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THE LATENT FUNCTIONS OF WELFARE  
AND NEED-SATISFACTION OF THE DISADVANTAGED\*

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ABSTRACT

In a study carried out among a representative sample of Jewish Israeli adults, a paradigm of need-satisfaction by direct welfare assistance has been developed and, to a great extent, empirically supported. Multivariate analysis revealed that, despite the fact that it is recognized as indispensable in facilitating basic living conditions, direct welfare assistance, whatever its kind, predicts frustration rather than need-satisfaction. The data ascertain that attributing to the welfare assistance the latent functions of preserving consumers' inferiority and of pursuing the agencies' and the welfare workers' interests rather than those of the consumers, constitute a major factor in the resulting feeling of frustration. Dependence, a sense of deprivation, and the attribution of these latent functions, rather than need-satisfaction beyond those of facilitating basic living conditions, are greatly predicted by receiving direct welfare assistance.

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## INTRODUCTION

Recent evidence from studies on the readjustment of individuals who suffered a traumatic loss (disability or bereavement) suggests that assistance from a rehabilitation agency predicts dependence on that agency, rather than psychosocial readjustment (Ben-Sira 1981; 1983a; Smith and Midanik 1980). Dependence, in turn, was found to be extremely detrimental to the achievement of intervention's goals, eventually resulting in maladjustment (Albrecht and Higgins 1977; Ben-Sira 1981; 1983a; Cull and Hardy 1973; Goldin et al. 1972; Stotsky 1963). It has been suggested to view this outcome as a consequence of the needy person's sense of inferiority and powerlessness (due to his/her resource deficiency) vis-a-vis professionals or bureaucrats who control indispensable resources (e.g., Blau 1969:22; Freidson 1972:72-80). Yet resource-deficiency, by definition, is the motive for turning to professional intervention--an intervention evidently having the overt goal of enhancing the needy individual's coping capacity. How, then, can the obvious resource inequality in the professional-client interaction lead to the consequence of maladjustment--a consequence which contradicts the overt goal of the intervention? There are allusions that inherent in the professional intervention are factors which latently counteract its overt goals. Among these were mentioned the "increasing bureaucratization of the public welfare organization inevitably [leading] to a reduction in... humanitarianism" (Wright et al. 1983:166-167); monopolization of "esoteric" professional expertise reflecting a growing aggregation of power in the hands of the professionals (Elliott 1972:112-114; Jackson 1970:2; Johnson 1972:51); and an ideology assuming the "superiority of specialized knowledge and expertise [and] well-defined role distance between practitioner and client" (Wright et al. 1983:149). Under these circumstances, chances are that authority maintenance and power enhancement may eventually become a predominant, though latent goal in professional activity (Goffman 1968:73-88; Perrow 1969:70-72)--presumably being a reward for the professional (e.g., Doob 1983:85, 150). As for consumers, there seems to be awareness of this trend, finding expression in growing distrust in the

aims of the professionals, giving rise to questions as to whose interests are actually being served and who ultimately is the beneficiary of the services--the professional or the consumer (e.g., Betz and O'Connell 1983; Burnham 1982; Cihlar 1979). Consumerist activities (Haug 1976; Haug and Lavin 1981; Haug and Sussman 1969) or ideologies such as the Movement for Independent Living (De Jong 1981; 1979) reflect the public's response to the latent aims which professionals presumably pursue.

However, the crucial question for the issue at hand is to what extent is the awareness of needy consumers of these latent functions detrimental to their need-satisfaction. Elucidating the eventual deleterious consequences of attributing such latent functions to welfare agencies seems of particular importance when recipients of welfare assistance are concerned. This segment of society which is the most deficient of resources (Blau 1973:233) is by definition also the least capable of responding to such latent functions. For this group, a feeling of being an object toward whom "the professional is anxious to demonstrate...his/her power and authority" (Wright et al. 1983:56) may deepen the feeling of deprivation by society which deliberately perpetuates their inferiority, i.e., powerlessness, its extreme result being alienation from that society (Schwartz 1973:211).

Interestingly, despite the fact that the ultimate goal of welfare assistance is need-satisfaction of the needy, systematic empirical investigation of consumers' assessments was confined to satisfaction with the service, rather than satisfaction of their needs. Thus, for instance, a recent study which developed and empirically validated scales of welfare-consumer satisfaction, was confined to satisfaction with the social workers' attitudes and behavior (Reid and Gundlach 1983). Also earlier studies on consumer assessments confined their investigation to the relationship between social worker and client (Beck and Jones 1971) or to feeling of deprivation by service (Timms and Mayer 1971).

