Learnfare) was facilitated not only by the rational arguments behind the program, but by the fact that it could be integrated into the existing
political framework and the existing welfare system. Moreover, the pressures on the Learnfare proposal as it moved into the state legislature were decisively incrementalist, as most legislators envisioned a sharply modified version for actual legislative consideration. In fact, it was only through Governor Thompson’s line-item veto that the program passed into law closely approximating the original design of its planners. The latter stages of implementation and evaluation are amenable to the rational comprehensive model, in that the administrative and technical procedures were carefully charted and less constrained by the surrounding sociopolitical environment.

Comprehensive rationality was an important element in the development of Learnfare, even though its boundaries were sharply limited in actual selection of alternatives and estimation of consequences. Even where the policy and political frameworks afford such an approach, the limits of social scientific and technical knowledge are such that the best that can be done is inadequate in the ideal sense of the term. One aspect of program development that fell far short of comprehensive rationality was the apparent lack of detailed planning and discussion of the causal theory of intervention. Even analysts focusing more on the technical or programmatic dimension of Learnfare, such as those in the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, were aware of the limitations on
their comprehensiveness. For these very reasons, important phases of program development more closely approximate incrementalism. Although this primarily applies only to the design and selection of policy alternatives, these stages are such crucial ones that the overall structure of the process takes on an important degree of incrementalism.

The findings here may lend some support to Amitai Etzioni's "Mixed scanning" approach to the policy process. The mixed scanning approach offers an alternative to comprehensive rationality and incrementalism by differentiating between the necessity of strategic choices that establish the general direction and scope of policy and operational choices that work within the strategic framework closer to implementation (Etzioni, 1967). Mixed scanning might help us understand why there might be a natural tendency for the policymaking process to turn towards the incremental somewhere in the middle stages of development as did Learnfare.

A major research objective of this dissertation was to better understand the role of analysis in the process, and the second series of models allowed these issues to be more specifically addressed. The most basic finding is this regard, is that contrary to the suggestions of many critics - and somewhat contrary to my initial suspicion that Learnfare may have been developed in an anti-analytic
environment - the data clearly indicate that analysis was not only conducted, but heavily utilized in program development. The image of the program as a political coup not subject to analysis may have been a product of the high controversy surrounding the program after implementation, combined with the fact that it came from a Republican Governor who up to this point had a conservative reputation. Seen through the controversy waged through the media, Learnfare had the appearance of being a classic welfare bashing scheme. Nonetheless, whether one ultimately supports Learnfare or not, there is no doubt that analysis - far beyond that of technical adjustment - played an instrumental role in developing the program.

As important as analysis was, however, it had to work in conjunction with an emergent bipartisan framework. Analysts working with ideas bearing a relationship to new consensus thinking faced a more difficult situation prior to the changing political environment that came with the election of Tommy Thompson as Governor. Whereas the Earl Administration was likely to provide hesitant support at best for policy proposals designed on the social contract, the new administration actively courted such an approach. This approximates the relationship between analysis and politics as portrayed in the analyst subordination thesis. In the Learnfare case, it would be inaccurate to say that
analysis proceeds on political whims, for the evidence points to a far more interactive process, and a policy framework of a more enduring nature. Analysts nationally and within Wisconsin state government played an important role in developing this framework. Nonetheless, they developed the framework at least in part through interaction with political forces, both individually and collectively. That is to say, the new consensus social policy framework was developed in Wisconsin in full anticipation of the political response, in addition to the purely programmatic merits the new paradigm was seen to contain. In Peter deLeon’s terms, even though both advice and consent were present as Learnfare was developed, the consent had sharply delimited boundaries which structured the general framework in which advice was to be provided. Again, analysis did play an instrumental role here, but exercised its influence within a larger political framework which held veto power.

The recognition that analysis proceeds in a highly interactive fashion while remaining ultimately subordinate to the veto power of politics takes us to the heart of the final theoretical model examined here. According to the model of Policy Analysis as Art and Craft, the most important task of analysts is not providing data and evidence, but more of an exercise in argumentation and persuasion. That analysis is ultimately subordinate to
politics implies that for analysts to play an active or
effective role, they must develop analytical work through
creative interaction with that political framework. The
evidence from Learnfare provides some support for this.
Analysts used data and surveyed a variety of analyses
pertaining to poverty and welfare. But their greatest
challenge and greatest contribution was the development of a
persuasive policy argument out of the Wisconsin version of
new consensus thinking, which involved transferring
normative precedents from other policy areas and mainstream society and establishing them within the social welfare arena. Their essential task was that of norm setting, in
which arguments were developed which effectively changed mutual expectations between welfare recipient and the state and which helped to substantially alter the terms of the welfare debate in Wisconsin as well as nationally. The
specific arguments launching the Learnfare program built on this larger process. As we saw, the analytic work was by necessity a highly interactive process in which a primary challenge was to structure the program in such a way as to not invoke the resistance of liberals who were committed to a strong support system for those in need. Clearly, Stone and Majone's approach to policy analysis as art and craft provides an excellent description of the actual process of analysis, seen as a whole, in a political environment. In
this manner, Majone and Stone avoid the tendency of theoretical approaches in some textbooks to portray analysis and politics as widely separate entities.

