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Alternative agencies : an exploratory study

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ALTERNATIVE AGENCIES

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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I

Alternative Agencies:

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A Research Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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CHAPTER I

ALTERNATIVE AGENCIES: AN OVERVIEW

The emergence of alternative social service agencies in the late 1960's was a response to new ways that people, most notably youth and minorities, were beginning to perceive and relate to societal institutions. In the early 1960's, there was a pervasive belief that "political, economic, and social institutions could, with some redirection and intensified effort, become capable of changing the conditions" which were leading to such serious problems as urban deterioration and inadequate health care (Patti and Resnick; 1972, pp. 245-6). Later, it was seen that such traditional institutions were quite inadequate to deal with these problems.

The late 1960's saw increasing numbers of young Americans act out their dissatisfaction with many of this country's traditional values and institutions. Experimentation with new forms of service delivery began to occur, especially in the area of youth services (Metzger and Smith; 1971, p. 59). Hotlines, shelters for runaway youth, free medical clinics centered around drug abuse, and drop-in centers were all established to respond to the needs of the thousands of young people who rushed to join the counterculture movement of this time. Huckleberry House, a shelter for runaway youth, opened its doors in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco in 1967. The same summer saw the Haight-Ashbury Free Medical Clinic, the first of its kind, open its doors to the growing numbers of youth unable to afford traditional health services. A revolution in social service delivery had begun.

Such forms of service delivery gathered momentum throughout the country, especially free clinics. The Open Door Free Clinic in Seattle opened in October of 1967. In April 1968, the Cambridgeport Medical Clinic opened in Cambridge, Massachusetts. By 1971, there was a total of 23 free clinics in Seattle, San

Francisco, Los Angeles and Boston. Concurrent with the growth of the free clinic movement was the expansion of services for other minority groups who were either unable or unwilling to receive services in traditional agencies. Women's services, including feminist counseling, birth and health services, rape crisis centers and shelters for battered women, began to emerge. Similarly, alternative programs for the elderly and psychotic adults emerged in the mid 1970's, as did alternative health services such as free clinics and holistic health services.

During this time, workers in alternative services became very aware of the futility of maintaining a distinctly separate and autonomous system. The declining economic situation brought the counterculture movement to an end at the same time agency workers became more aware of the complexity of their client's problems. Alternative service agencies began to hire mental health professionals as consultants and staff in order to help them understand particularly difficult clients, and to teach them to analyze and deal with their life situations. Thus, while the number of alternative social service agencies continued to grow, many began to embody characteristics of more traditional agencies (Gordon, 1978, p. 385). Alternative agencies are still in existence, though much change has occured since the first ones emerged in 1967.

ALTERNATIVE AGENCIES: A DEFINITION

Most of the literature written about alternative agencies which we found significant for the research project was published in the mid to late 1970's, after the trend toward alternative services had become fairly well established. Some of the articles which most clearly defined these agencies were those with a medical or socio-political orientation. Many of the articles mentioned the importance of the "politics of the times" as an important component in the emergence of alternative social service agencies, but they differed in their view as to how large a role the political times actually played.

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It is not surprising that much of the literature is written by those related to the medical profession. Traditionally, suicide prevention, drug treatment and crisis intervention have been associated with mental health services based on a medical model of treatment.

The concept of an alternative social service agency is heavily influenced by the view that one has of its dominant characteristics. For example, Bruce A. Baldwin (1975) argued that alternative services were preferred by some because the structure and orientation of the helping relationship was different. As a result he defined an alternative agency as one that responds to the needs of specific segments of the community not reached by more traditional agencies. He also believed that such agencies were usually small, flexible, survived on minimal budgets, and used indigenous non-professionals (particularly young adults) as primary caregivers with a minimum of professional supervision and control. While Baldwin recognized and appreciated the innovations contributed to the service delivery system by alternative agencies, he also seemed to lean toward the idea that it would be better if alternative trends were incorporated into the mainstream of service delivery in order to reduce the differences between professional and non-professional caregivers.

In sharp contrast to this, is the perspective of Claudette McShane and John Oliver (1968), who argued that a major change was needed in service delivery in order to meet the needs of various groups, particularly women. They argued that the structure of alternative women's agencies tended to conform to an ideological framework whose major thrust was social, economic and political egalitarianism. They outlined nine structural characteristics which distinguished alternative feminist agencies from conventional agencies.

FIGURE 1

	Alternative Feminist Agency	Conventional Agency
Authority Structure	Collegial/Collective	Hierarchical
Performance Guides	Internalization of Organizational Goals/Feminist Ideology	A-Priority rules/white male system ideology
Problem Solving Process	Collective Decision Making	Bureaucratic
Planning Process	Persons delegated by representatives of women	Experts
Public Service Model	Help women to advocate for selves	Maintain (Status-quo) System
Agency Orientation Toward Women's Problems	Preventative/Responsive	Curative/Reactionary/ Consumer Pressure Oriented
Pattern of Relating to Women	Humanistic/Personalized	Impersonal
Accountability	To consumers and collective	To Taxpayers and Agency Administrators
Feelings and Attitudes Engendered in Consumers by the Agency	Beloning/Solidarity/ Collective potency	Unwanted/Individualism/ Competiveness/Personal Impotence

One of the effects, however, of having a more "radical" perspective, such as a feminist perspective, was that it was more difficult for the organization to survive and still maintain its ideological stance. According to McShane and Oliver (1978), there are clear differences between male and female human service systems. A male system "promotes dependency, is dehumanizing, and perpetuates a false consciousness regarding social change by advancing the false notion that social problems are resolvable mainly through individual efforts or personal behavioral changes" (McShane and Oliver, 1978, p. 619). In contrast, a female system is based on the belief that social change is only possible through collective action, and emphasizes social, economic, political, and service activities with a feminist perspective to achieve this end. The authors thus felt that any compromises between the systems were ultimately viewed as diluting feminist purposes. However, they did advocate obtaining funding from the male system if it enabled organizations to establish and maintain a separate female system. Thus, while Baldwin argued for bringing alternative services together with traditional services - mainstreaming them - McShane and Oliver argued for the development of separate systems.

A feminist alternative agency in Philadelphia, Women in Transition, endorsed a philosophy which advocated social change but worked with a more conservative focus, namely to influence the existing social service structure and make a contribution to the overall improvement of human services. This agency was not only interested in meeting the unmet needs of women but it was also learning about their needs in an atmosphere less constrained by tradition. The common characteristics and problems of alternative agencies identified by this agency's experiences included: 1) funding insecurity, 2) a more creative approach to service model development, 3) a non-hierarchical authority structure, 4) high quality service, and 5) highly committed staff members. Since the people involved in this agency saw their role as described above, they devoted energy and time to educating professionals in the community regarding their purpose

and what they had learned.

Other authors such as Glasscote, et al, (1975) simply identified specific characteristics common in alternative agencies. They included the following:

1) Nobody is denied services for lack of ability to pay, i.e., no fees.

2) Staff members and volunteers alike, like people, particularly those ages 12-25.

3) Clients welcomed a natural casual "non-professional" way, treated as an equal and on a first name basis.

4) No long hours of waiting.

5) If a person needs a service the agency is unable to provide, a staff member would make every effort to see that the client receives the service needed at another agency.

6) Agency is usually a private independent agency.

7) No conditions of eligibility.

8) Services make a deliberate attempt to operate within the values of the counterculture.

9) Non-judgmental view of clients.

Perhaps the most comprehensive and helpful of any of the articles we found was one written by James S. Gordon, a physician who studied a variety of alternative agencies for the President's Commission on a Special Study of Alternative Mental Health Services. While he did not offer a precise definition of an alternative agency, he did argue that most have the following characteristics:

1) They respond to people's problems as those problems are experienced.

2) They provide services that are immediately accessible with a minimum of waiting and bureaucratic restriction.

3) They tend to treat their clients' problems as signs of change and opportunities for growth rather than symptoms of an illness which must be suppressed.

4) They treat those who come to them for help as members of families and social systems.

5) They make use of mental health professionals and the techniques they have developed but depend on non-professionals to deliver most of the primary care.

6) They regard active participation as a correspondence of their mental health service program and indeed of mental health.

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7) They provide both clients and staff with a supportive and enduring community which transcends the delivery or receipt of a particular service.

8) They change and expand the work they do to meet the changing needs of their clients.

9) They address themselves to the economic and social handicaps from which their clients suffer.

10) They can provide care that is by any standards equal or superior to that offered by traditional mental health centers.

11) They are in general, more economical than the traditional services which their clients might otherwise use.

12) They have financial problems.

13) They use their experience in trying to meet people's direct service needs as a basis for advocacy efforts on their clients' behalf (Gordon, 1978).

Summary and Conclusion

When analyzing the material we reviewed, several points become apparent. First of all, there is no standard or uniform definition of an alternative agency. In fact, none of the articles we reviewed contained a definition. Most of the authors discussed the characteristics of alternative agencies, which varied from author to author and from discipline to discipline.

Second, although there was some common agreement that the movement toward alternative agencies indicated that the models of existing service delivery were not meeting the needs of people, there was little agreement on what seemed the "best" alternative model.

The purpose of the research project was to try to get some insight into the actual operation and structure of what are commonly called alternative agencies. The project was viewed as an exploratory study, designed to try to understand if some of the commonly held assumptions about alternative agencies seemed to be reflected in actual practice. The research team's first task was to try to develop a working definition of an alternative agency.

Toward A Working Definition

Each member of the research team attempted to locate articles which would provide a clear definition of an alternative agency. At this point in the project, several issues began to emerge. First, there were very few articles on alternative agencies. Second, of those that could be found, few contained precise definitions of an alternative agency. The more typical approach was simply to list the characteristics of alternative agencies rather than to try to define them with any degree of precision. In an effort to generate a working definition, the research team engaged in a series of sessions to try to list characteristics, spell out working assumptions, and identify broad, common elements that appeared to exist in the concept of an alternative agency. As a result of this process, the research team agreed upon the following working definition:

> An alternative agency can be differentiated from a traditional agency by the programs they provide, populations served, and/or methods used in providing service in that they provide services not otherwise available or acceptable to their clients.

Selection of the Sample

Beginning with the working definition of an alternative agency and with the use of various resource directories, the research team developed a list

of potential agencies that might be included in the study. This initial list was divided into five areas of service delivery; health, education/community education, information and referral, law/justice service and counseling. By deciding to concentrate only on agencies providing social services, as opposed to economic alternatives such as co-ops, the list was further reduced. Two of the categories, education and community education, and law and justice services were excluded since they were outside of what are normally considered social services. The final set of agencies, then, consisted of agencies that provided health, counseling, or information and referral services.

Some of the agencies that were included in this final list were free-standing agencies. They were autonomous, independent organizations. Other's, however, were really embedded agencies and part of another larger organization. The research team decided to try to identify a sample which would reflect both freestanding and embedded agencies for each area of service delivery. This approach, it was assumed, would provide an initial analytical framework to compare agencies, since it was assumed that embedded agencies would be constrained by the organizations of which they were a part, and therefore would probably have different organizational patterns than freestanding agencies.

In an effort to clarify which agencies were embedded and which were free-standing, as well as to make sure the research team had identified the known alternative agencies in the community, one of the research team met with Ms. Michelle Carlson, a Resource Specialist for the Information and Referral Program of the Tri-County Community Council. Ms. Carlson proved very helpful in clarifying the functions of organizations and helped to understand which agencies were embedded and which were freestanding. On the basis of the interview, it became apparent that the use of freestanding versus embedded agencies for each service delivery type would not be feasible. It was decided to try to select a purposive sample, a sample of agencies that would reflect the diversity of the agencies on the list. As a result, agencies were selected from each type of service delivery area. Each member of the research team took

responsibility to interview two agencies. A letter was sent to each of the selected agencies to indicate the purpose of the study and to encourage their participation. A copy of the letter is included in the Appendix.