The aim of this study is to elucidate the extent to which the welfare recipients' inclination to attribute to the helping professionals the latent goal of promoting their self-interests through their helping

the needy may result in the welfare recipients' frustration rather than need-satisfaction.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### Consumers' need-satisfaction

Alienation is evidently the most commonly referred to ultimate consequence of societal deprivation (Seeman 1971; 1959), implying expressions at both the social and individual level (Taviss 1969). The former implies perceiving the social system oppressive and incompatible with desires, and a feeling estrangement from it; in other words, perceiving society as hostile and punishing rather than gratifying. The latter implies an ultimate feeling of incapability of controlling one's own activities.

I posit that resolution of alienation, which, by inference from Merton's (1965:139-160) classic typology of adaptation implies successful integration into society, be conceived as the ultimate need-satisfaction.

### Factors promoting need-satisfaction

What, then, are the factors that facilitate a needy individual's reintegration into society, i.e., achieving need-satisfaction? Following recent developments in the study of stress and coping (Antonovsky 1979; Ben-Sira 1981; 1983a), enhancing a needy person's sense of coping capacity would constitute the first step toward reintegration into society. In fact, this goal essentially coincides with the ultimate attributes of welfare services, as suggested by Reid and Gundlach (1983), i.e., enhancement of the welfare recipient's self-esteem and sense of power. Coping capacity by definition implies achieving the desired results in return for one's effort--namely, in terms of classic exchange theory, getting from society rewards proportional to one's investment hence promoting a feeling of society being basically just (Homans 1961:234-242). That, in turn, would lead to perceiving welfare assistance as essentially aimed at the recipient's benefit; in other words, perceiving welfare as pursuing its manifest functions. Under these circumstances, welfare assistance may have the

potential of promoting need-satisfaction of welfare recipients. In the form of a testable hypothesis, it is suggested that:

- (1) Welfare assistance → coping capacity → social justice → perception of manifest functions of welfare → societal reintegration.

Frustration: A consequence of the perception of welfare's latent functions

However, contrary to the overt goals, chances are that receiving welfare assistance will result in perpetuating dependence on that assistance--implying inability to cope with demands by means of own resources. Dependence, despite the assistance, may lead recipients to interpret their condition as being a consequence of deliberate deprivation aimed at perpetuating their inferiority.<sup>\*</sup> Promoting the interests of the power-holders (Blau 1973:234-5) may serve them as an expedient explanation for perpetuating the recipients' inferiority--an explanation greatly conforming with the earlier delineated distrust in the professionals' aims (e.g., Betz and O'Connell 1983). Thus, welfare assistance may be suspected to fulfill latent functions for the "benefactor's" benefit. Perceiving welfare assistance as fulfilling such latent functions may ultimately result, as pointed out earlier (Schwartz 1973) in alienation from society. The consequence, then, is frustration, rather than need-satisfaction. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

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\*For instance, allocation of monetary assistance ("resource compensation") instead of engaging in laborious efforts of motivating the recipient toward integration into productive life ("resource enhancement") may initially seem to satisfy the recipient, but at the same time perpetuate his/her dependence (Ben-Sira 1983b). In the long run, however, the welfare worker may be blamed for having allocated compensation with the deliberate intention of perpetuating the recipient's inferior condition, for his own benefit.

- (2) Welfare assistance → dependence → sense of deprivation → perception of latent functions → alienation (i.e., frustration).

Thus, direct compensation may have two contradictory consequences, as reflected schematically in Figure 1. Considering, however, the conditions under which each outcome may be achieved, it follows from our line of reasoning that chances for such assistance to result in frustration (its ultimate expression being alienation) are greater than in need-satisfaction (namely, reintegration).