Despite its use in describing the overall functions of analysis, however, Majone and Stone's characterization of analysis as argumentation, persuasion, and heavily dependent on rhetorical skills is less accurate as a description of the work of the majority of analysts taken individually. In the case of Learnfare, middle and lower level DHSS staff analysts with various responsibilities as well as upper level analysts involved with administration, who together comprise a majority of analysts, performed tasks that were more analytically narrow than key analysts such as Peter Tropman and Al Fish. Not surprisingly, these analysts were less attuned to the political dimensions of Learnfare. On the other side of the equation, most political actors were not deeply involved in the policy aspects of the Learnfare proposal.

The evidence here suggests the key to understanding the relationship between analysis and politics is to recognize analytic and political functions not as two separate poles, but as a continuum (see Figure One). The majority of analysts and political actors fall closer to their respective ends of the continuum. However, a minority of both political actors and analysts fall closer to the middle
FIGURE ONE: Analysis and Politics in the Policymaking Process

of the continuum, possessing a substantial mastery of both the political and analytic dimensions of social welfare policy. And while the evidence here suggests these people most likely comprise only a small minority of their respective occupations, they are the key players in establishing the policy space. Therefore, in arguing that analysis and politics are deeply interwoven, and that primary tasks of analysts are more argumentative than algorithmic, to use Majone's terms, it would be mistaken to suggest that such tasks characterize the work of most analysts, seen individually. Rather, it characterizes the work of the minority of analysts who perform the central
argumentative tasks that shape the overall role of analysis in the policymaking process. As we move away from the crucial policymaking circles shared by the key players, whether we move towards the analytic or political end of the continuum, we find a declining necessity to simultaneously master the analytic and political domains.

**Validity of Findings**

One issue that emerges, particularly in a qualitative study such as this, concerns the validity of the research findings. A qualitative study, relying heavily on interviews, lends itself to the possibility that someone coming along afterwards, who picks up the same research project, might come to substantially different conclusions. However, two factors lend this study to a fairly high level of reproducability. First, my data base was built on multiple accounts of important and common issues and events in the process. Secondly, interviewees were provided a copy of the chapters describing the process, and were thus afforded an additional opportunity to point out oversights and inaccuracies, or simply to add more pertinent information. Many responded with such comments. And third, the validity of this was enhanced by the extensive use of a variety of supporting documents as discussed in the methods section.
Generalizability

After examining the findings in this research, the question emerges as to their implications for other arenas of social welfare policymaking and policymaking in general. In essence, there are questions to be raised concerning generalizability to other settings.

Questions of generalizability focus on issues pertaining to space, i.e., political and geographical jurisdiction, time period, and policy area. Two factors discussed earlier in the study must be taken into consideration before making generalizations across spatial lines based on the Learnfare experience. First, as noted at the beginning of Chapter Five, the State of Wisconsin has somewhat unique traditions in policymaking. Since relatively early on, Wisconsin has been noted as a reformist State with a reputation for bringing policy analysts into closer contact with government than appears to be the case in most states. Analytic activism has coupled with a political climate favors "progressive" reform and policy tinkering in general. It is possible that such a tradition permits programmatic considerations to carry more weight in the policymaking process than in many other States around the nation, and thus an environment more favorable to rational comprehensive program development. The evidence in this study suggests that this tradition was also present in the
development of Learnfare. Perhaps the suggestions among opponents that Learnfare was developed in an analytical void could be corrected to say that the influence of one policy framework (and perhaps some of its adherents) had diminished while another moved to the fore. What opponents saw as a decline in the use of analysis may in fact have been a shift from one analytic framework to another.

A second factor making Wisconsin government somewhat unique is the institutional power of the Governorship. As noted in Chapter Six, Wisconsin Governors are allowed to exercise vetoes to such an extent where the fundamental meanings of legislation can potentially be changed. And as we saw, Governor Thompson took full advantage of this through a multitude of partial line-item vetoes in the 1987-89 biennial budget, the best known of which expanded Learnfare back to its earlier recommended size. From the standpoint of the observer, this capacity may have afforded Governor Thompson, his staff, and key DHSS analysts a greater opportunity to plan the Learnfare program and see it retain more of its original form in its final enactment into legislation. For our purposes here, this may favor a policy process that is somewhat closer to the rational comprehensive model than that of other states.

A second issue concerns the extent to which the Learnfare experience of the mid-to-latter 1980s is
generalizable to other time periods. Clearly, the institutional analytic capacity within state government has increased dramatically over the past quarter century, spurred in part from their rapidly increasing responsibilities under the Nixon and Reagan versions of new federalism. This has certainly increased the role of analysis in the policymaking process and may leave generalizations of the Learnfare experience to earlier situations prior to the 1970s problematic. However, there is no immediate reason to believe that generalizations to the 1990s are not warranted.

The Learnfare experience appears to be generalizable to other policy areas beyond welfare reform. The findings in this research clearly link the Learnfare experience with policymaking patterns seen elsewhere. Policymaking in many of these areas occurs in somewhat similar (perhaps common) political, analytic and institutional environments.