Agency Responses

The research team had expected that all of the agencies would be willing to participate in the study. However, this did not turn out to be the case. One of the agencies, a women's collective, had recently closed its doors, and although interested in the study, the collective simply felt they couldn't participate. No one felt they had the time nor energy.

Another agency, a free people's health clinic, simply never answered their telephone, despite numerous calls from a member of the research team.

Three agencies turned out not to be agencies at all, despite the fact that they had an identifiable name. One agency, although it had a director, really consisted of a home where nine senior citizen women lived together. Apparently, the director simply did not show up for work one day and the under-standing was she would not be back. Another agency was also a group living situation for handicapped individuals. The third agency was really a group of individual therapists who shared a building in common.

Finally, one agency refused to particpate. They say they were "appalled at being selected" because they did not have any say in the matter. Furthermore, they didn't give out the information the research team was requesting.

Each time an agency was dropped, another was added to the list in order to try to maintain a sample of approximately 20 agencies. The following organiza-tions were finally included as part of the research project:

Acupuncture Pain Control Center
Bradley-Angle House
Cancer Counseling Center
Casey Family Program
Counseling Center for Sexual Minorities
David's Harp
Friend In Need
Harry's Mother
Health Help Center
Men's Resource Center
Nurse Practitioner Community Health Center
Northwest Neighborhood Nurses
Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence
Outside-In
Phoenix Fellowship Center
Portland Women's Crisis Line
Quad, Inc.
Roll-On-In
Solo Center

The Questionnaire

Two members of the research team took the responsibility for developing
an initial draft of a questionnaire to be used in collecting the data for the
project. This initial draft was reviewed by the research team, revised several
times, and finally organized into major categories of information. The major
categories included: (1) demographic data on the organization, (2) historical
data, (3) eligibility and intake requirements, (4) the financing patterns of
the organization, (5) the staffing pattern, (6) the administrative structure,
(7) the governing structure, (8) the decision-making structure, (9) the feed-
back structure, and finally, (10) the linkage structure. The questionnaire
took the form of a data guide. A copy is attached in the Appendix.

Since the project was exploratory in nature, each of the interviewers was
to try to secure information around each of the topical areas. The interviews,
which were face to face interviews with the director of each of the agencies,
were then recorded and typed up in a coherent manner. Interviewers were free
to ask more questions than were on the questionnaire. In addition, they were
expected to secure specific pieces of data, such as a copy of the current bud-
get. The interviews lasted between an hour to an hour and a half. This stra-

tegy then, provided the research team with specific information, such as how many clients the agency served, as well as a host of descriptive data about each of the organizations included in the study.

Data Analysis

Individual members of the research team took responsibility for analyzing different sections of the data. This allowed each member to explore one aspect of the data in considerable detail. Their findings and conclusions are presented in the chapters that follow.

For purposes of analysis, common definitions and categories were developed for the age of the organization, the size of the organization, and its funding and decision-making pattern. This enabled individuals to use common categories, i.e., a young organization was one that was less than two years old, throughout the separate chapters.

The Formalization Scale

At the outset of the study it was assumed that the agencies would vary in degree to which they operated on an informal versus formal set of policies and procedures. A formalization scale was developed in order to be able to assess an agency's degree of formalization. The scale was developed simply by noting the presence (or absence) of eleven items which included written eligibility requirements, a budget document, written job descriptions, a personnel policy, a statement outlining employee benefits, a formalized training program, an organizational chart, written by-laws, a referral procedure, an evaluation procedure, and a formal board selection process. It was assumed the more items the agency had, the more formalized its structure. Agencies were then classified as low (0 to 3 items), medium (4 to 6 items), or high (7 to 11 items). Each member of the research team used the same classification system in their analysis of the data.

Conclusions

Although conclusions were developed for each of the chapters around specific content areas, the final, or overall conclusions, were based on a series of meetings with the entire research team. Each member presented their major findings, and then the entire group attempted to determine what statements could be made for the entire sample, recognizing that not all concluding statements applied equally to all of the agencies in the study. The concluding section was the research teams effort to "sum up" the entire study.

Study Limitations

Although the study was an exploratory study, it does have a number of limitations which need to be noted. First, the study is essentially a series of case studies. Since the sample is very small, it limits one's ability to draw any conclusions about alternative agencies in general. Second, the sample is not a representative sample, but rather it is a purposive sample. Although a purposive sample enabled the research team to collect data on the diversity of agencies, it made data analysis much more difficult and limited its ability to draw conclusions. And finally, since the interviews were not structured interviews, there was considerable variation in both the type of data that was gathered on each agency as well as the quality of the data. Although the interviews provided the research team with rich qualitative data, it made the data analysis more difficult and further limited the team's ability to draw conclusions that applied equally well to all the agencies in the study. Despite these limitations a great deal of information has been collected on alternative agencies. The team's findings and conclusions are presented in the following chapters.

ALTERNATIVE AGENCIES: A DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

by

Bea Zizlavsky

This chapter will describe the functions of the alternative agencies, the types of services they provided, the client population served, and the changes in the services or numbers of clients served by these agencies.

The sample of 19 alternative agencies were chosen from within the Portland metropolitan area. These agencies ranged in age from six weeks old to twelve years. The average (mean) age was 4.4 years; the median age was 4.

Primary Functions of Alternative Agencies

By the process described in the methodology chapter, our sample was limited to alternative agencies in the service areas of health, counseling, and information and referral. In the sample, the primary service functions were unequally distributed; five of these agencies (26.3%) provided health care as a primary service definition, seven (36.9%) were in the counseling area, three (15.7%) were information and referral agencies, and three (15.7%) of these agencies, although providing one or more of the health, counseling, information and referral services, also listed "shelter" as a primary function of that agency. One agency was not a direct service agency, and was different from the other agencies in that its main function was providing "technical assistance."

Types of Services Provided

Although the sample was selected by primary areas of service, i.e., health, counseling, or information and referral, almost 90% of the agencies were "multi-service" providers. Only two of the agencies were identified as single service providers. One of these agencies was a shelter provider, and the other was classified as a counseling service.

The following chart lists the array of services provided by each of the agencies included in the study.

CHART 3.1

SERVICES OF ALTERNATIVE AGENCIES

Services Provided:

	Primary Function							Services Provided by Agencies								
	Health	Counsel	I & R	Shelter	Other	Multi-Service	Single Service	Counsel	Health	Education	Information	Referral	Advocacy	Crisis Intervention	Shelter	Other
1.	X					X			X							X
2.				X		X		X		X	X	X	X		X	
3.		X				X		X		X	X					X
4.		X					X	X								
5.			X			X				X	X	X				X
6.			X			X				X	X	X				X
7.		X				X		X	X				X			
8.		X				X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
9.	X					X		X	X		X	X				
10.		X				X		X		X						X
11.	X					X			X	X	X					
12.	X					X			X	X	X	X	X			X
13.					X	X			X	X		X				X
14.	X					X		X	X		X	X		X		
15.		X				X		X		X						X
16.			X			X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
17.				X		X			X	X					X	X
18.				X			X								X	
19.		X				X		X		X	X					X

As displayed in the chart, 11 of the 19 agencies (58%) provided counseling services, even though only seven described the agency as a counseling service. Health services were provided by six agencies (32%), which was closely related to the five agencies described as health service providers. Information and referral services were provided by 13 of these agencies (68%),

although only three of the sample described information and referral as a primary function.

In terms of service functions then, the picture that begins to emerge is that most of the agencies provide multiple services even though they claim a single primary function. It is also important to note that the majority of the agencies, 12 of the 19, also provide community education or advocacy as part of their service function. Of these 12 agencies, six were counseling agencies, three were health agencies, two were agencies which provide shelter, and one was an agency who provided technical assistance.

Population Served

Although all of the agencies provided services to an individual client, except for the agency that was not involved in direct service delivery, 50% of the alternative agencies also provided services for groups, such as growth groups, peer groups, family counseling, rap groups, and self help groups. This suggests that some of the agencies emphasize the ability of those who have been or are being helped to use their personal experience as a basis for helping others.

The assumption that alternative agencies focused on specialized populations and/or specialized problems seemed to be supported. Although many of the agencies were multi-service agencies, 84% defined their populations by a specialized problem area, such as divorce, runaways, or abuse. Four agencies only served men or women. Ten agencies had age requirements to define their populations. Three said they served the low income; all three of the agencies provided health services. Only one of the agencies defined their population by ethnic or racial backgrounds.

Changing to Meet the Changing Needs of Clients

One of the characteristics that Gordon (1978) noted in his study of alternative agencies was that alternative agencies changed to meet the changing

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needs of clients. In our sample, almost 74% of the agencies reported an awareness of their services changing to meet client needs, although most were not specific as to the reasons for these changes. The changes included extended hours, the addition of different services such as a hotline, peer groups, or shelters, and different client population changes resulting in different program focuses. From the data, it appeared that the higher the number of services provided by the agency, the more likely the agency was involved in a change to meet client needs.

Number of Clients Served

The number of clients served by these alternative agencies ranged from 0 to 14,400 per year. The average (mean) number served was 2,722. The median number was 1,300.

The agency serving no clients was not a direct service agency, but one that provided only technical assistance to other programs and agencies. The agency serving the most number of clients was an information and referral service.

In addition to the agency changing in some way to meet the changing needs of clients, many of these alternative agencies also experienced a change in the number of clients served. The reasons for the increase or decrease in the number of clients the agency served were either external reasons, such as shifts in societal attitudes or the economy, or internal reasons, such as hiring more staff or changing the focus of the service or program.

Eleven of the 19 agencies had an increase in the number of clients they served each year. Two of the agencies felt the reasons for the increase were largely external reasons. More people simply heard about and used the agency and there was more "societal support for more grant money." The remaining agencies had a variety of reasons to explain the increase. Some added staff, thereby increasing the capacity for service. Another reported that they were initially hesitant to overload the staff in the beginning of their operation.

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Others increased services by adding group work to individual services.

Three of the 19 agencies had a decrease in the number of clients served, and all listed internal reasons for this change: "narrowing the focus of the program", "no longer doing groups", and "reduced the number of people to fit in the van."

Five of the agencies, roughly one quarter, had no significant change in the number of clients served. The data indicated that the size of the number already being served had an impact because three of these agencies were "at capacity", so that no increase could be expected. One of the agencies had a change in type of clients, but not a change in the numbers of clients served.

Length of Service

According to Gordon (1978, p. 379), alternative agencies "respond to people's problems as those problems are experienced." Our impression is that most of the agencies in the study follow this open-ended approach to service delivery. As one counselor put it, "We start where the person is and are here for that person however they want to use us." Another reported that their clients typically "stick with the program until they leave the area." Most of the agencies - 17 in all - were organized so that clients could have ongoing visits.

Office Hours and Accessibility

One of the characteristics of alternative agencies is that they are immediately accessible at hours convenient to clients. Our data tends to support this description. Nearly 80% of the agencies in the study have non-standardized, weekend, or around the clock services. Over one-third have a 24-hour crisis line telephone number. As one respondent stated, "We're always operating. The families have the social workers' home telephone number."

However, in addition to the non-standardized hours, all but two of the agencies in the sample answered "yes" to the question of having regular office hours. Of this group, 63% used the standardized "9 to 5"; others included 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.; and 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Of the two agencies not having standardized office hours, one agency was a shelter provider, and the other was a counseling agency.

Thus, the agencies are "traditional" in the sense that they have regular office hours, but alternative in the sense that most of them have non-standardized, weekend or around the clock services.