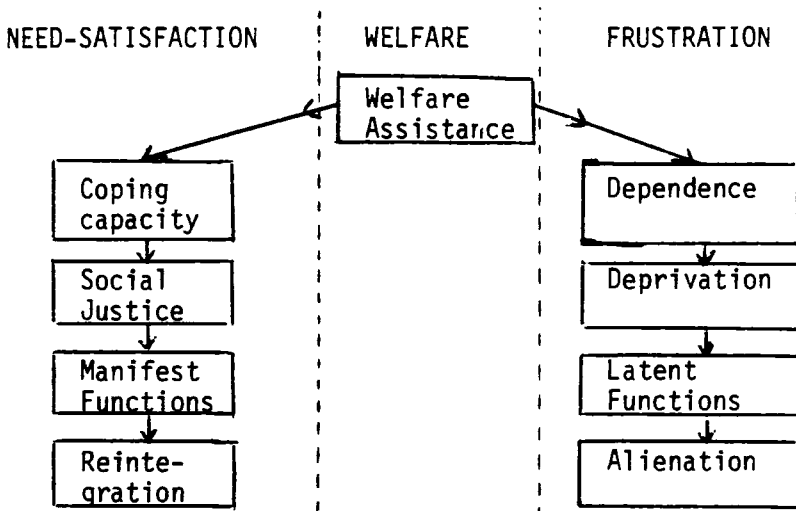


Figure 1: Schematic portrayal of hypothesized paradigm of need-satisfaction/frustration by welfare assistance

#### METHOD

##### Sample and fieldwork

A representative random sample (Appendix A) of Israel Jewish adults (aged 20+) (N=1179) drawn systematically from the Israeli voting register, was investigated by means of a closed questionnaire presented to them by interviewers in the respondents' homes during July-August 1982.

## Measures

(a) Welfare assistance: Any direct assistance received from welfare services by respondent or spouse as a consequence of resource insufficiency for coping with fundamental needs of existence was conceptualized as "welfare assistance."\* A list of assistance items was presented to respondents asking whether they or their spouse have received or are receiving such assistance. Items were classified into three types, and grouped into three compound measures: (i) material compensation for disability or loss of breadwinner (4 items); (ii) material compensation for neediness (e.g., general monetary assistance, unemployment allowance, allowance for dependent relatives (5 items); (iii) non-material assistance (e.g., assistance for problematic children such as special education, instruction in parenting and placement in foster homes, instruction in housekeeping - (5 items). Extent of assistance was measured by the number of assistance items received.

(b) Dependence: Following Rotter (1966), dependence was conceptualized as "external locus of control," implying one's life being controlled by others--hence being dependent on others for satisfying one's daily needs. A composite measure, based on Rotter's (1966) Index of Locus of Control was constructed. The measure intends to identify the extent of internal vs. external locus of control. The items comprising the scale were: (1) Not having control over things that happen to me; (2) Feeling of being pushed around; (3) I can do just anything I really set my mind to do; (4) Inclined to feel that I am a failure; (5) One the whole I am satisfied with myself; (6) Feel useless at times; (7) Feel helpless to deal with problems of life; (8) What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me; (9) I feel that I am a person of value, at least as an equal to others;

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\*Payments which are universally allocated independent from the recipient's economic condition (e.g., children-allowance, birth-allowance) were not included in the concept of "welfare assistance."



(10) There is little I can do to change many of the important things in life.

After rearranging the categories so that all eight are in the same direction, the items formed a Guttman scale. (C.O.R. .80 which though relative weak still gives some confidence of relating to the same content universe.)

(c) Coping capacity was defined as the needy person's ability to meet the basic demands of existence: one item focused on the extent to which welfare assistance provided the basic means for existence (1. To a very great extent... 6. Not at all). A second question asked whether the recipient's present economic condition enabled him/her to meet the family's needs. (1. Definitely sufficient for meeting all the needs... 4. Not sufficient for meeting most of the family's needs). The first item indicated resource compensation, while the second reflected the outcome of resource enhancement (Ben-Sira 1983b).

(d) Latent functions: A composite measure comprising seven statements was intended to elucidate the extent to which respondents perceived goals of welfare as satisfying aims other than those of the needy person. The items were as follows (factor analysis ascertained that items related to the same underlying factor. Factor loading of items indicated in parentheses): 1. enhancing bureaucrat's power (.58); 2. making the recipient dependent on the professional (.64); 3. calming down the poor rather than helping them (.63); 4. helping those who have influence with politicians (favoritism) (.59); 5. widening intergroup gap by giving money instead of helping find a job (.51); 6. causing social injustice through unjust distribution of resources (.52); 7. helping mainly the troublemakers in order to avoid trouble for themselves (.66). (1. Definitely agree... 6. Definitely disagree).

(e) Manifest functions: A composite measure comprising two items (included in the same battery of items as the latent functions) was intended to elucidate the extent to which respondents perceived the goals of welfare as predominantly helping the needy. The items were: 1. predominantly to help the disadvantaged to live a decent life; 2. to promote social justice by transferring some resources from the

rich to the need (1. Definitely agree... 6. Definitely disagree).