Assuming the use of caution, and writing at a very general level, the findings of this study appear to be generalizable to State and to a lesser extent, federal policymaking processes. Due to institutional similarities, it is easier to move from one state to another, than to jump from the state to the federal or local level.

No doubt, this study is most generalizable to those policy making contexts which most closely resemble that of
Learnfare; state level, new consensus style welfare reform of the 1980s. But the findings here may have some more general implications as well. First, despite the uniqueness of Wisconsin state government, the structure of the policymaking process and the relationship between analysis and politics in this study appears to support various theories of the process as we noted earlier, and in doing so, taps into phenomena that occur in a wide range of settings.

The Dual Functions of Public Policy: Symbolic and Programmatic

Having examined the policymaking process and the role of analysis in the development of Learnfare, a question remains: how are we to characterize the policy framework at its core, this being the new consensus, i.e., social contract approach to welfare programs for the poor? To put it in more general terms, based on this analysis of the new consensus welfare reform of the 1980s as well as broader discussions of the policy sciences touched on briefly in the first two chapters, how can we better understand of the role of public policy in society?

Part of the answer to this comes from the contrast that can be observed between the critiques and evaluations of 1980s welfare reform on one hand, and the limited impact of those responses on the political viability of those very
programs on the other. But first, it is essential to differentiate between the programmatic and the symbolic dimensions of public policy. The programmatic dimension as used here refers to the issues relating to the actual change in objective conditions that may result from social program intervention, i.e., higher rates of high school completion, higher rates of labor force participation, reduced poverty rates and so forth. The symbolic dimension refers to the way that people view a program and its role in society—their attitudes towards the ideals and values it is seen to uphold, or fail to uphold. To some extent, these two dimensions resemble Robert K. Merton’s characterizations of manifest and latent functions, the manifest referring to functions which are formally intended, the latent referring to that which is unplanned or incidental, but whose functions are important nonetheless (Merton, 1968). The symbolic dimension of public policy is broader than the programmatic because it does not merely refer to whether or not the outcomes are such that certain conditions are attained and ideals and/or values are furthered—although this is important—but whether or not the law itself, or means employed, uphold those ideals and values.

And here is the crux of the issue. While some of the new consensus programs of the 1980s may have decreased welfare dependency among some, and overall may have improved
the welfare system at least marginally, that is the best
that can be said, as many reports are more doubtful. And the
evidence comes from two distinct intellectual circles.
First, if we look at the programmatic dimensions of new
consensus reform, there is fairly compelling evidence from
evaluations, some of which were discussed in Chapter Two,
that welfare reform initiatives whose goals are the
reduction of poverty and welfare dependency through the
introduction of various rules, rewards, punishments -
ultimately designed to make recipients achieve self
sufficiency - are generally unable to make more than a small
dent in the problem. Whether it is the traditional WIN
programs first enacted in the late 1960s or the "New
Consensus" state welfare reforms of the 1980s such as
Workfare, WIN Demonstration, Learnfare or other initiatives,
the programs appear to be making only very limited inroads
at best against poverty and welfare dependency; in fact, as
noted earlier, the welfare rolls continue to expand in the
early 1990s.

Secondly, many of the poverty experts such as William
Wilson (1980 and 1987) and Michael Harrington (1984) and
compelling theoretical and empirical arguments that welfare
reform as we know it is seriously misguided; It fails to
address crucial structural and demographic factors such as

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low wages, the increasing percentage of work that is part
time, offering little or no benefits such as child care and
health care, the growth of female-headed households, plant
closings, the flight of manufacturing from the central city
and from the nation as a whole, lack of transportation and
day care, etc.

Actually, this is nothing new or that terribly
controversial. Even if these writers overstate their case or
gloss over other important factors sustaining welfare
dependency - as some other experts like Charles Murray and
Lawrence Mead believe they do - their basic argument that a
series of structural factors are important in producing
poverty has validity. An analyst who was instrumental in
shaping the series of welfare reforms that were enacted in
Wisconsin along with Learnfare vigorously acknowledges the
inability of these initiatives to deal with issues such as
the plant closings and low wages that plague the high
poverty sections of Milwaukee where a large percentage of
the states's AFDC population lives. Even if these programs
work, they can only be a part of the solution. In the end,
the effects of incentives, rewards/punishments,
requirements, and the establishment of recipient-government
reciprocity have had far less impact than larger
socioeconomic forces in expanding and shrinking the welfare
rolls and indeed shaping trends in American poverty (NY
Ironically, these programs remain popular with policymakers, the public, and even the recipients themselves - the new consensus social policy reform remains at the center of the welfare debate. For example, a poll of Milwaukee County residents shortly after a variety of newspaper reports of administrative problems and program ineffectiveness of welfare reform in general and Learnp fare in particular, found 70 percent of respondents supporting "a cut in benefits for families whose children miss school" (Limhoefer, 1992). To adequately understand the new consensus and the social forces driving welfare reform, we must unravel this seeming paradox.

For all of these doubts, uncertainties and disappointments, new consensus programs appear to enjoy a broad base of support among policymakers, the public and even the recipients themselves. And each time, the problem of poverty appears on the agenda, the same general style of welfare reform is resurrected - although perhaps under a new name and in an altered form. To understand why such reform is fairly indestructible politically, we must shift our attention from the programmatic to the symbolic dimension of public policy by examining the manner in which policy interacts with society.