Summary and Conclusions

This brief overview highlights a number of issues regarding alternative agencies. First, although each of the agencies has a primary function, most are clearly multi-service agencies that provide not one, but an array of services to relatively specific population groups. Second, although the agencies are designed to serve individuals, half use some type of group process as part of their service delivery method so that experiences are shared among those who use the service. Third, most of the agencies have experienced some kind of change to try to effectively adapt their programs to meet client needs and most of the agencies are either "at capacity" or they have increased the number of clients they service each year. And finally, they do appear to be accessible when clients need them. Although most have "office hours", they also have alternative arrangements outside their defined office hours.

CHAPTER IV

ALTERNATIVE AGENCIES IN THE PORTLAND AREA:

HISTORICAL DATA

by

Carolyn M. Curnane

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus upon the history of the 19 alternative agencies
in the Portland metropolitan area which we have surveyed. Specifically, it
will address the issues of how the organizations got started, who started
them (the organization pattern), what changes have taken place in the organi-
zation since they began operating, and look more closely at program expansion.

The Organizational Pattern

We identified two dominant patterns of organization: 1) individually or-
ganized, and 2) community organized. We defined, individually organized or
based, as those agencies that were started by an individual or group of indi-
viduals because of a particular goal or dream. Community based refers to
those agencies that were started as a response to a need in the community; an
outgrowth of repeated requests for particular services. We also had a mixed
category which refers to a combination of the two. We found that the majority
of the agencies surveyed (13) were individually based, while only four were
community based. Two were mixed.

We were also interested in whether or not the agencies had identifiable
founders and if so, whether or not these founders tended to still be involved
with the agencies. We found that almost all of the agencies (18) had identi-
fiable founders and in almost half of them (9) the founders were still active.
Eight did not have their founders still involved and two reported that they
did not know. One example of an agency with its original founder still in-

volved is the Acupuncture Pain Control Center, founded by Dr. Chiasson, who has directed the agency since its inception in 1973. Another is Quad, Inc., which was founded by Bud Meyers in 1974. He is currently the director of the agency. We also found that out of the nine agencies with founders still involved, seven of these were individually based, one was community based and one was mixed. It can be postulated that perhaps the individual founders who started the agencies because of a dream tended to stay involved with it.

Organizational Changes

We looked at eight specific types of changes which are described in the chart below:

<div align="center">Type of Change</div>

Change	Number	Percent
General Change	13	68
Population	8	42
Funding	12	63
Physical Location	8	42
Administrative Structure	6	32
Goals and Philosophies	8	42
Board of Directors	12	63
Program	9	47

<div align="center">(N=19)</div>

We can deduce from this that most (68%) of the agencies reported that they had changed in a general sense, although the majority of them had not changed location, population, administrative patterns or goals and philosophies. They did tend to report changes in boards and programs since they started. We asked the agencies to describe their most significant change if they indeed had mentioned change and found no pattern in their responses. Changes cited ranged

from loss of funding to an increase in referrals, to a change in governing structure.

We did find some interesting correlations, however. We found that out of the eight agencies that changed location, six of these had changes in population served. This could have been due to changes in the neighborhoods. One agency, for example, draws the majority of its population from the elderly living in the Northwest section of Portland. If the agency were to change its location, they would most likely lose a substantial portion of their clientele. We also found that all of the agencies which reported population changes also had funding changes. This may have been due to a greater amount of money needed to serve a larger population. We found that all of the eight agencies whose founders were no longer involved reported that they had changed. Perhaps as new leaders took over they tended to move in different directions than the original founders had intended.

Program Expansion

We considered the question of whether or not the agencies had expanded in the past and if they intend to in the future, which is described in the following chart:

Expansion

Type of Expansion	Past		Future	
	No.	%	No.	%
General Expansion	16	84	9	47
Funding	11	58	10	53
Type of Program	8	42	7	37
Type of Staff	4	21	1	5

N=19

We can see from this chart that almost all of the agencies had expanded in the past, although less than half planned to expand in the future. Most had

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expanded their funding and also planned to do so in the future. Less than half had expanded their type of program and less than half also planned to expand it in the future. A very small number of agencies had expanded their type of staff in the past and even fewer planned to expand it in the future.

We further found that most of the agencies that expanded their type of program had expanded their funding (6/7), probably to cover the expenses of such program expansion. However, the agencies who had expanded their funding did not use the revenue to expand their type of staff (3/11), nor did those who expanded their type of program expand their type of staff to accomodate (3/8).

Conclusions

In conclusion, we found that with regard to the organizational patterns of the agencies, the majority of them were individually based. Almost all of them had identifiable founders and almost half of them had founders that were still involved.

With regard to organizational changes, we found that most reported general changes although they reported changes in only two out of seven specific categories. We found no pattern in the significant changes which the agencies had mentioned.

Finally, with regard to expansion, almost all of the agencies had expanded in the past although less than half planned to expand in the future.

CHAPTER V

ELIGIBILITY AND INTAKE

by

Susan Kouns

Introduction

During the first stages of gathering and sharing information, the re-
search team formulated two assumptions regarding the eligibility and intake
process of alternative agencies. The first assumption was that alternative
agencies would have ill-defined eligibility requirements and would try to
serve anyone who walked through the door. The second assumption was that
the intake process would be non-bureaucratic. These assumptions were based
on the notion that alternative agencies were established with a philosophy of
providing services to people in need, who traditionally have not been served,
or who have fallen through the "gaps" in the larger and more bureaucratic so-
cial service system.

Traditionally, the criteria most often used by public social service agen-
cies for eligibility, or social allocations of services, usually includes one
or more of the following demographic characteristics: 1) income or the ability
to pay, 2) age, 3) sex, 4) location of residence, 5) diagnosis, 6) race,
or 7) ethnic background. Social allocations of services are usually based
on a rather rigid framework of criteria by the larger and older social service
agencies, such as Welfare.

The following questions were asked to obtain information regarding eligi-
bility and intake:

1) What is the eligibility criteria for your agency?

2) Is there a cost to the clients for service?

3) Are appointments necessary for services?

4) What is the average waiting period for services?

Two of the 19 agencies interviewed did not respond to the eligibility section of the questionnaire, so the following data is based on information gathered from 17 agencies.

Eligibility Criteria

Our early assumption that alternative agencies had little or no eligibility requirements was fairly accurate. Six of the 17 agencies reported no eligibility requirements; ten agencies based eligibility on one criteria; and only one agency had two criteria for eligibility. Of the agencies that had criteria for eligibility; four based eligibility on sex (three served women and one served men); four based eligibility on diagnosis (two served chronically mentally ill and two served quadraplegics); three based eligibility on age (all three served children/adolescents); and one based eligibility on income (served only low income people). The one agency that did have two criteria served both women of adolescent age or older, and anyone under age 21.

These findings also support another assumption we had prior to collecting the data, that alternative agencies focused on specialized populations or specialized problems. Well over half (65%), of the agencies interviewed targeted their services to a well defined population. Typically these populations are comprised of groups of people who have been traditionally underserved (youth, women, mentally ill, etc.), by the larger governmental system of services.

Cost to Client

We also assumed that alternative agencies would not charge the consumers for services, or if there was a fee, it would be minimal, since fees can be viewed as a barrier to service. We were half right. Nine of the 17 agencies reported having no fee for service. One of those nine agencies did charge a fee on a sliding scale basis for counseling services beyond their normal length of contact. Several of these agencies did state however, that they would accept contributions for services. Of the remaining eight agencies that did

charge fees for service, three used a sliding scale fee schedule for assessment and based the fee on the individual's income, three agencies had fixed fees for services, and two used both a sliding scale and fixed fees for different services.

When analyzing the cost to client against the degree of formalization of the agency, the data showed that none of the four agencies that were categorized as "highly" formalized had a sliding scale fee schedule and three of those agencies had no fee and one had fixed fees. This finding is contrary to a traditional belief that the more highly organized or bureaucratic an agency is, the more likely it is to have fees for service. Smaller and less developed agencies are usually more characteristic of delivering free services.

A similar analysis comparing the size of the budget to the cost to clients revealed that none of the agencies with small budgets ($0-19,999/yearly budget) had either sliding scale fees or fixed fees. This is interesting because it seems like a small budgeted agency would be more likely to charge fees for service to help supplement their budgets. This situation may be due to the nature of the services delivered by these agencies. Of the three agencies that had small budgets, two reported doing no direct service to clients, and one provided a socialization program for chronically mentally ill, which is relatively inexpensive to administer.

In an analysis of the age of the agency and the cost to clients the singular pertinent factor was that only two of the eight agencies which were over five years old did not charge a fee for their services. This would seem to imply that the longer an agency has been in operation the more likely they are to charge for services, or; that the fees for service is one of the reasons why they operationally endure longer.

Appointments

It was assumed by the research group that alternative agencies would not require appointments for service, based on the assumption that these agencies

are less bureaucratic in nature. Our assumption was somewhat supported in that only four agencies required appointments for some of their services, but not all of them. Seven of the agencies did not require appointments for any services, with three of those seven agencies stating that they did prefer appointments.

In an analysis between the degree of formalization and if the agency required appointments, it was noted that none of the agencies that were considered "highly" formalized required appointments for all of their services. Two of theses agencies did not require any appointments and two required them for only one or two services. This finding somewhat contradicted our earlier assumption that the more bureaucratic (formalized) the agency, the more likely they are to require appointments.

The comparison between appointment requirements and the age of an agency revealed very little significant information. The one interesting result was that none of the five agencies under two years old required appointments for all services. This could possibly be due to the factor that in being young agencies they are not in as much demand yet from the public and therefore do not require the formalization of appointments for all services. Thus, the younger agencies don't charge fees and don't have appointments.

Waiting Period

Built on the premise that alternative agencies are less bureaucratic than traditional agencies, it was our assumption that they would have no waiting period for services. this characteristic in regards to alternative services is also supported in the literature, as pointed out by James Gordon (1978) in his analysis of alternative agencies. He stated that alternative agencies provide services that are immediately accessible with a minimum of waiting and bureaucratic restrictions (Gordon,J.; p.33).

Nine agencies did not have a waiting period for services, with the exception of one that did have a one to two week waiting period, but only for one of

their many services. The waiting periods for the other eight agencies varied from one day to two or three weeks before services could be provided.

When comparing the age of the agency and the waiting period, there were no significant findings in the agencies that had no waiting period. In fact, they were equally split; three agencies were between 0-2 years old, three agencies were between 2-5 years old, and three agencies were over five years old. Of the agencies that did have waiting periods the number increased as the age of the agency did, with the number of older agencies requiring waiting periods doubling that of the younger agencies. These finding tend to support the theory that the older the agency, the more "red tape" and bureaucracy is involved.

Conclusions

In general there was very little variance between the eligibility and intake procedures for an alternative agency when compared to more traditional agencies. Although six of the agencies reported not having criteria for eligibility, each agency was targeted at serving a particular population or problem. The responses given to eligibility requirements in some cases were inconsistant with the responses given to the question of population served. For example, each of the two agencies that reported no eligibility requirements, serves specific age groups; one serves adults and the other youth and families. It is unclear what implications this may have on the overall research findings. This inconsistancy regarding eligibility and population served was found in nine cases.

The basic characteristics which were found to be present in at least 50% of the agencies in terms of eligibility andintake were:

1. They provide services to either a specific population or problem.

2. They often have very loose eligibility requirements.

3. They traditionally do not charge a fee to the consumer for services.

4. If a fee is required it is based on a sliding scale fee schedule in accordance with the individual's income.

5. There is usually no waiting period for services.

Although these five characteristics are not always true of alternative agencies, they are the prominent traits that appeared in our study.