(f) Sense of deprivation: One question asked about the extent to which the respondent felt being deprived by society. (1. Very often... 5. Never).

(g) Social justice: One question was intended to elucidate whether the Israeli society is perceived as just. (1. To a very great extent... 5. Not at all, no social justice at all).

(h) Alienation. A composite measure comprising six items based on the commonly used alienation scale (e.g., Seeman 1971; 1959; Schwartz 1973) was modified to conform to Israeli conditions. The following six statements were posed to respondents: (1) Nowadays, a person has to live pretty much for today, and let tomorrow take care of itself; (2) In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse and not better; (3) It is hardly fair to bring children into the world, with the way things look for the future; (4) Party membership is more important than talents in order to achieve something; (5) Having the right connections is more important than talents in order to achieve something; (6) Anybody with a talent can progress in this country (order of categories of this item was changed in the course of computation). (1. Strongly agree... 6. Strongly disagree). The responses to the six items, after dichotomization, formed a Guttman scale with a coefficient of reproducibility (C.O.R.) of .79--which though relatively weak, still alludes to their relating to the same content universe. The score of 1 represented highest level of alienation, and 5 the lowest.

(i) Societal integration was measured by a composite measure comprising two items: Feeling at home in Israel (1. To a great extent... 5. Not at all), and ability to adjust to the situation (1. Certain he/she will adjust... 4. Certain he/she is unable to adjust).

### Data analysis

(a) Correlations: In accordance with the aim of the study, which is to elucidate the extent to which the variables are predictive of need-satisfaction or frustration of the recipients of welfare assistance, the strength of the relationship among the items was

deemed an appropriate indicator of their predictive power. A weak monotonicity correlation coefficient ( $r_2$ )--which is especially appropriate in conditions such as ours where linearity is not assumed--was used (Guttman and Levy 1975; Rave 1978). The formula for  $r_2$  is as follows: Given n pairs of observations of numerical variables  $(x,y)$ ,  $(x_i, y_i)$  ( $i = 1,2,\dots,n$ ), then

$$r_2 = \frac{\sum_{h=1}^n \sum_{i=1}^n (x_h - x_i)(y_h - y_i)}{\sum_{h=1}^n \sum_{i=1}^n |x_h - x_i| |y_h - y_i|}$$

(b) Smallest Space Analysis (SSA): The rationale underlying the hypothesized paradigm (Figure 1) requires a definite "consequential" order among the variables--an order being determined by the relative proximity of each variable in relation to all others. For the purpose of this study, "proximity" is defined, according to Guttman (1966) (Elizur 1970:58) by the strength of the intercorrelations among the variables: the stronger the correlation between a pair of variables, the closer they are. Thus, empirical support to the hypothesized paradigm requires technique that facilitates inferring conclusions from the overall structure produced by the interrelationships among all the variables in a multivariate content universe. Such a technique should enable a simultaneous perception of the predictive power of such variable vis-a-vis all the other variables, thus enabling to arrive at conclusions regarding the usefulness of each of the hypotheses (1 or 2) in predicting need-satisfaction and frustration, hence resulting in an empirical verification of the suggested paradigm in Figure 1. A practical technique is Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) (Ben-Sira and Guttman 1971; Bloombaum 1970), which is a graphic display of the interrelationships among the variables, reflecting the relation of each variable vis-a-vis all the others. In the SSA technique, the computer locates the variables as points on a map according to the strength of the correlations among them: the stronger the positive correlation between two variables, the smaller the distance between the points representing

them; the weaker the positive correlation (or the stronger the negative correlation) between two variables the greater the distance between the points representing them. The extent of accuracy to which the spatial distances on the map reflect the actual relationships is expressed by the Coefficient of Alienation (COA): the smaller the coefficient of alienation the more accurate the fit. A coefficient of .15 is considered a relatively accurate fit (Brown 1985).

Conclusions are derived from the entire structure reflecting the relative proximity among all variables and not merely from specific pairwise relations. (For an extensive discussion on the value of this method and illustration of its application, see Canter 1985; Guttman 1981:36,43; Borg 1981).