This is a crucial task, for it turns out that not only
are people concerned about the ends of public policy, i.e.,
the extent to which it achieves given goals, and thus
upholds important values such as meeting basic needs or
reducing particle emissions into the atmosphere; people are
also concerned that a policy or program in and of itself
symbolically reaffirm an ideal to which they can positively
relate, and that the means employed in addressing a problem
be consonant with societal values. More specifically, the
rules, regulations and contracts that compose a particular
program carry powerful symbolic messages in their own right,
regardless of their ultimate goals and objectives. The very
nature of these rules, regulations and contracts govern
social interaction; more specifically, they carry strong
normative guidelines outlining the "appropriate" boundaries
of that interaction. Among other things, this consists of
definitions of the rights, responsibilities and reciprocal
obligations between groups, organizations and individuals
and society vis-a-vis government.

An appreciation of this symbolic dimension of public
policy is crucial in explaining the sustained popularity of
"get tough" new consensus welfare reform in the wake of
sober program evaluations and other debunking evidence.
These programs fulfill two distinct symbolic functions.
First, the very act itself of developing and implementing a
program such as Learnfare, aimed at reducing welfare
dependency, assures the public that society, via the State
is concerned about people who are stuck on welfare for
whatever reason, wants to help them, and views their
integration into the social and economic mainstream as a
laudable goal. In reflecting on experiences such as the
Great Society, Thomas Dye was an early articulator of the
symbolic dimension of the policy initiative:

The policies of government may tell us more about
the aspirations of a society and its leadership
than about objective conditions.
.. a government "war on poverty" may not have any
significant impact on the poor, but it reassures
moral men, the affluent as well as the poor, that
government "cares" about poverty. Whatever the
failures of the anti-poverty programs in tangible
respects, its symbolic value may be more than
redeeming (1976, p.20).

Secondly, new consensus welfare reform brought
important change to the means by which poverty was to be
addressed, by stating that in return for support, people
should be required to work, enroll in job training, or in
the case of Learnfare, attend school regularly; in short,
take responsibility for themselves. The establishment of
these performance requirements, regardless of whether they
work or not in a programmatic sense, is a symbolic
reaffirmation of deeply rooted societal values.

Let us look more closely at this. Public assistance in
the United States, i.e., AFDC, Food Stamps, General
Assistance, etc. which has as its stated goals the provision

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of sustenance, whether seen as transitional emergency aid for sudden unexpected hardship, or as long term income support. In providing sustenance, it presumably upholds societal norms of equity and justice, however vague by definition. However, other dominant American values include hard work, self reliance and family autonomy (Williams, 1960 and Ellwood, 1988), and large portions of the public often feel that welfare, unwittingly or not, undercuts these values in the process of assisting people. A common critique among policymakers and laymen is that the administration of AFDC, Food Stamps and General Assistance programs contains no adequate mechanisms encouraging or requiring recipients to work hard and make an honest effort to improve their own condition and achieve self sufficiency. This is why surveys find the public to be generally supportive of governmental aid to the truly needy while simultaneously remaining highly suspicious of welfare programs (see NORC file data, 1991 and Feagen, 1974 for surveys). In this sense, Ellwood (1988) argues that welfare appeals to half of the public mind.

There is no doubt it could be argued that the public is overly preoccupied with the perceived work disincentives in welfare, and indeed, even those studies calling attention to the problem of long term dependency among a subset of the welfare population demonstrate that the majority of AFDC recipients are truly needy and do not "abuse" welfare
(Ellwood, 1988; Moynahan, 1987). But knowledge of such statistics is not likely to change the public mind very substantially, for the heart of their concern seems to be that performance requirements must be built into public assistance; that regardless of actual abuse rates, any welfare program providing benefits to non-retired, apparently able-bodied people without corresponding work-related requirements violates deeply imbedded societal norms and values. For these reasons, public assistance remains controversial and morally suspect, while ongoing 'get tough' welfare reform efforts draw sustained public support despite little evidence of actual success.

As these observations indicate, we can say that public policy consists of more than the programmatic task of achieving certain goals such as early intervention and treatment by the welfare department in child abuse cases, or protecting the consumer from monopolies in cable television. For in addition to this, it symbolically upholds normative ideals by (a) declaring a given problem and its "victims" worthy of attention, i.e., "We're doing something about it", and (b) constructing policies and programs whose guiding rules and regulations are structured to explicitly and/or implicitly uphold those very normative ideals and values that govern relations between organizations, groups and individuals vis-a-vis society, regardless of their impact on
formally stated goals. Merely providing formal endorsement of certain behavior and values via rules and laws of legislative and/or administrative enactment symbolically upholds these norms and values regardless of the actual programmatic outcomes. As such, public policy is inherently normative and powerfully symbolic. In societies like our own, it functions as a moral ledger between society and the disadvantaged. As of this writing, new consensus style welfare reform programs remain the dominant strategy against welfare dependency. To be sure, these programs are not dependent on positive program evaluations or the blessings of poverty analysts for their survival.