CHAPTER VI

STAFFING PATTERNS IN ALTERNATIVE AGENCIES

by

Linda Crane

Staffing Patterns in Alternative Agencies

There is little disagreement that manpower is an essential element in
delivery of human services. The way that workers perceive and experience their
work will be reflected in their performance and the benefits they provide for
their clients. Consequently, staffing patterns are an important aspect in our
study of alternative agencies.

In order to get a better understanding of alternative agencies we wanted
to find out how these agencies managed their day-to-day activities and to de-
termine the extent to which volunteers played a major role in service delivery.
The typical image of an alternative agency is one in which there is a dedicated
core staff who function to keep the agency going by using a host of volunteers
in a variety of capacities. We also wanted to determine if the agencies had
some kind of organized staffing plan. And finally, since it is frequently
assumed that alternative agencies are financially poor agencies, we wanted to
examine the kinds of benefits that they agency provided for their employees.

In the area of staffing patterns, the research team looked at two basic
categories of staff, paid and voluntary. Paid staff includes both full and
part-time employees of the agency, including work-study students. Voluntary
staff refers to volunteers, unpaid staff and practicum students. Volunteers,
as defined in this study, include all paraprofessionals or other individuals
who contribute hours to the direct or indirect needs of the agency. Unpaid
staff refers to professionals within the community who contribute time to the
agency.

Paid Staff

The number of paid staff in full-time equivalencies (FTE) ranged from a low of 0 (two agencies were run totally by volunteers) to a high of 15.25. However, most of the agencies (12 out of 19) had less than 3.5 FTE and only one had more than 7 FTE. This suggests that the agencies in our study were relatively small agencies with a few paid employees. The health agencies tended to be smaller than the others. The average number of paid FTE for the five health agencies in the study was 2.2 The average number for all other agencies was 3.6.

In 18 of the 19 agencies in the study, there seemed to be what one might call a "core staff". This core staff was an individual or group of individuals who served as the staffing foundation of the agency. In most instances, the core consisted of a group of paid employees, although there was some variation to this pattern. For example, in one agency the core staff consisted solely of the director who managed the affairs of the agency. In another agency the core staff included paid and voluntary staff. A further example of a differing composition was an agency in which the core staff consisted totally of voluntary staff. This last example happened to be the youngest agency in the study. It was six weeks old at the time of the interview.

Formalization of Roles

The paid staff of the agencies in our study tended to have well defined positions, at least they had formal job descriptions. Thirteen of the 17 agencies with paid staff had job descriptions for their employees and provided copies to the research team. Several others reported having them but did not provide us with a copy. Two of the agencies said that they had job descriptions because they were required by the funding source. Thus, the staffing pattern to emerge for the agencies in the study is that they are run by a paid staff who have relatively well defined formalized positions.

Voluntary Staff

Not all of the agencies used volunteers to carry out their program. Six agencies did not have voluntters, although two of them said they were considering using them. Two of the agencies were health agencies. One specifically said they did not use volunteers because of the problems which arose with malpractice insurance. Two others were basically facilities serving physically handicapped clients, while the remaining two were a foster care program and a coalition concerned with sexual and domestic violence.

Of the 13 agencies that did used volunteers the number ranged from one to 150 volunteers, averaging slightly more than 32 volunteers per agency. The number of hours which make up a voluntary position ranged from four to 160 with an average of approximately 30 hours per month. One of the agencies with voluntary staff was excluded from this and other estimates of voluntary time in this chapter because it includes a shelter care program with 18 homes. The research team was unsure of the number of workers needed to staff these homes, and of the number of hours contributed by the voluntary workers.

The agencies with voluntary staff that reported having no budget seemed to have a much higher reliance on voluntary staff members than those with a budget. The former averaged approximately 55 hours per month as a voluntary position while the latter averaged only slightly over 20. Two of the agencies in our study could not be included because they refused to provide us with a budget. Thus, it appeared that financially poor agencies tended to rely on voluntary staff to a greater degree than did agencies which had some secure source of funds.

Scope of Voluntary Roles

The duties and responsibilities of the volunteers varied tremendously. The variation is reflected in some of their titles which include; director, group leader, therapist, aide, community liaison, newspaper staffer, fund-raiser, babysitter and advocate. Although most of the agencies do use volunteers, only

two reported that they have formal job descriptions for their volunteers. One agency which is run entirely by volunteers does not have formal job descriptions, but it does have specific requirements in order to become a member of the collective.

Training of Voluntary Staff

Of the 13 agencies which utilized volunteers, most of them provided some sort of training. Nine said they provided training to all of their volunteers, while three provided training to only a portion of the staff. Only one agency reported that they did no training at all. Typically, training methods included an orientation program, monthly workships, weekly house meetings (in a residential program) or refresher sessions to help deal with new problems.

Half of the agencies with some sort of training seemed to emphasize training in their voluntary positions, in terms of having a multi-dimensional format. A single-dimensional format, according to this study, is one in which training is only provided at the time the volunteer joins the agency. A multi-dimensional format is defined as some sort of orientation program plus additional training within the length of time that the individual remains with the agency. The agencies which fell under the latter definition seemd to have an on-going commitment to their volunteers.

Relative Impact of Voluntary Positions

The overall staffing pattern of alternative agencies appears to be that paid staff make up a larger proportion of the work force than do volunteers. The agencies in our study were measured in terms of the relative impact of voluntary hours to the total number of staffing hours needed to run the agency. By computing a monthly number of hours in an FTE paid staff position as 175, the total number of voluntary and paid hours were compared. The average relative impact of voluntary hours in the 18 agencies (one agency, mentioned pre-

viously, was excluded) was approximately 32%, with the remaining 68% as the average impact of paid staff hours.

The range of percentages of voluntary service varied from 0 to 100%. The average across only those agencies with some voluntary staff was approximately 48%. This figure includes two agencies which are staffed solely by volunteers. Of the ten agencies which have a mix 37% of their staff time is donated on a voluntary basis.

The agencies which were the oldest, five years or older, averaged 53% of the working hours as a result of volunteers. The middle-aged agencies, 2-5 years, average only 7% use of voluntary staff. The youngest agencies, 0-2 years, showed 16% impact from voluntary help. From this viewpoint, it appears that older agencies do have a more solid reliance on their voluntary work force to carry out the responsibilities of the agency.

The total number of service hours per month, derived by adding the calculated number of FTE hours in an agency to the voluntary hours, provides a picture of the overall capability of the agency to serve clients. The average total number of service hours was 929 per month. The range of service hours varied from a high of 2,668 to a low of 240. The agency excluded previously, due to having 18 shelter care homes in addition to its core program, has also been excluded here, leaving a sample size of 18.

The more formalized agencies seemed to have a larger capacity in staffing hours. The formalization scale described in Chapter II was utilized for this comparison. The agencies which were considered as highly formalized had an average service capacity in staff hours of 1,141. The medium groups in terms of formalization averaged 1,021 service hours. The agencies having a low level of formalization seemed to be fairly small agencies, having an average of 650 service hours per month contributed by both paid and voluntary staff.

<u>Benefits</u>

The research team wanted to examine the benfits that staff accrue in the positions that they hold in alternative agencies. Data was collected in these categories: health, vacation leave, sick leave, retirement and comp-time. These categories were selected because they are characteristically included by more traditional agencies. In addition, we created an "other" category to reflect the agencies total conceptualization of benefits.

Figures used in this section will be based on the 17 agencies with paid employees. The two agencies which do not use paid staff were asked and reported no benefits in the first five categories. One of these two said that they give some compensation for travel to their volunteers.

Sick leave was given in 13 of the 17 agencies, making it the most commonly provided of the five categories of benefits. Health insurance was offered by 12 agencies, while five did not. Three of the five agencies who did not offer health insurance did not offer any benefits at all. Two of these three agencies had no budget, and all three were considered financially unstable. Consequently, it appears that health insurance is frequently provided by agencies which have the budgetary capacity. Vacation leave was also frequently available in the sample agencies. Eleven of the 17 agencies (64%) give their paid employees vacation leave.

Retirement is the least likely of the five types of benefits normally offered in more traditional agencies to be offered by the agencies in our study. Only two agencies provided retirement benefits. Comp-time was found in only three of the 17 agencies, or approximately 18%. Six of the agencies which did not use comp-time offered alternatives. One agency, for example, only had comp-time in unusual circumstances, in which case it had to be approved by the board. Four agencies reported that workers have the flexibility to take time off if they have put in extra hours. One agency added a comment to their reply; that there is no compensation for holidays. This is a residential program, so that

holidays are a work day for some individuals.

In the "other" category, travel pay was mentioned, as was free rent in a small house next door to the agency (the person in this position is the only paid employee of the agency). One agency pointed out having no reimbursement for gas. Another paid for professional dues, licensing and accreditation fees for its employees in addition to the more traditional types of benefits.

Overall, the research team has broken down the agencies into these categories in terms of benefits: 1) total package, all five; 2) near total, one missing; 3) partial package, two or more missing, but some type of benefits offered; and 4) no benefits. There were no agencies which had a total package. The second category took in 23% of the sample agencies. Approximately 60% fell into the third category, leaving 17% of the agencies with no benefits. From this viewpoint, it appears that the agencies we selected offer relatively few benefits in comparison to more traditional agencies.

Employee Salaries

It appears that low pay is an appropriate way to characterize the majority of agencies in our study. In terms of FTE, 12 of the agencies with paid staff paid their employees less than $1,000 a month. In the youngest age category, 0-2 years, half of the agencies with paid employees fell below the $1,000 a month level. In the middle age category, 2-5 years, two-thirds, or approximately 67% of the agencies paid under $1,000 a month. The largest percentage of low paying agencies, by our definition, fell into the group of agencies over five years of age with paid positions. Approximately 83% of these agencies paid under $1,000 per month. Consequently, it appears that alternative agencies are not able or choose not to pay above a low level to a large extent.

Five agencies paid by the hour, while eight paid by salary. Three agencies used methods other than salary or wages. An example of another method is payment by the individual client. Both of the agencies which paid by the individual client provided health services and the employees are at a Master's level

or above. Another agency in which the Director receives a salary, has a pay rate for professionals who teach classes, which is a percentage of the fees collected. This agency also pays their counseling staff the direct service fees. One agency could not be included in this count because the method could not be determined by the data collected. In some instances, research team members contacted the agency after the interview to clarify or obtain additional data, but in some cases it was still not clear enough to be included.

Stability of Staff

In looking at the 17 agencies that have paid staff, it appears that their employees are faily stable. The answers given to the question, "How long do employees stay?" fell into these groupings created by the research team: 1) not applicable, since the agency has been operating a short time or the interviewee was unable to estimate; 2) high turnover, 3-6 months; 3) intermediate turnover, 6-18 months; and 4) low turnover, 18 months or longer. Approximately 47% of the agencies with paid staff fell into the low turnover category. Four agencies were placed in the not applicable category, leaving only four agencies, or 23%, in the high or intermediate turnover groups. Two agencies mentioned burn-out as a reason for intermediate or high turnover. One of these two specified that it was due to low pay. Excluding the agencies in the not applicable category, 69% of the agencies that could comment on stability of paid staff reported a low level of turnover, according to our definition.

Volunteer staff appear less stable than paid employees. Of the 13 agencies with unpaid, six, or just under 50% reported one year or less. One agency considered voluntary staff who remain for six months as long-term. An agency which functions as a women's crisis line attributed their turnover to burn-out, saying that the work is emotionally draining.

Budgets

Reports on the total budgets also took various forms. Two agencies refused

to provide documents, feeling that they were not willing to reveal where their money came from and went specifically. Six of the agencies did not have a budget that was formalized, in print or available. In all eight of these cases, however, we were able to determine at least which funding sources they used.