## RESULTS

### The structure of need-satisfaction

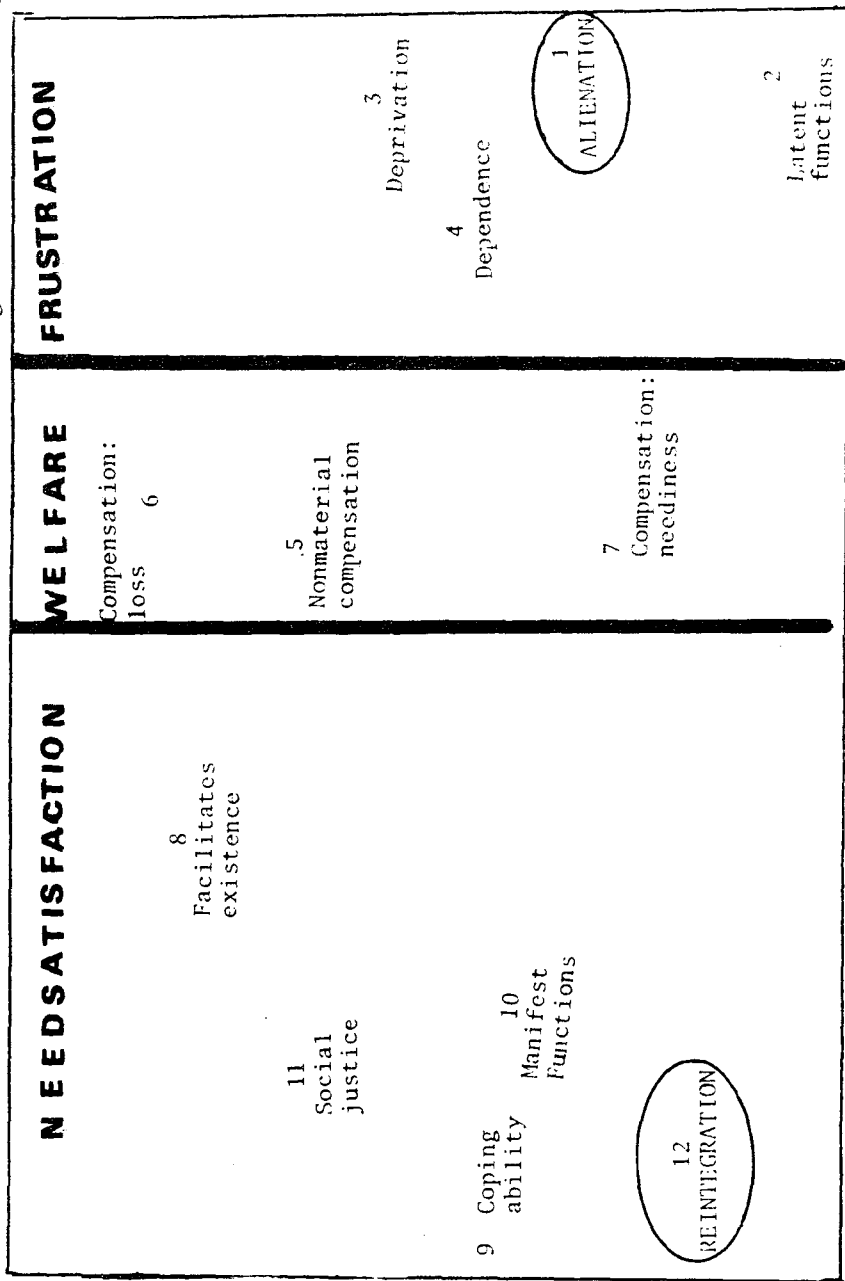
The SSA-1 (Figure 2), which displays graphically the interrelations among the variables on the basis of the coefficients in Table 1, reveals a structure which in general terms greatly supports the hypothesized pattern, highlighting in particular that welfare compensation predicts better frustration than need-satisfaction. This conclusion is inferred from the location of the variables on the SSA map (Figure 2): on the extreme right is located the variable indicating alienation (Var.1), on the extreme left integration (Var.12). The farther an item is to the right (i.e., closer to alienation), the greater its power to predict (i.e., the stronger its correlation with) alienation; the farther an item is to the left (closer to integration), the greater its power to predict integration.

The location of the variables according to their interrelationships forms three areas: moving from right to left, the area on the right (hence close to the alienation item) comprises items indicating the frustrating consequences of welfare assistance. Following close to it is the area comprising items denoting getting welfare compensation, followed by the third area which includes the rather scattered items of need-satisfaction. The location of the variables on

Matrix of Intercorrelations ( $r_{2}$ ) among Welfare Assistance, Need-satisfaction and Frustration Variables  
(Total Population N = 1179)