While these are important reasons why new consensus welfare reform programs sustain fairly widespread support, despite their very limited impact on poverty and welfare dependency, there may be other reasons as well. Were an Administration at the federal or state level to make a concerted effort to address structural poverty, the fiscal and political costs could be quite substantial. There are several possible means of addressing structural poverty. One of these is to increase the minimum wage. This could be politically costly due to opposition from employers particularly reliant on low-wage labor. Another possibility is a publicly funded job creation program, in essence a modernized version of the New Deal public works projects.
Despite the strong support it would receive in many corners, the political and fiscal costs incurred might be quite substantial. On the political side, organized labor might resist what they may regard as an intrusion of public works projects into their particular sphere of the labor market, thus reducing the demand for their own work. Certain businesses might resist if the work done by public works employees overlapped with their own, thus intruding on their market share. On the fiscal side there are the inevitable costs of funding a direct job creation program large enough to make substantial inroads against unemployment. Discussion of the revival of large scale jobs programs has increased recently, as of this writing early in 1993, but there is no evidence of any serious proposals at this point.

**Social Policy and Contemporary Community**

Social policy fulfills important institutional functions in the development and maintenance of community in industrial mass societies by providing mechanisms of support, opportunity and even discipline to various target populations - and to do so in a manner that upholds public values and ideals, however generalized and abstract. However, I must make a disclaimer here. I do not mean community in the same sense as the village and tribal structures that were dominant in the past. I am referring to a type of community structure that consists of a commonly
held system of general, if somewhat abstract set of values and beliefs that acts as a cohesive force in a society that is heterogeneous in most respects. The welfare reform initiatives of the 1980s have important implications for the development and maintenance of contemporary community. However, to understand their relationship to these larger historical social processes, it is essential to step back and look at the larger social transformations that have changed the structure and meaning of the social community.

These transformations, and their implications for sociology, are best exemplified in the sociological classic, *The Division of Labour* (1984) by Emile Durkheim. At the heart of Durkheim's work was an intense concern with community solidarity and the new means by which it is maintained in our complex, changing society. It is on the subject of community that this study must begin and end.

In traditional preindustrial societies, Durkheim explains, community in its ideal typical form, could be found within tribes and small villages, through a commonly held system of norms, values and world view which created an all-embracing social system bonding people through a collective conscience. The division of tasks was relatively simple - each individual in the community participating with others in many different spheres of life simultaneously, this including work, religion, the teaching of the young,
the control of deviance, the care of the elderly and vulnerable, etc. In this fashion, community social standards were upheld on a daily basis through the collective conscience of mechanical solidarity. While this collective conscience was locally produced and particularistic in world view and thus likely to appear as extremely parochial to the contemporary observer, it also reinforced strong social bonds which made a strong community structure possible.

At the community level, the collective conscience was often manifested, among other ways, in a basic concern for the welfare of others. Whether through the teachings of a common religious doctrine or the social connectedness associated with the smaller communal structure itself, these societies carried a community ethic (however parochial in nature) which united people in carrying out social functions and attending to the needs of the community. This social concern represents what one community theorist refers to as a form of "agape love", i.e., the general caring for a fellow tribal or village member outside of one's immediate family and kinship structure (Hillery, 1984).

This all began to change with the rise of industrialization, Durkheim maintains. A rapidly growing division of labor brought the specialization of tasks and a rapidly increasing scale and complexity of society. The particularistic and all-encompassing collective conscience
of traditional society was slowly subsumed by one of a more universalistic and diffuse nature. This new common consciousness was forced to rise above local diversity and assume a large space as a public ethos (Durkheim; 1984). Large scale industrial production, the growth of urban areas, high levels of both geographic and social mobility and the increased specialization of tasks signaled the arrival of mass society. Whereas members of various traditional societies were linked through commonalities of a particularistic system of values and beliefs, it is the interdependence that comes with the specialization of tasks and the vastly increased importance of contracts, coupled with a more general and abstract set of norms and values that now bonds their industrial counterparts (Durkheim, 1984). As local custom became increasingly inadequate in regulating the many complex interactions that compose a heterogeneous industrial society, social life became evermore contractual in form. The greater use of contracts in turn permitted increased cooperation among complete strangers and thus, ever greater heterogeneity. Consequently, intimate community structures and kinship groups were increasingly ill-prepared to serve as the focal point in the regulation of social life.

However, the development and validation of contracts required coordination and support at the macro level.
Consequently, the state assumed a new role in the regulation of social life, steadily enveloping more social spheres under various laws, regulations, programs and policies (Marshall, 1970 and Mishra, 1980). The agape love of communal society reemerged as the civic ethic and the charitable ethos as industrialism swept across the landscape. Because intimate social structures within mass industrial societies are very limited in their ability to articulate and express these norms and values, large organizational bodies - most importantly, government, gradually assumed many of the tasks. In essence, the norms and values of the new collective conscience found in contemporary society - more abstract and universalistic - are manifested in public policy, via administrative law, contracts, programs of redistribution, etc., as opposed to tribal or village custom.