Consequently, for 11 of the 19 agencies in our sample who did provide a budget document, we were able to establish some general ranges of funding. The rage of agencies' budgets varied from $2,000 to $480,000, with an average budget of slightly over $100,000.

It is interesting to note that there was no correlation between the age of the agencies and the size of their budget, though we imagined at the outset that there might be a tendency in the older agencies toward having larger budgets. Instead, there was an almost even distribution of small, medium and large budgets in each of the three age categories (0-2 years, 2-5 years, and over 5 years).

As stated above, even the agencies who would or could not provide budget documents were able to reveal funding sources, and the following results could be summarized according to the number of funding source types.

TYPES OF FUNDING SOURCES	NUMBERS OF AGENCIES	PERCENTAGE
2	3	16
3	7	37
4	5	26
5	1	5
6	3	16

Summary and Conclusions

In summary, the vast majority of the agencies in the study are run by a paid staff, although the number of staff are relatively small. Most of the agencies rely on volunteers and provide some kind of training program. The use of volunteers seems somewhat related to the age of the agency since the percen-

tage of volunteer hours is higher among the more established agencies than among the younger agencies. Most of the agencies provide some benefits to their employees, the most common being sick leave, health insurance, and vacation. Finally, the staffing patterns appear quite stable.

CHAPTER VII

FINANCES AND FUNDING PATTERNS

by

Mary Ann Hanson

When we began the study we assumed that most of the alternative agencies would have financial problems because that was one of the common characteristics listed by several authors (cf. Gordon, 1978). Since financing is such a central issue to an organization's ability to carry out its program, we were interested not only in finding out if the agencies in our sample had financial difficulties, but we also wanted to know what sources of funds were being used, the amounts from each of the funding sources, and the short and long range stability of those funding sources.

Although we had a number of questions designed to illicit information about each agency's funding patterns, the data about funding tended to be reported throughout the interview. Fox example, financial difficulties were sometimes discussed when the respondent was talking about eligibility requirements. Two agencies refused to provide budget documents, feeling that they were not willing to reveal where they money came from nor how it was spent. Six agencies did not have a formalized, printed budget document. Consequently, the contents of the entire interview had to be reviewed in order to try to piece together an agency's financial problems and funding patterns.

Funding and Funding Sources

It is interesting to note that six of the agencies did not have a formalized budget document. In other words, they could not tell us what their annual budget was. Of the 11 agencies with budget documents their budget ranged from $2,000 to $480,000. The average budget was slightly over $100,000. We were, however, able to piece together the sources of funds for each of the 19 agencies, even though we could not identify the specific amount. The sources of funds are

are displayed in Table 7.1 listed below.

TABLE 7.1

FUNDING SOURCES

SOURCE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Donations	15	79
Grants	12	63
Private fees	9	47
Other (*)	7	37
Fund raising	7	37
Church	6	32
Third party payments	6	32
Foundations	5	26
Contracts	3	16
United Way	3	16
Endowments	1	5

(*) Includes trusts, memorials.

We were also able to identify the extent to which agencies relied on more than one source of funding. This data is displayed in Table 7.2 listed below.

TABLE 7.2

NUMBER OF FUNDING SOURCES

SOURCE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
2	3	16
3	7	37
4	5	26
5	1	5
6	3	16

All of the agencies had more than one funding source and nearly half (9) had four or more funding sources. In terms of funding sources, the agencies in our study rely on a range of sources, although the majority rely on donations (79%) or grants (63%). It is interesting to note however, that there does not seem to be any relationship between the age of an agency and the size of their budgets.

We had assumed, for example, that older agencies might have larger budgets,
but when age and budget size are compared, no patterns seems to exist.

Funding Stability

Funding stability was based on such factors as number of changes in fund-
ing sources, whether or not the agency was able to count on continued funding
and how organized or established their funding sources were judged to be. If
any agency did not have many sources of funding, and it appeared that the agency
would fold without them, it was considered unstable. Agencies in transition,
with no guarantee of continued funding and the possibility of closure without
it, were also considered unstable as were those agencies who had only small
amounts of money from tenuous or temporary sources. The more sources an agency
had, the more stable it was considered. An even distribution of money from
various sources was judged to provide more security since a loss of one source
would not be totally detrimental to the agency's program.

Of the 19 agencies in the study, 12 could claim stability in their fund-
ing while seven could not. We suspected that funding stability might be rela-
ted to the age of the agency. The middle-aged agencies did show a pattern,
with all six of the agencies exhibiting funding stability. The younger agencies
showed three unstable and two stable ones, while the older agencies had only
three out of eight which were unstable. The younger agencies with stable fund-
ing came into existence only after years, four in one case, six in the other,
of preparation and search for adequate funding before they could even begin to
offer services. In one sense then, the stability of funding for young agencies
seems related to the amount of planning that took place prior to the time the
organization opened its doors.

All the agencies had between two and six types of funding sources, but
within one type, they might have two or three different sources. There were
agencies which had back-up sources they could depend on to compensate financial-
ly for deficits in their budget, or partial back-up provided by a primary fund-

ing source. It was not always possible to determine a primary source in the funding pattern, and at times, the history of funding was only partially documented or known by the person being interviewed.

Six agencies had no changes in funding source since their beginning. One agency had six changes and the other agencies fell somewhere in between. Of the six agencies that reported no changes in funding source, three had been in existence for a year or less, making the likelihood of change in that period smaller by logical assumption. Regarding funding stability sources, three agencies had seen a reduction in the time since they had existed, nine had seen an increase and seven remained the same. Of those agencies which remained the same, three again had been in existance less than a year. Two more had a high degree of stability since they were founded, so remaining the same indicated a continued high functioning rather than no results from efforts made.

Funding Difficulties

In contrast to what we had learned in the literature regarding alternative social service agencies, results from our study revealed that only eight of the 19 agencies could be classified as having financial difficulty. Many agencies ran on small budgets or reported having no budgets, but they were not necessarily the same agencies which reported financial difficulties.

Several explanations can be offered to account for the absence of financial difficulties. First of all, we had a variety of ages of agencies in our sample ranging from six weeks to 12 years. Unless agencies started out with a viable, secure funding source which continued with them throughout their history, it was necessary for them to move in a direction which would guarantee continued funding. Since 14 of the 19 agencies had been in existance for more than two years, most of them had gone through a process of adapting to pressures related to funding. Second, as mentioned above, two of the five agencies which were considered new (0-2 years old) came into existance after years of preparation

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for the specific purpose of being financially secure before beginning their programs. All in all, it was the medium-aged agencies who had been around between two and five years which reported the least financial difficulties. Younger and older agencies were equally divided between those who did and those who did not have financial difficulty.

Agency Autonomy and Funding Patterns

After examining the agencies and their financial status, it became apparent that what was really significant was the process of adaptation that agencies had made in order to secure funding. For agencies which were dedicated to alternative philosophies, there was concern about funding sources and the impact of having their programs shaped by these sources. Several questions emerged:

1) Could an agency maintain its autonomy and be involved with established funding sources?

2) Was it possible to seek alternate funding sources and be successful?

3) Did funding sources restrict or take over programs?

4) How far was an agency willing to go to meet regulations and policy standards and how much would they let their procedures be changed by the regulations?

The answers to these questions varied, but many of the agencies did demonstrate creative, "financially smart" techniques in managing the dilemma of how to keep themselves afloat financially.

One agency increased its funding stability by tapping less organized sources of funds, such as client fees and small foundation grants. It did not have financial difficulty. In fact, it had an excess of money but no established budget. While the agency was still not considered to be in the group of those agencies with stable funding, it had been in existence for seven years, and was not in danger of having to stop serving people because of a lack of funds.

Another large agency, which had been in existence for six years, had gone through a process of changing from a totally collective consensus model to a

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modified hierarchical type of administrative structure. Along with this trend came a push toward seeking more established and committed funding sources and they agency itself has gone through a process of tightening procedures and policy. This may well be a natural trend and partially in response to changing economic conditions, but it is interesting to note that one quarter of this agency's budget now comes from one large, very organized source.

Another agency had an interesting response to the issues regarding agency autonomy and the influence of funding sources. When discussing administrative structure, the interviewee said, "Most funders require that you don't be a collective, so you'll have co-directors that are responsible for the administration, but the decisions are actually made a a collective staff meeting". It would appear from this statement that it is sometimes necessary to appear less alternative if you wish to continue to be approved by a funding source. In the same interview, the statement was made, "Money can wipe you out, as you know; money can destroy your integrity and independence". This agency was in transition financially and is considering taking a very large amount of money from a government source.

The agencies in the sample showed a trend toward focusing on the reality of financial matters. Several mentioned their survival or future expansion as being dependent upon the amount of funding they would get. There was also a group of six agencies who had developed mechanisms within the structure of their agencies for insuring financial stability. These mechanisms included such things as having a financial advisory committee, regular and aggressive fund raising, or a particular person on the staff whose sole purpose was to write grants or bring in money. Other agencies had lived from hand-to-mouth for so long or depended on a dwindling back-up source that they had to take emergency action to find new sources of funding. In these cases, it appeared that agencies tended to be more vulnerable to focusing their programs in the direction prescribed by the funding sources.

There were six agencies dedicated to alternative philosophies and showed evidence of it in their budgeting techniques. Agencies which managed to maintain alternative philosophies often viewed the area of funding carefully, with consideration given to the implications of accepting funding from particular sources. Generally speaking, it is easier for agencies to maintain autonomy if the variety and number of funding sources is increased and a balance is established regarding the amount of money received from each source. If one source contributes a major percentage of the budget, the agency has less bargaining power. If the agency has money from internal sources, such as steady patterns of donations and regular fund raising, they have more ability to be independent. Also, the most successful agencies used long range planning techniques with an eye to the future and knowledge about where money was becoming available. If grants were scheduled to run out at a certain time, plans were made for balancing the possible loss of that source with new possible sources. It is interesting to note that alternative philosophy oriented agencies in this group tended toward small or medium sized budgets which may also have made it possible to remain more alternative.

Perhaps more important than any of the above techniques was a commitment on the part of the staff that the freedom to maintain their agency according to alternative principles was not going to be affected by the demands of funding sources. If agencies wanted to maintain a collective structure which was not appealing to fundings sources of one type, they would begin efforts to seek funds elsewhere. Often times, dedicated staff and volunteers stated they would work more hours or receive less pay if it was a choice between that or restricting eligibility or reducing services.

Summary and Conclusions

In summary, most of the agencies (12) in the study had stable financial

sources and did not seem to be in financial difficulty. They did not have the "hand-to-mouth" existance that was so typical or characteristic of the agencies of the 1960's. Our impression is that the agencies were more realistic in their approach to funding and quite aware of the potential impact that funding might have on their programs. They seemed to adapt programs to funding sources, or they sought funding from sources which were supportive of their programs. At the same time, six of the agencies did not have an annual budget document, which seems quite unrealistic in today's age of accountability. The lack of a docu-ment did not necessarily mean the agency was unaware of what it needed financial-ly. In fact, one respondent created a budget during the interview. Neverthe-less, this latter group of agencies appeared to give low priority to long range fiscal planning. Only time will tell if they survive.

CHAPTER VIII

GOVERNING STRUCTURE

by

Mark Pierman

This chapter of the research project explores the governing structure
of alternative agencies. The research team was interested in the governing
structure, that is, who set the overall policy for the agency. The govern-
ing structure is important because it is the group that establishes the goals
and overall program direction for the agency. We assumed that the agencies
would have some kind of board and operating set of by-laws, since both are
frequently required to secure non-profit tax status and certain funding.
Thus, we tried to collect data on board size, composition, selection process,
meeting frequency, and activity in order to gain some understanind of the
governing structure and its role in alternative agencies.