Variable	FRUSTRATION				WELFARE				NEED-SATISFACTION			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
ALIENATION	1	--										
Latent Functions	2	.63	--									
Deprivation	3	.48	.27	--								
Dependence	4	.40	.15	.45	--							
Non-material	5	.10	.06	.20	.20	--						
Compensation - needy	6	.14	-.01	.20	.07	.56	--					
Compensation - loss	7	.12	.16	.08	.11	.34	.09	--				
Provides existence	8	-.03	-.17	.00	.05	.43	.63	.18	--			
Coping ability	9	-.41	-.34	-.39	-.29	-.26	-.25	-.17	-.03	--		
Manifest functions	10	-.05	-.16	-.07	.06	-.02	-.06	.04	.15	.13	--	
Social justice	11	-.40	-.29	-.35	-.15	-.12	-.07	-.16	.04	.32	.21	--
REINTEGRATION	12	-.36	-.28	-.33	-.39	-.07	-.16	-.10	-.06	.39	.08	.33

Figure 2. Empirical structure of the paradigm of needsatisfaction by welfare assistance  
 (Smallest Space Analysis--SSA--of the intercorrelations among variables for Table 1)



Coefficient of Alienation = 0.108

the map clearly shows the greater proximity of welfare assistance to the frustration items than to need-satisfaction items, thus supporting the hypothesized frustrating consequences of welfare compensation.

As hypothesized (Hyp. 2), receiving welfare assistance predicts dependence (external locus of control), which in turn predicts a sense of deprivation, leading to a perception of welfare as fulfilling latent functions, eventually resulting in alienation (i.e., frustration). On the other hand, receiving assistance, though relatively close to the variable of providing basic existence needs, it is quite far from the other variables of need-satisfaction, namely, coping ability, perceiving society as just, perceiving welfare's manifest functions and ultimately leading to societal integration, thus refuting hypothesis 1.

However, an inspection of the correlation coefficients (Table 1) reveals some noteworthy deviances. First, though "latent functions," as hypothesized, is the most strongly correlated item with alienation ( $r_2 = .63$ ), contrary to our expectation, deprivation and dependence are more strongly correlated with alienation than with latent functions (correlations = .48 and .40 respectively). Second, though welfare, as hypothesized, reveals an overall positive relationship with the frustration variables, and negative association (except for one item--see below) with the satisfaction variables, most of the coefficients are rather weak. The only salient deviance from the hypothesized pattern is the strong positive correlations of welfare assistance with the items relating to assistance in providing basic subsistence needs (correlations = .18, .63, and .43). The latter item, however, is distinct from all other satisfaction items. Thus, though assistance does help in meeting basic needs, it seems unable to go beyond that, namely, to lead to a sense of integration into society. In fact, the pattern of negative (though very weak) association with all other need-satisfaction items is noteworthy, requiring further prying into the interrelationships, as will be done in the next section.

## Type of compensation, need-satisfaction and frustration

Up to now, the data referred to the population as a whole, highlighting the general effect of receiving welfare. The next step in investigating the veracity of the proposed paradigm, requires exploring the interrelationships among the frustration and need-satisfaction variables among recipients of each type of compensation.

First, as shown in Tables 2, 3, and 4, the overall consistency in the pattern of intercorrelations among recipients of each type of compensation is striking. Interestingly, however, the strongest correlation between attribution of latent functions and alienation is among recipients of nonmaterial assistance ( $r_2 = .71$ ) and of compensation for neediness (.66); the weakest among recipients of compensations for loss (.52). Second, in all types of assistance, perceiving welfare as fulfilling latent functions is negatively correlated with need-satisfaction - (loss: -.26; neediness: -.37; nonmaterial: -.27). Thus, perceiving welfare's latent function is contradictory to need-satisfaction, particularly among those who receive nonmaterial\* assistance and compensation for neediness.

At this stage, the correlations of perceiving welfare assistance as providing basic means for existence (item 5) with all other variables is noteworthy. On the one hand, whatever the type of assistance, perceiving assistance as providing basic needs both weakens perception of welfare's latent function and strengthens perception of manifest functions. This pattern is particularly strong among recipients of nonmaterial assistance (correlation with latent functions = -.38; with manifest functions = +.39). On the other hand, its correlations with dependence and alienation can hardly lead to conclusions regarding both alleviation of dependence and enhancement of need-satisfaction (correlation of basic

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\*It should be recalled that nonmaterial assistance includes, among other things, instruction in parenting and household activities, placement of children in foster homes, etc., i.e., assistance that involves a great deal of interaction with social workers.