It is essential to point out here that the increased importance of contract in modern social life should not be seen as a development replacing values, norms and collective sentiments as the glue holding society together. Rather, it provides a means by which they may be expressed and formalized. This is particularly important since the dominant values under which our society is organized are more abstract and universalistic than those characterizing earlier societies.
However, the process by which such collective sentiments can be expressed and formalized through contract is fraught with dilemmas and conflict. Durkheim emphatically states that these new contracts must be consistent with social norms and values—the collective conscience. After all, a healthy society cannot be sustained by contract alone. Yet various forms of contracts today are used to regulate all manners of interactions in an effort to uphold various social norms and values. This involves very complicated tasks and leaves such contracts highly vulnerable to a variety of unintended consequences.

Durkheim maintains that historically, the societal response to increased pressure for the use of contracts has varied. In some cases, contracts have been forged unsupported by the collective conscience, and thus, a totalitarian society is created. The American tendency has been the opposite in this respect, as the emphasis on individualism and autonomy, among other things, harbors a general resistance to the rapid growth of the state, despite the need for a coordinated public response in many situations. The consequence is the American tendency towards a very diffuse collective conscience only weakly supported through a contractual system—thus laying out the basis for an anomic society (Durkheim, 1984).

Having used Durkheimian theory as a theoretical basis
for this study, I must offer an additional explanation to those who may question the manner in which the theory is applied here. My use of Durkheimian theory is part of an attempt to correct for what I believe to be the selective application of Durkheim's work by American sociology. American sociologists have generally emphasized the more anthropological elements of Durkheim's theoretical work in the *Division of Labour*, that being, his comparison of the social structure of tribal and village societies with that of the emergent industrial society, i.e., mechanical and organic solidarity. Thus, he examines traditional societies as a means of contrasting them to our own, i.e., the weakening of the collective conscience, etc. But his lengthy discussion of the growing division of labor is designed to highlight the structure of contemporary society and the dilemmas arising. Collectively, American sociology, has incorporated elements of his analysis, but in doing so they have concentrated on A) the anthropological elements of Durkheim's theoretical work, such as the generic meaning of a collective conscience, society as an organism, norms, values, rituals, etc. And, B) the general anomic tendency in societies like our own, in the wake of the division of labour where these traditional elements of societal glue appear to have weakened.

What has not been adequately treated, and which is
perhaps the culminating message arising from these observations is that which is repeatedly emphasized in the latter stages of *The Division of Labour*: Whereas an examination of the nature of the norms, values, rituals and institutions that compose the collective conscience as expressed in everyday social life were the means by which the moral solidarity of traditional society is to be understood, it is the study of laws, regulations, contracts and social administration — in short, public policy — that is the means by which the moral solidarity of industrial societies like our own are to be understood and judged. In essence, American sociology has understood the means while deemphasizing the ends of Durkheim's work in *The Division of Labour*.

It has been almost a century since Durkheim wrote, and the developments over which he was concerned have only intensified. The study of public policy is crucial in understanding the key issues and dilemmas of contemporary social life. And the intellectual pioneers in social policy such as T.H. Marshall (1970) and Richard Titmus (1974) build on the issues Durkheim raised in their analysis of the shift from the family or village to the State, of many social welfare functions such as the care of the sick, the handicapped, and the elderly, as well as education, and assistance for the economically dislocated.
The importance of the study of public policy is only underscored by the great difficulties societies have experienced as the state moved to assume these tasks. In fact, writing at around the turn of the century, Durkheim could not have anticipated quite how difficult this process would be. It is problematic for two general reasons: First, *cultural lag*; there is a substantial time lag between the emergence of new social realities stemming from changes in material culture, and the cultural response allowing those changes to be addressed (Ogburn, 1950). And when a social response does occur, it generally comes in the form of overt behavioral changes, and only later on through some changes in values. Often, old values change very little. In fact, in the case of the industrialization of the United States, many very basic values such as rampant individualism, the work ethic and the relative autonomy of the family did not change. However, industrial society and the ensuing division of labor brought mass society which did require that new avenues be adopted to achieve goals upholding these values. These include economic productivity, the provision of comfort and security, protection of the vulnerable and sick, the education of the young, etc. The social structural forces of mass society and industrial capitalism which absorbed American society, gradually shifted the locus of community from the village to the public sphere and changed
its very nature. A new public ethos, or civic ethic
galvanized early support for public responses to an
increasing array of social problems. But it was a slow and
painful process and continues today.

Once the culture has initially responded to emergent
realities, the difficulties should be over, one might think.
But, in fact, the troubles are just beginning. Having
accepted the need for change, designing the policies and
specific programs that actually allow formally stated
societal goals to be achieved, and which do not
simultaneously violate important societal values either in
legislation or implementation, is a truly monumental task,
as evidenced in the explosion of controversy surrounding the
expansion of public policy into new social spheres over the
last several decades. These are some of the dilemmas
involved in the process of institutional adaptation, which
as used here, refers to the institutional change and
innovation - within governmental bodies and elsewhere - to
perform an array of tasks designed to achieve societal goals
and uphold important ideals thus fulfilling important social
functions.