Board of Directors

Sixteen of the 19 agencies interviewed had a board of directors and by-
laws, mainly because of the non-profit tax status and certain funding require-
ments. It is interesting to note that the three agencies that had no board
were either embedded in a larger agency and thus were not independent agencies,
or they really didn't need a board because of the nature of the agency.

There was one agency that had a board but did not have a set of by-laws.
The reason for this is that the agency had only been in operation for three
weeks and still in the process of drafting their by-laws.

The size of these particular boards varied among the agencies. The boards
ranged in size from four to 26 members. The average number of members was 11.
For analytical purposed, the agency boards were divided into three groups in
order to make other comparisons: 1) small, from one to five members, 2) me-

dium, from six to 11 members, and 3) large, over 12 members. There were

three small boards, five medium boards and six large board.

The composition of the boards also varied. The boards included staff,

volunteers, consumers (clients), other individuals from the community, or a

combination of these. Five of the boards had staff members on them which is

unusual because boards do not normally have staff as part of the board. In

nine of these agencies the members of the board also provided the services of

the agency.

Board Size and the Selection Process

There seems to be a direct relationship between the size of the board and

its selection process. Small boards tend to use informal processes to select

its members and large boards tend to use a formal process. An informal process

is one that is somewhat loose and no established procedure exists for selecting

members. A formal process is one in which there are existing established pro-

cedures by which someone becomes a board member. Each of the three small boards

used an informal process and five of the six large boards used a formal process.

The five medium boards were split between the two processes.

This relationship would seem to exist because of the necessity to control

the flow of a large number of board members. A large board must establish for-

mal procedures to fill any vacancies and a smaller board would not have as much

need for a formal process. It is much easier to hand-pick three or give members

than 12 or 15.

This relationship may also be an extension of the degree of formalization

that exists in the entire agency because there appears to be a direct relation-

ship between the size of the board and the degree of formalization of the agency.

Agencies with small boards tended to have a lower degree of formalization than

agencies with large boards. None of the agencies with small boards had a high

degree of formalization and none of the agencies with large boards had a low

degree of formalization. Again, the agencies with medium sized boards were

distributed among the three categories of formalization.

One possible explanation for these two findings may be a difference between the professional and personal relationships that exist on these boards. It would seem that the large boards are based more upon formal professional relationships and small boards upon informal personal ones. For a large board these professional relationships are initiated by the formal selection process and then extended throughout the agency with other formalized procedures. A small board, organized on an informal basis, may not find it necessary to extend certain formalized procedures throughout the agency.

Board Size and Board Activity

One of the most interesting findings arises from a comparison of the board size and the activity of the board. For analytical purposes, the activity of the board was categorized as either active or inactive. Our interview included only one question concerning the activity of the board which was whether the board was active or not. Eleven of the 16 agencies reported their board were active and five said their boards were inactive. For the purposes of this comparison, we are only using 14 of these agencies because the size of the board was not determined for two of the agencies.

One might presume that small boards might be more active than large ones because of the dynamics of working with small groups and the informal relationships that exist on small boards. However, the data illustrates that almost the opposite is true. All of the agencies with small boards said their boards were inactive while only two of the agencies with medium and large boards said their boards were inactive.

There are several factors that may contribute to the fact that the larger boards were generally more active than smaller boards. First, a large board allows for a diversity of expertise among the members so that different members can be utilized to perform various tasks for the agency. Second, there are also more members so that the work of the board can be distributed among a variety

of individuals rather than fall on the shoulders of one or two people.

Another factor that may explain the difference in activity is the fact that of the agencies that reported they had active boards, nine in all, eight said their board members also provided services in the agency. Consequently, in addition to their policy-making functions, the board members were also part of the agency's service delivery structure. This pattern of relationship is a departure from the traditional separation of policy-making functions and administrative/service delivery functions.

Board Size and Agency Age

The research team assumed there might be a relationship between the size of the board and the age of the agency, but this was not the case. When the age of the agency was compared to the size of the board, no consistent pattern was evident. However, there does seem to be some relationship between the age of the agency and the type of process it used to select its board. Nine of the 16 agencies in our study used an informal process to select board members. All five of the young agencies - those two years or younger - used an informal process to select board members. In part, this is what one might suspect because young agencies have not had sufficient time to develop formal procedures for board selection. At the same time, the data does not seem to support the assumption that as the organization gets older its process for board selection becomes more formalized since older agencies, those over five years, used both formal and informal processes to select board members.

The research team assumed that the young agencies would have active boards because of the commitment and energy needed to establish the agency. This would be especially true of small boards since they tend to select their members informally. The data shows that three of the five young agencies were inactive, while six of the seven old agencies were active. The discrepancy between young agencies and the lack of board activity might be explained as inexperience on the part of board members, lack of a clearly defined relationship

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between the board and the agency, or a difference between the board activity

and the expectations of the person interviewed, especially if this person was

a key member of the staff.

Frequency of Meetings

The research team explored the frequency of board meetings to discover

what bearing this might have on other aspects of the board. Of the 16 boards,

one met weekly, ten met monthly, two bi-monthly, two quarterly, and one met only

once a year.

One interesting finding is that there is no apparent relationship between

the frequency of meetings and the activity of the board. The boards that met

monthly were generally active (8 of 10), but boards that met bi-monthly or

quarterly were also viewed as active. There was one inactive board that met

weekly. Consequently, there doesn't seem to be any relationship between the

activity of the board and the frequency of their meetings.

Agency Decision-Making Style and the Governing Structure

The decision-making style of the agency should have some effect upon the

aspects of the governing structure. If the board is the body that sets agency

policy and is involved in establishing goals, priorities and programs, then

it should be an active participant in the decision-making process.

The research team compared the decision-making style with different as-

pects of the governing structure such as board size, activity, and frequency of

meetings.

In relation to the board size, agencies with small boards tended to use

either a team or consensus decision-making style, agencies with medium and

large had no consistent style. Two of the agencies with large boards utilized

consensus style which was unexpected. We expected that agencies with large

boards would use either a single or team style because of the difficulty in

achieving any consensus decisions with such a large number of people involved

in the process.

It is interesting to note that of the five agencies that used consensus style of decision-making, two of the boards were inactive. The boards of these agencies were also small. For some reason, the agency utilized a consensus style but did not include the board in those decisions. This would account for the inactivity of the board.

Conclusions

From the data on the governing structure the research team cannot conclude that there is a governing structure typical of alternative agencies, but some common characteristics of these agencies emerged from our exploration.

The agencies with large boards tended to have a formal selection process, were mostly active, and generally had a higher degree of formalization. On the other hand, agencies with small boards tended to have an informal selection process, were inactive, generally had a low degree of formalization, and were mostly young agencies.

One characteristic shared by these agencies was their decision-making style. They used either a team or consensus style.

The agencies with medium-size boards shared characteristics of the agencies with both small and large boards but didn't exhibit any of their own. They had both formal and informal selection processes and were evenly distributed among degrees of formalization and agency age. The reason they didn't possess any unique characteristics may be due to the fact that their board size ranged from borderline small to boarderline large.

CHAPTER IX

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE, DECISION

MAKING STRUCTURE AND SEX OF

THE ADMINISTRATOR

by

Susan K. Rademacher

The administrative structure, the decision making style and the sex of the administrator all are important variables that define how an agency functions internally and in its environment. When we chose to look at alternative agencies we expected to find alternative ways of administration and decision making. Instead, we found that newer agencies are choosing the more traditional ways of doing these tasks.

Perhaps the only alternative concept we found was in the number of women in administrative positions. About 67% of the agencies had women administrators, this is far greater than the number in the general population.

How these 19 programs were set up as defined by their formal organizational charts is the basis for what we called their administrative structure. This structure greatly influences how information and resources within the agency flow as well as how the agency functions within the rest of the community.

Decision making was another important aspect of internal and external interfacing, and differs from the formal administrative structure in that it defines how decisions are really made versus who has the formal power in their job description.

What we did find was a preponderance of boards of directors with high degrees of formalization, perhaps necessary to go after the grant moneys necessary for financial stability. We also found most administrators chosing to listen, through formal and informal channels, to input of information from their staffs. This is perhaps the legacy that the alternative movement of the 1960's has

left to aid the agencies of the 1980's.

Administrative Structure

We divided the agencies into three groups according to their administrative structure. We determined the three classifications by studying the formal organization charts we received during the interview process as well as the self report answers to questions at that time. The terms that were chosen were to closely reflect the actual style of administration the agency practiced. They were; benevolent dictators, boards of directors and collectives.

The agencies with benevolent dictators had a single person who was responsible for the administration of the agency. These persons varied in their style but did perform the "buck stops here" role. They ranged from a doctor in charge of a pain control center to the woman founder of an organization to aid single adults with lifestyle problems. We found four agencies of this type.

The majority of the agencies chose the traditional board of directors to perform this administrative role of bottom line decision making. These boards varied in style, size, composition and levels of involvement but all were legally responsible for the administrative decisions of their agencies. The agencies with boards ranged from a program to aid teenage runaways, to a battered women's program,to a mental health center to a crisis line. We found 12 agencies which had boards of directors.

Finally, we found that the remaining agencies were three collectives. Administration was done through group meetings where all members had an equal voice in the administrative process. We had expected that most of our alternative agencies would fall into this style that was so popular in the 1960's but we found that the three agencies were a small collective for counseling cancer patients, a counseling center for gay men and women, and a men's resource center.

Decision Making Structures

Decision making in the alternative agencies we studied was divided into

three categories. This division was made based upon information derived from
agency response to a series of three questions regarding financial, program
policy and client related problems. These three categories of decision making
were; single power, single power with team input and consensus.

Three agencies reported that a single power was responsible for decision
making in their agencies. In these cases the input of agency staff was not
requested for decisions regarding any of the problem areas we inquired about
in our interviews. Of these agencies, two had benevolent dictators and one had
a board of directors.

Agencies that reported that team input was sought prior to decision making
were in the majority. There were ten agencies in this category with two having
benevolent dictators and eight having boards of directors. Team input was
sought from administrators of two socialization programs for the chronically
mentally ill, two programs serving quadraplegics, two programs for victims of
abuse, and a program for runaway teenagers, just to mention a few.

Six agencies used consensus decision making. This means that decisions
were reached after the long process of discussion and compromise that the en-
tire group could agree upon. Of these agencies three were the collectives and
three had boards of directors. All three of those with boards of directors
were in the health care field.

Sex of the Administrator

We found in our study of alternative agencies a much higher proportion of
women administrators, 11 out of the 19 agencies studied, than we had expected
to find based on the number of women in administration. The remaining agencies
were administered in seven instances by men and one by a man/woman team.

Their administrative style varied. One man and three women were benevolent
dictators. Five men and seven women had boards of directors and the remaining,
man - woman and team all administered collectives.

The decision making structure also varied. Three of the women were the

the only ones to use single power decision making. Two of these women were
benevolent dictators and one headed a board of directors. The majority of the
men chose team input, six out of the seven, while only four women chose this
mode. Consensus decision making was the style of the remaining four females,
one male and the one team.

The women chose much more varied styles of both administration and de-
cision making than the men who seemed to cluster in the traditional pattern of
having boards of directors and using team input.

Agency Age in Relation to These Variables

The agencies were divided into three groups, new agencies (0 to 2 years),
middle aged agencies (2 to 5 years), and old agencies (over 5 years) accord-
ing to the length of time they had been in operation. We found five new
agencies, six middle aged agencies and eight older agencies.

The administrative style chosen by the majority of the new agencies was
the traditional board of directors in four of the five cases. The remaining
new agency had a benevolent dictator as administrator.