Table 2

Matrix of Intercorrelations ( $r^2$ ) among Need-satisfaction and Frustration Variables:  
 Recipients of Welfare Assistance for Loss Only (N=226)

Variable	FRUSTRATION				NEED-SATISFACTION			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<u>Frustration</u>								
ALIENATION	1	--						
Latent Functions	2	.52	--					
Deprivation	3	.44	.20	--				
Dependence	4	.35	.22	.45	--			
<u>Need-satisfaction</u>								
Provides existence	5	-.08	-.12	-.22	-.01	--		
Coping ability	6	-.41	-.31	-.47	-.40	.07	--	
Manifest functions	7	.01	-.09	.06	.07	.22	.05	--
Social justice	8	-.26	-.11	-.29	.06	.19	.20	.25
REINTEGRATION	9	-.45	-.26	-.50	-.53	-.23	.46	-.03
								.35

Table 3  
 Matrix of Intercorrelations ( $r$ ) among Need-satisfaction and Frustration Variables:  
 Recipients of Welfare Assistance for Neediness Only (N=363)

Variable	FRUSTRATION				NEED-SATISFACTION				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
<u>Frustration</u>									
ALIENATION	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	
Latent Functions	2	.66	--	--	--	--	--	--	
Deprivation	3	.54	.19	--	--	--	--	--	
Dependence	4	.52	.18	.53	--	--	--	--	
<u>Need-satisfaction</u>									
Provides existence	5	-.15	-.26	-.11	-.09	--	--	--	
Coping ability	6	-.39	-.34	-.39	-.28	-.01	--	--	
Manifest functions	7	-.05	-.05	-.10	-.03	.12	.10	--	
Social justice	8	-.40	-.36	-.44	-.20	.08	.30	.32	
REINTEGRATION	9	-.40	-.37	-.34	-.46	.01	.35	.02	.39

Table 4

Matrix of Intercorrelations ( $r_{ij}$ ) among Need-satisfaction and Frustration Variables:  
 Recipients of Nonmaterial Assistance Only (N=103)

Variable	FRUSTRATION				NEED-SATISFACTION			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<u>Frustration</u>								
ALIENATION	1	--						
Latent Functions	2	.71	--					
Deprivation	3	.37	.14	--				
Dependence	4	.33	.02	.53	--			
<u>Need-satisfaction</u>								
Provides existence	5	.00	-.38	-.04	.22	--		
Coping ability	6	-.56	-.35	-.56	-.46	.28	--	
Manifest functions	7	.03	-.25	.09	.13	.39	.17	--
Social justice	8	-.29	-.47	-.49	-.12	-.04	.30	.09
REINTEGRATION	9	-.45	-.27	-.03	-.36	-.26	.38	.01
								.15

needs with alienation = .00 and with dependence = +.22 among recipients of nonmaterial assistance; -.08 and -.01 respectively among recipients of assistance for loss; -.15 and -.09 among recipients of assistance for neediness).

## DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The central question this study attempted to investigate was the extent to which direct assistance from public welfare services will result in alienation (the ultimate expression of frustration) rather than in reintegration (the ultimate expression of need-satisfaction). The rationale underlying the hypothesized paradigm of need-satisfaction/frustration was that implicit in the acceptance of welfare assistance lies dependence on a resource-controlling (i.e., powerful) agent. Continuous dependence on a powerful agent may lead to a sense of being deliberately deprived by providers who are suspected of serving their own interest rather than that of the recipient and interpreted as a pursuit of the latent aim of maintaining the recipient's inferior position.

The structure of the intercorrelations among the variables supported the hypothesized paradigm according to which receiving direct public welfare assistance does not necessarily lead to need-satisfaction. Whatever the type, welfare assistance is close to (i.e., correlated with) each of the frustration variables, which among themselves are intercorrelated, located remote from the need-satisfaction end of the continuum.

Considering the multivariate nature of the content universe of welfare-assistance-consequences, the conclusion from the interrelated constellation of the variables is that direct welfare compensation assistance has greater chances of resulting in frustration rather than need-satisfaction. Perceiving welfare assistance as fulfilling latent functions aimed predominantly at maintaining the recipient's inferior position, fulfills in this respect a central role. The specifically strong relationship between perception of latent functions and alienation among recipients of nonmaterial assistance serves as additional support of our line of reasoning, in view of the close interaction between the consumer and the social worker character-

izing this type of assistance, an interaction which renders professional dominance particularly salient.