Social adaptation consists of a long collective
struggle within and between governmental units, major social
institutions and society at large to integrate various
segments of society and achieve a variety of general
societal goals in the wake of rapid social change. The task of government is to create public policy that on one hand addresses the problem it is designed to address, thus fulfilling important social functions, while not exacerbating other problems or undermining other societal values in the process. Included in this maze are a variety of distinct concerns, including efficiency, equity, liberty and intended versus unintended consequences.

In fact, the rise of the policy sciences corresponds well to the emerging problems of institutional adaptation which have been so challenging in the wake of the rapid social change this century. The planning end of the field rose to an important degree as a response to the challenges of the New Deal and Great Society. In the wake of a rash of new Great Society programs came new disappointments in the late 1960s and early 1970s over less than expected performances or even outright failures in some cases. The evaluation end of the field developed in response. In the 1970s, increased attention went to implementation studies following the many disasters awaiting social programs out in the field (deLeon, 1988).

The disappointing performances of many Great Society programs vividly demonstrated that the social scientific ideal of years past of "applying" social scientific knowledge to policy solutions had been naive as previously
practiced. With the development of the policy sciences over the past decades, people began to recognize that it was not enough to bring a large body of social scientific knowledge into the forum, or to establish the major causes of a particular problem, for public policy was increasingly recognized as containing its own complex dynamics (Moynahan, 1969; Aaron, 1978; Deleon, 1988; Smith, 1991). If contemporary society was to meet its objectives, strengthen its institutions and uphold its system of values as expressed in every day affairs, the complexities of policy had to be mastered.

The Poverty Dilemma

Perhaps nowhere are the efforts towards institutional adaptation more challenged than in the ongoing struggles against poverty. The presence of ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed people in our midst is irreconcilable with the image of America as the land of plenty. Moreover, it indicates to people that our economy might not always provide for everyone who is willing to try to make ends meet - that some people fall short on the opportunities available to others. Clearly the vivid and persistent poverty in our midst is seen by many as violating values of dignity and fairness.

The answer then, should be simple — wage a great war against poverty, increase welfare — launch a new series of
programs for the poor. Unfortunately, as David Ellwood (1988) points out, and as we have seen throughout this study, these public policies contain complexities of their own which up to this point have thrown a wrench in the whole process: The very policies which stand to meet the basic needs of the poor and potentially restore their dignity, are seen by many to be simultaneously violating other deeply ingrained societal values. Fairness and dignity are but a couple of esteemed values; the others include autonomy, self reliance, the importance of work and the importance of a strong family structure, as noted at the beginning of this study. The very programs such as AFDC and Food Stamps - which in principle are designed to uphold standards of fairness and to restore a semblance of dignity to the impoverished - are charged with reducing the work ethic and self reliance of recipients and weakening the family structure; thus the frequent references of the "helping conundrums" of social welfare (Ellwood, 1988).

People on the far right of the political spectrum lament that we fail to learn that government is largely incapable of addressing social problems, and is more likely to perpetuate them (see Murray, 1984). Those more on the left argue that we fail to see the true causes of poverty, and consequently push the wrong policy levers, the writings of William Wilson (1980 and 1987) providing a good example. 337
I would argue that both viewpoints contain strong elements of truth. On one hand, structural factors are very important and need to be addressed in any serious attack on poverty and welfare dependency, and clearly the welfare system has often provided benefits that are far from adequate. Arguments more traditionally seen as conservative are correct in pointing to the work and self reliance disincentives in the system, and the capacity for welfare to degrade the very people it was designed to help. And both arguments have their shortcomings. No doubt, the landscape is littered with the wreckage of programs that failed to live up to expectations. Many of those who have traditionally focused on structural factors have not paid enough attention to evidence that long term welfare dependency is more prevalent than they had thought, with more pathological social consequences.

On the other hand, a traditional conservative practice of pointing to the inability of government to solve problems overlooks two factors. First, many of the programs they cite as evidence were part of the Great Society initiatives which were vastly oversold in the process of mobilizing political support. A closer look reveals that disasters or mere failures were only part of the story, for many of these programs did bring modest improvements (Aaron, 1978, Schwarz, 1988). Secondly, public policy is not stagnant but
everchanging, and the social programs at the center of debate are part of a much larger historical institutional learning process in which interventions are modified and restructured over a period of time so as to maximize effectiveness. The social programs that have failed or performed poorly are an early product of that learning process rather than evidence of an immutable law of the futility of social engineering.

In the case of the poverty and welfare debates, the problem is that each approach only speaks to half of the public mind and half of the policy dilemma. Ellwood writes:

In emphasizing one value over the others, the authors found it possible to prescribe coherent and plausible changes in policy. It certainly is true that if one selects just one or two of these values for emphasis, one’s choices about policy are easier. If autonomy is key, then any policy of assistance seems dangerous because it will certainly reduce the responsibility of individuals. If work is central, then individual obligations make sense. If the family is paramount, we need family policies. If community is primary, then the society is obliged to ensure the economic security and dignity of its citizens" (1988, p.18).