The majority (four of six) of the middle aged agencies also had boards
of directors. The remaining two agencies were equally divided between one
benevolent dictatorship and one collective.

The older agencies also had four agencies chosing boards of directors.
The reamining four were also divided equally with tow benevolent dictators
and two collectives.

The dominant pattern, regardless of age was the board of directors, which
was evenly distributed across age lines. the other interesting pattern to note
was that no new agency was a collective. All three collectives were middle
aged or older.

The decision making structure had a similar distribution. Only one of
the new agencies had consensus decision making. One also had single power
decision making while the majority (three of the five) chose team input as
their style.

The middle aged agencies had a similar clustering with four of the seven choosing team input with one single power decision maker and two choosing consensus decision making.

The older agencies showed equal division between team input and consensus with three of the seven falling into each group. The remaining older agency had a single power decision maker.

It is, once again, the pattern of the middle aged and older agencies choosing the more alternative style of consensus decision making while the majority of all agencies chose team input. Perhaps the idealistic days of "one man, one vote" have given way to the realistic days of decision making with input.

The age of the agencies we studied also had some affect on whether the administrator was a man or a woman. The five new agencies were headed by women in three cases and men in two. The middle aged agencies were administered by four men and two women. While the remaining eight older agencies had only one man, with six women and the team as administrators. Over half of the women administrators (six of the eleven) headed the eight older agencies, while the majority of the men administered new or middle aged agencies.

Formalization in Relation to These Variables

Formalization has been defined by 11 attributes. Agencies were divided into three groups by the number of attributes they possessed. The five agencies with a low degree of formalization possessed 0 to 3 of these attributes, the eight agencies with medium degrees of formalization possessed four to six, and the six with high degrees of formalization possessed seven to 11.

Administration was an important factor in the degree of formalization. Of the agencies with low formalization, three were benevolent dictators, one had a board of directors and one was a collective.Of those with medium degrees of formalization, six had boards of directors, and two were collectives. The majority of those with high degrees of formalization had boards of directors (five of the six) and the remaining one was a benevolent dictator. This

of directors require medium to high degrees of formalization.

Decision making structure had a similar effect on formalization. Three of the agencies with team input had low degrees of formalization with the remaining two equally divided between a single power and consensus decision making styles. The medium degree of formalization formed a pyramid with one agency having a single power decision making structure, three with team input and four with consensus decision making. The group with the highest degree of formalization was similar to the one with the lowest degree with one agency having a single power decision making structure and four with team input while the remaining one had consensus decision making.

The sex of the administrator seemed to have little or no effect on the degree of formalization with the ratio pattern of six males to 11 females following throughout the groups. Approximately one third of each group had a male administrator and two-thirds had women.

Financial Stability in Relationship to These Variables

In alternative agencies money is often the critical survival issued. Financial stability is the deciding factor in the future of these programs. About one-third of the agencies we studied had unstable budgets.

Administrative structure seemed to have an affect on budget stability. Fifty percent of the benevolent dictatorships had unstable budets, while 25% of the agencies with boards of directors and 33% of the collectives also fell into this group. This group of seven agencies, with their various styles of administration, represent a non-traditional approach to service delivery in a time when even traditional approaches to social services are coming under the ax. It is no wonder that these are also fairing poorly.

The decision making style seemed to have no effect on budget stability.

The sex of the administrator did seem to show an effect with male administrators accounting for four of the financially unstable and

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three of the financially stable programs. The women admin-
istrators did somewhat better with eight financially stable programs and three
unstable ones, with the remaining financially stable programs administered by
the team. I, being a woman, would like to believe that this is because women
are better at making ends meet but do not have the data to prove this.

Staff Size in Relation to These Variables

Staff size was defined by the number of combined total hours of paid and
volunteer staffs. This was distributed into three groups; six small agencies
with a total of 0 to 500 hours per month, seven medium sized agencies with a
total of 501 to 1,250 hours per month, and six large agencies with a total of
more than 1,250 hours per month.

The only variable that staff size seemed to effect in any degree was ad-
ministrative structure. No collective had a large staff. The majority of
the agencies (five of the six) were administered by boards of directors. The
majority of the medium sized agencies also had boards of directors (four of
the seven), while two had benevolent dictatorships and the remaining one was
a collective. Half of the small agencies (three of the six) had boards while
two were collectives and one was a benevolent dictator.

Conclusions

The administrative structure, decision making style and sex of the admin-
istrator all have an effect on analyzing how an agency functions, internally
and externally. By looking at these structures and how they interact with each
other and the factors of age, formalization, financial stability, and staff size,
we have been able to show some of the ways these variables interface within
alternative agencies.

LINKAGE PATTERNS

by

Mike Echols

Introduction

In looking at the extent to which each agency had established inter-agency linkages, we were primarily concerned with focusing on how each coordinated their activities with others in the area. Before we move into the specifics of this chapter, it is important to define what we mean by "linkage" or "linkage mechanism". We are defining it as "an exchange relationship that facilitates the coordination of two or more organization" (Lauffer, 1978, pp. 187-8). We are concerned with linkage patterns at the operational level, that is, where administrative or programmatic activities occur.

The importance of forming linkages with other agencies is clear. Without it, fragmentation of services at the area level occurs, which is problematic in several ways. These include: the duplication of some services; the underuse of others; the unavailability of continuous care. Some services reach only those populations which have little need for them, leaving other large segments unserved. Moreover, the uncoordinated nature of the service system makes it all the more difficult to spot gaps in services (Lauffer, 1978, p. 188).

Increasing the linkages between providers then, can benfit both agencies and their consumers through increasing the availability of services, their accessibility to particular populations, their effectiveness and efficienty, and their responsiveness and accountability to both other agencies and outsiders (such as funders) in the community (Lauffer; 178, p. 222).

We made several assumptions about alternative agencies. Because we saw alternative agencies as "growth oriented", we assumed that the majority would provide some sort of educational services to the public to aid in their per-

sonal growth. Because we saw these agencies as providing services to popula-
tions not served by traditional agencies, we assumed that they would build a
support community of (link up with) other similar agencies for maintaining
strength to continue providing services, and strongly advocate for their clients
(and not themselves as an agency) who found no support in traditional agencies.
A strong emphasis then, would be placed on particular strengths of linkage as
mentioned above, namely "increasing the availability of services (and) their
accessability to particular populations". Other lesser assumptions were also
made which will be discussed in the findings.

In analyzing each agency's linkage structure, we broke it down into five
different sections: 1) the referral system; 2) the networking done with other
agencies (networking refers here to the amount of interaction between agencies
based on service delivery); 3) the difficulties in linkages with other agen-
cies; 4) advocacy as a function of the agency; and 5) what services are
used to inform people of the services offered. We looked at each section in-
dividually and used the categories of age of the agency, formalization and
budget stability, as described in the methodology in determing our findings
in this chapter.

Referral System

In looking at alternative agencies, we felt that the referral system
they used was an important facet in their operation of services. Thus, we
tried to determine if they had a referral list of other agencies on hand, how
formalized their referral system was, whether their referrals came mainly
from individual clients or from other agencies, and how referrals to other
agencies were handled.

First, of the 47% (9 of 19) of the agencies that did have a referral
list, 67% (6) of these were older agencies, that is five years or older,
while 11% (1) of the younger ones, two years or younger, had one. With re-
spect to degree of formalization of the agencies, 55% (5) of those agencies

that were seen to be "highly formalized" did have a referral list, while only 11% (1) of the "least formalized" agencies did. Also, with respect to the stability of the agency, we found that 67% (6) of those agencies that did have a referral list had "stable budgets", while 33% (3) of those who had "unstable budgets" did.

In looking at how formalized their referral system was, we found that of the agencies who did have formalized referral systems, 55% (5) of them were "older" ones and 11% (1) of them were "younger". Also, 44% (4) of those who had formalized referral systems were "highly formalized", while 22% (2) of those were "least formalized". Finally, 89% (8) of those same agencies had "stable budgets", while 11% (1) of them had "unstable budgets".

With respect to how agencies receive their referrals, 63% (12 of 19) of them came from other agencies instead of clients doings so on their own. Of this percentage, 75% (9) of them had "stable budgets".

In looking at how referrals to other agencies were handled, all but two of them (89%) said they used the phone as the primary means of contact, while 57% (11) of them listed "personal contacts" as a form of interagency communication when transferring clients. Of those who use the phone, 41% (7) of them are "older" agencies, while 23% (4) were "younger". Similarly, of those who use personal contacts, 45% (5) of them are "older" agencies, while 18% (2) of them are "younger". Thus, the pattern that seems to emerge is that the older, more formalized, more stable agencies tend to have and utilize a formal referral system.

Networking

A good consistent networking system is often associated with alternative agencies and we were interested in seeing who these agencies networked with. Consequently, we tried to determine to what extent the agencies networked with other similar agencies, and if their linkages tended to be with agencies that were also alternative, traditional, or some mixture of the two. To begin with,

we assumed that these agencies would tend to network with other alternative agencies. However, only 42% (8 of 19) of the agencies networked with similar agencies. Of this percentage, only 50% (4) were "older" agencies, and 25% (2) of them were "younger" ones. Thus, the data did not support our assumption.

In looking at whether the agencies tended to link their services with alternative or traditional ones (or a mixture), only one of the 19 agencies linked solely with other alternative agencies. Fifty-three percent (10) linked solely with traditional ones, and 42% (8) of them linked with both. Of the 53% who linked with traditional agencies, 50% (5) of them were "older" agencies, while 20% (2) were "younger" ones. Of these same agencies, 70% (7) had "stable budgets". The data seemed to support our assumption that the older and more financially stable agencies tended to link with traditional agencies, but did not support the assumption that these agencies would most often link their services with other alternative agencies.

Linkage Difficulties

Besides looking at which agencies they tended to link with, we were interested in knowing whether or not they had difficulties with linkage patterns both in the past and currently. We assumed that over the years difficulties in establishing and maintaining linkages would decrease, and that the younger agencies would have more difficulties currently than the older ones.

First of all, we found that there was no change in the number of agencies which experienced difficulties in the past as compared to the present. In both cases, 47% (9) of them felt there were difficulties in both the past and the present. Also, 67% (6) of those experiencing difficulties in both time frames were "older" agencies. There was a change, however in the experiencing of difficulties as related to "formalization" of the agency and "stability of the budget". While 44% (4) of those "highly formalized" agencies experienced past linkage difficulties, 33% (3) of them did so in the present. Likewise,

while 67% (6) of the "financially stable" agencies experienced past difficulties, 55% (5) of them perceived difficulties in the present. While our data then, does not support the assumption that there will be less linkage difficulties over time either across the board or for older agencies, it does show that the more formalized and financially stable agencies have experienced less difficulties over time.

Advocacy

The concept of advocacy is frequently associated with the services alternative agencies provide. Consequently, we tried to determine if advocacy was a function of the agencies, who the agency advocated for and how important a function advocacy was to the agency. We were also interested in the extent to which agencies performed "educational" functions; that is, informing the general public of the problems the agency is dealing with or the problems of certain populations.

All but one of the agencies said that advocacy was a function of their organization. Most (15 of 19) said they advocated "for the client". It is important to note however, that only six agencies (32%) reported they advocated for the client only. In other words, although the vast majority said that advocacy was a function of their agency, they viewed advocacy both in terms of client advocacy and agency or professional advocacy. We assumed that the more financially stable the agency, the more they wouldn't feel the need to primarily advocate for their own profession but instead would do so for their clients. Of this percentage, 67% (10) were "financially stable"; also, 47% (7) of this same grouping were "older" agencies.