How, then, can we understand the apparently contradictory finding that recognition of welfare as providing basic existence, though negatively correlated with latent functions, does not predict need-satisfaction (reintegration) nor alleviation of alienation--alienation being strongly correlated with latent functions? I believe that this finding highlights the cross-pressures to which recipients of welfare are exposed. On the one hand, they are in need of welfare aid for their basic existence; on the other hand, receiving such help implies dependence and consequently does not alleviate their alienation. Attributing latent functions to welfare may thus serve as a defense mechanism (displacement) against these cross-pressures, yet hardly results in need-satisfaction.

These conclusions, however, should be considered with caution, in light of several weaknesses. First, the study is unable to ascertain causality. In this respect, however, the present study does not differ from any other field study in the social sciences which has to use personal interviews for data collection (controlled experiments which allow for establishing causality are evidently irrelevant for the present type of study). Ascertaining causality merely by data analysis methods is seriously questioned today (Guttman 1977).

In light of these limitations, some confidence regarding the direction of the prediction may be obtained from the time sequence: whereas the report about receiving welfare compensations relates to a continuous process from the past to the present, the respondents' condition regarding alienation, attribution of latent functions, and sense of deprivation, relate to the present.

It could be argued, of course, that alienated people tend more than others to apply for welfare. But even so, the data indicate at least that welfare compensation fails to alleviate these feelings, and strengthens the attribution of latent functions. Even if attributing latent functions does not only determine alienation but also is determined by it, the strong correlation between these variables may mean that an

alienated person is very much inclined to blame welfare for his condition.

These findings bring up the question that has been raised in a recent paper (Ben-Sira 1983b) regarding the limits of the efficacy of welfare assistance as a resource compensation, and the efforts that should be devoted to resource enhancement activities. The earlier delineated cross-pressures seem to illustrate this point: on the one hand, direct assistance may be regarded as providing for basic living needs, but in the long run it may lead to feelings of deprivation, with its deleterious consequence. Of course, welfare assistance is concerned with the most underprivileged, who evidently lack the most basic resources. The question, however, is whether efforts are being made to identify and determine these limits, and therefrom start the laborious efforts of resource enhancement activities.

Thus, the study may at least draw attention to some of the deleterious consequences of welfare activities.

The earlier discussed inability of this study to establish causality imposes, of course, serious limitations upon these conclusions. However, the fact that the results conform greatly with those obtained for other needy populations (Ben-Sira 1981; 1983a; Smith and Midanik 1980), together with the earlier discussed time sequence, may give support to our conclusions. The weak correlations that were found between the assistance items and the other items could be considered as an additional weakness. However, as indicated earlier, it is not the specific pairwise relations that lead to our conclusions, but rather the entire structure (as determined by the relative position of each variable vis-a-vis all the others) that support the hypothesized paradigm. In other words, it is the overall pattern that should be considered. The consistent pattern of the relationships in all types of assistance that were investigated, as shown in Tables 2-4, may give confidence that these relationships are not merely by chance. (Consistency of the pattern of interrelationships evidently constitute a more reliable indicator of the meaningfulness of the relationships than statistical tests of significance, the validity of which is seriously questioned today--cf. Guttman 1977:94-96.)

The fact that this study is confined to the Israeli society, is doubtlessly a limitation on the external validity of the findings for other societies. Further research is needed for validating the paradigm in other cultural contexts. However, I think that the study may provide insights regarding the eventual deleterious consequences that welfare may have. The close association between alienation and attributing latent functions (whatever the direction of the prediction) may allude to the possible importance of the social workers' behavior toward clients and sensitivity to their needs, conforming with Wright et al. (1983:168) who urge "welfare workers... to revive a humanistic orientation in the welfare bureaucracy [and]...at least...to increase their level of sensitivity and awareness of cultural differences between themselves and their clients."

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## APPENDIX A

### Sample Characteristics

The sample was drawn systematically from the Israeli voting register, which is the relatively most reliable updated listing of the Israeli population. The sample is representative of the heterogeneous character of the Israeli, Jewish, urban, adult (age 20+) population: 39% were Israeli born (15% of North African or Asian origin, 24% of European or American origin or second generation Israelis), and 61% were born abroad (24% in a North African or Asian country, 37% in Europe or America). 80% of the latter immigrated after the establishment of the State of Israel (in 1948), 40% in the years 1948-1954, and only 15% after 1968. Less than a quarter (22%) had no, some or complete elementary schooling, 19% some high school, 28% completed high school, 31% studied 13 years or more (12% completed university): 46% were male, 54% female. 19% had experience in receiving welfare assistance as compensation for loss, 31% for neediness, 9% for nonmaterial assistance.