Actually, all the above values are "community" values as the term is used in this dissertation. Ellwood uses the term more narrowly in separating community values from the other values in the last sentence. Economic security, dignity, work, individual responsibility, autonomy and family are all community values. But each governs a
different portion of the multifaceted nature of community membership. The chief task is to design a welfare system which provides for the basic needs of the poor and allows them a measure of dignity, while simultaneously encouraging hard work, self reliance and strong family structures. This is an achievable task. But the amount of energy and attention it has taken thus far and will probably continue to take, underscores the problematic nature of the social structuring process. Within this context, I would argue that at its very core, Learnfare, Workfare and much of the new consensus welfare reform of the past decade has as much to do with the middle classes as it does the poor.

Undoubtedly, the divisiveness of many issues of the past decades, of which the poverty and welfare debate is but one example, have heightened the tendency of contemporary sociologists to shift away from the concept of community and from consensual social theories in general. And certainly, one can cite ample evidence that ours is a society riddled with great social conflict. In the rush to develop a social science suitable to a world in which conflict is at the center, there has been a tendency to overstate the level at which conflict is being waged. The sheer complexity of achieving societal goals while simultaneously upholding social values in a complex and rapidly changing world is staggering - a reality of which this study of welfare reform
only offers a glimpse. The institutional adaptation process in which contemporary society is embroiled is turbulent. But in fact, an examination of the great policy debates surrounding these great issues vividly demonstrates a fairly enduring system of values within American society. Much of the apparent conflict of our times boils down to debates over the different strategies that might be selected to achieve public goals that draw fairly wide support. In other words, conflict theory, the currently dominant theoretical orientation, has a tendency to portray conflict as more systemic than it really is.

I would argue that it may be a common intellectual error today to mistake basic changes in the form of the contemporary community for its actual decline. In fact, the great political debates over welfare and poverty along with debates on a host of other problems, offer evidence of the persistence of community – its ongoing capacity to reestablish itself in a new and rapidly changing world through innovative institutional arrangements.

**Afterthought**

The question as to whether or not the Wisconsin Learnfare program is ultimately effective in bringing AFDC teens back to school, and part of an effective strategy against poverty and welfare dependency, I must leave to others. Building on this study of the key issues guiding the
development of the program, as well as other issues facing public policy I will offer a few general words to those who would take up these questions.

The ultimate question of the program's effectiveness will not be easily answered. As noted in the introduction to this study, there are examples of fairly successful programs such as Head Start that appeared to be ineffective according to initial evaluations. But, program evaluation results are generally sensitive to changes in modes of implementation, and thus, a major task of policymakers - legislators as well as administrators - is modifying and restructuring implementation strategies so as to maximize outcomes. Unfortunately, this can require several years of continuous modification and evaluation feedback, and political actors may be inclined to act on initial evaluations, particularly when they can be used to build longstanding support or opposition to the program in question. Such is the case with Learnfare, where initial evaluations from an outside evaluation agency suggest the program has not been effective in increasing school attendance among AFDC teens. This contradicts data coming from the DHSS. The biggest obstacle facing the program may not be the negative evaluations themselves, but the use of evaluations by supporters as well as opponents to politicize the issue and ultimately stifle the analytic dialogue that is necessary in establishing an
effective program.

It is also important that policymakers recognize that even if Learnfare can be effective in increasing school attendance and high school completion rates of AFDC teenagers, it should never be seen as more than a small part in a the multi-pronged strategy that will be necessary to effectively address poverty and welfare dependency. If the Learnfare experience has increased the awareness in the policymaking community of the multiple disadvantages facing youths in the underclass, it has made a second valuable contribution.

Policy analysts and policymakers, searching for some way to solve the welfare problem and achieve significant gains in the war on poverty within these limitations, face a vigorous challenge, demanding intellectual creativity. The various performance requirements that have marked welfare reform over the past decade are likely to remain intact with full public support for the foreseeable future. Some important and perhaps necessary components of a serious attack on poverty are increased funding for child care, transportation and work-related expenses. There is also an urgent need for a national health care plan, particularly for those in the working class. The provision of health care for the working class and near-poor would serve two functions. First, it would meet the pressing needs of a
group whose income levels are too high to qualify for Medicaid and too low to purchase a viable alternative. Secondly, in doing so, it would simultaneously remove the "notch effect" that plagues the welfare system, a situation where those who might be inclined to move off welfare and achieve economic independence may be discouraged from doing so by the loss of Medicaid that eventually follows. It will also be important to step up the effort to collect child support payments from absent spouses. However, it may also be necessary for state and/or the federal government to first, increase the minimum wage, and secondly, agree to be the last resort employer if necessary to the unemployed through direct job creation in the form of public or public/private works projects.
APPENDIX

Interviewing Format

Interviews with people directly involved in the development of Learnfare was a major source of data in this study. The questions I asked varied widely according to the location of the given person within the policy development process and the specific issues they dealt with. However, there were some very general types of questions I asked of participants. The following provides an example.

1. What was your professional position during the development of Learnfare?

2. Why and how were you brought into the process?

3. What was the nature of the proposal/program when you became involved?

4. What people, agencies and interest groups did you interact with, and what was the nature of the contact?

5. What did you/your agency see as the primary problem the Learnfare program was to address?

6. What ideas for policy action were being discussed and where did they come from?

7. What actions did you/your agency take in the policy development process? Why?
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