While 58% (11) of the agencies said that advocacy was a "very important" aspect of their service delivery, 16% (3) said it was of "minimal" importance. We saw no clear correlations between any of the categories used though, or the importance of advocacy to the agency.

Of the 42% (8) of the agencies who said they performed educational ser-

vices, 63% (5) of them were "older" agencies, compared with 13% (1) of the "newer" ones who did so. Thus, the older agencies tended to do more outreach in terms of educating the public about their problems and populations served.

Services Used to Inform Public

All agencies use certain techniques for informing the public about their services. We assumed that with alternative agencies, certain informal means would be used, along with a wide variety of unique and creative forms.

First, 63% (12) of the agencies listed "word of mouth" as the most frequently used method of informing the public. The next most frequently used method was passing out pamphlets and brochures--42% (8) of the agencies did this. After that, there were no clear groupings among the 17 different methods mentioned. The interesting thing to note is the wide variety of methods the agencies used to inform the public. Among them were: posters/flyers; word of mouth; promotional events; public service announcements; newspapers (public and private); educational talks; phone/service directories; other organizations; churches/schools; pamphlets/brochures; published articles; volunteering at other agencies; annual reports; community fairs; matchbooks/business cards; and referral banks. Thus, the data supported our assumptions that informal means (work of mouth) and many unique forms were used to inform the public of services.

Conclusions

Several preliminary conclusions can be deduced from the findings presented in this chapter.

The first has to do with linkage patterns of the agencies studied. We had assumed that they would tend to link services with other similar alternative agencies. Our data shows, however, that instead they more frequently link with traditional type agencies. This could be attributed to several reasons: 1) that

often they are the only agency in the area which offers the service they do; or 2) there is a current trend of alternative agencies to adapt to the situation and establish ties with the more traditional agencies both for exposure in and acceptance by the community they are a part of. Thus, while they do tend to build a support community with other agencies, it is not solely with similar alternative ones.

The second major assumption has to do with client advocacy. We assumed that alternative agencies would most often advocate for clients, and less often for their agency/profession. Our data shows, however that this is not the case. Only about one-third of the agencies studied advocated for their clients only, while about two-thirds mentioned advocating for their own agency. Thus, while they tend to strongly advocate for their clients, they also strongly advocate their own services--perhaps as a means to continue their own survival, and thus provide needed services to these populations not able to receive them alsewhere.

FEEDBACK STRUCTURES: HOW ACCOUNTABLE ARE THESE AGENCIES?

by

Sara Weisberg

Introduction

One of the more important influences on human service organizations in the past two decades has been the demand for increased accountability. The abuses witnessed in many levels of government have impacted the taxpayer's willingness to fund programs and forced administrators to develop systems for proving their worth, even in the social services, where accurate measurement is difficult. Sze and Hopps (1974, p. 1) comment:

> In the past it was assumed that any program with the stated purpose of helping people and solving human problems necessarily had great social value and therefore should be supported without question. This assumption is no longer accepted without question. Social programming now exists within a societal framework highly influenced by technological development and the old assumptions and beliefs come under scrutiny of an educated, scientifically sophisticated citizenry. As a result the human services are entering a new era - the age of accountability.

We attempted to obtain information about evaluation, monitoring and grievance procedures from our sample of 19 agencies, to determine how they fit in with this trend. These three aspects constituted the ingredients of what we termed "Feedback Structures" and we asked the following questions:

How do you obtain feedback about your program?

How much participation is there from clients? Staff? General Public?

Is there a Grievance Procedure for clients? For staff?

How is your program monitored?

How is your program evaluated:

How often?

We defined monitoring as a way of determining if any agency was accomplishing the tasks, programs, etc., that it has set out for itself. We defined evalua-

tion as a way of determining if what they are doing is effective, i.e., are
the agency's goals being fulfilled.

The approach of this chapter will be to review the results of the above
questions and evaluate them in terms of other defining characteristics of
these agencies (such as age). Then, some conclusions about the nature of
evaluation, monitoring and grievance will be drawn.

Monitoring and Evaluation

First, it is important to explain that, although interviewers attempted
to explain our working definitions of monitoring and evaluation to interviewees,
answers given indicate that five agencies did not clearly differentiate between
monitoring and evaluation. In several cases, the same answers were given for
both questions. For example, one agency responded to the question about moni-
toring: "There have been three surveys conducted in six years to determine
the percentage of success at the center." They gave the same answer for the
evaluation question. By our definition, this would have been more properly
denoted evaluation.

As one can see in the chart below, we differentiated between internal
and external monitoring and evaluation. This followed from the recognition
that in many cases these procedures were required and/or performed by an

CHART 11.1

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MONITORING/EVALUATION

	Internal	External	Only Internal	Only External	Both	Neither
MONITORING	10	9	6	7	4	2
EVALUATION	7	9	6	8	1	4
EITHER EVALUATION OR MONITORING	11	12	6	7	5	1

outside funding agency. This distinction will be used throughout the review
of findings. We will also utilize Key, et. al.'s (1979, pp. 159-173) division
of evaluation into "soft-line approaches" and "hard-line approaches" to help

describe our findings.

Hard-line approaches are those which assume an exact definition of evaluation and a set of specific procedures to be used, these being procedures and techniques of a rational and objective kind. Those using these types of approaches see evaluation as a substantial and systematic activity.

Soft-line approaches are characterized by a general or vague definition of evaluation with few specific procedures, where such procedures as exist are subjective and allow for opinion, and where evaluation is considered an unsystematic and even marginal activity open to the partial or eclectic application of various techniques. (Key, et. al., 1979, p. 160.)

These approaches represent opposite ends of a continuum and it cannot be assumed that one is better than the other. Obviously, however, in this age of accountability, even the social services are moving more toward hard-line approaches, which borrow methods from commerce and industry, and involve a more consistent compilation of objective data. Hard-line approaches include goal models in which programs are evaluated according to preset goals and objectives. Soft-line approaches include impressionist inquiry and opinion surveys. A questionnaire filled out by clients would be included in soft-line approaches.

Some form of informal feedback was received from clients, staff, other agencies, and the general public by all our agencies except one. In most cases, this consisted of comments or calls unsystematically solicited and/or received. As such, this does not appear to represent a situation much different from that found in any existing public agency, and does not really qualify as a monitoring/evaluation procedure. It would have been interesting to ask what value was placed on this information by our agencies. One agency did mention that they solicited comments from clients about problems and solutions. Twelve of the 19 agencies stressed that they solicited and/or received a high level of input from clients.

Internal monitoring in our 19 agencies was characterized by fairly informal arrangements. Two agencies did report calculating data. Seven reported that staff monitored each other or the board monitored activities. Since many

of these agencies may not even prepare reports on these activities, they definitely fall on the soft-line end of the continuum. One could even venture to argue that this type of informal monitoring goes on naturally in any agency. Nine agencies did not report any internal monitoring efforts.

Internal evaluation, again, involved the use of soft-line approaches, such as evaluation forms and surveys done on an irregular basis (six cases). One agency reported that the board evaluated the program and specifics were not elicited. Ten agencies indicated that they had no internal evaluation procedures.

External evaluation and monitoring information most clearly indicates problems in differentiating between the two. For example, one agency stated it was evaluated and monitored for accreditation and certification but gave no further explanation. In some cases, it appeared that the agency was not familiar enough with what is done to draw a distinction. In other instances, our interviewers failed to probe for additional information. Seven agencies did say that they were monitored and evaluated by an external source. Three specified that they were monitored or evaluated but not both.

Although one could assume that outside, more organized funding sources such as ACTION (VISTA), CETA, and HUD, are employing a more hard-line approach, the information we obtained was not sufficiently descriptive to make a valid judgement. Three agencies specified that they fill out periodic reports and one agency reported that United Way checks the progress they have made on their goals.

Overall, only five agencies reported both internal and external evaluation and monitoring. Six agencies reported only internal monitoring/evaluation and seven related only external events. One agency had not internal or external monitoring or evaluation; however, this agency is only a few months old.

Grievance Procedures

In reviewing the findings on grievance procedures, we assumed a broad definition of grievance such as the one presented by Beach (1975, p. 619): "A grievance is any dissatisfaction or feeling of injustice in connection with one's employment situation that is brought to the attention of management." We also included "handling issues on an interpersonal basis", even if no specific mention was made of bringing something to the attention of management, as a grievance procedure. (Many of our agencies are so small that the staff consist of a director and one other person.)

Only one agency did not report some kind of informal staff grievance arrangement. In this agency, volunteer staff have little or not contact with each other. The results from others can be summarized as follows: two reported the use of residential meetings; two reported the use of radical therapy; six said staff have access to the board or director; two mentioned staff meetings; and six described handling issues on an interpersonal level.

Only four agencies reported the use of personnel policies which dictated grievance procedures. We defined these as formal staff grievance procedures. This led us to question the lack of formalized procedures. Beach (1975, p. 619) suggests the following reasons for developing formal grievance procedures: (1) first-line supervisors may not handle complaints fairly; (2) they bring employee problems to the attention of high management; (3) they legitimize employee complaints so employees do not have to feel as if they are going over their boss' head. It seems that most of our agencies are so small that these reasons do not apply. A direct line to the director or the board automatically exists. It is interesting to note that the three agencies that had policies had only interpersonal means of handling grievances on the informal level. Perhaps, they found the policies more necessary. On the other hand, it was an older, more stable, well-funded agency which had both a policy and well developed informal structures. The lack of formal policies may relate to inadequate resources in terms of time, money, and staff to plan and imple-

ment such procedures.

There was a greater range of alternatives for informal client grievance procedures. For example, one agency reported using contracts; two teach skills, and five might be described as "open to input". What is probably more significant is that three agencies reported no informal client grievance procedures, and, overall, there were less well-developed procedures for clients than for staff. Only three agencies related agency policies directing client grievance procedures which we designated as formal client grievance procedures. Again, it was our most formalized, oldest and most stable agency which reported use of more well-developed informal grievance structures and a policy. They described using house meetings, facilitators, advocates, and allowing clients access to records, in addition to a specific written procedure.

Feedback Structures and Other Agency Characteristics

With the exception of the agency mentioned above, there appeared to be no consistent correlation between age and feedback structures. The youngest agency did report the least well-developed structures. In general, it seemed that more well-developed structures were associated with large budgets, with the exception of one, young, well-funded agency which was however, in the process of developing many of its procedures. There was some indication that agencies with more stable budgets have more well-developed procedures. When we looked at only monitoring and evaluation, there was no strong correlation with funding pattern, although more agencies with only internal procedures have unstable budgets. There were no agencies with large (over $100,000) budgets who did only internal monitoring/evaluation. In addition, those reporting only internal processes had the least staff. Five of the six have two or fewer FTE's. To a great extent, many of these trends may simple reflect the fact that many of the agencies with large, stable funding have external funding in the form of contracts, grants, and United Way monies which

necessitate external evaluation and provide larger staffs.

In general, there was no consistent correlation between feedback struc-
tures and administrative structure or decision making style. Feedback struc-
tures tended to be less formalized than other agency procedures and policies.

Conclusions

We distinguished between internal and external monitoring and evaluation
procedures, realizing that in many agencies these procedures were dictated by
outside agencies. We found that only five agencies had both internal and ex-
ternal forms. Six agencies reported only internal monitoring and/or evalua-
tion and seven agencies were only monitored or evaluated by external agencies.
We found there was some correlation between larger staffs, stable funding,
larger budgets and external procedures. It has been suggested that these
correlations may be explained by the presence of outside funding which dic-
tates procedures as well as provides resources. A soft-line/hard-line distinc-
tion has been used to describe procedures found in these agencies. Internal
procedures were of a soft-line nature. There were indications that external
procedures were of a more hard-line nature, but more information would be
needed to make a sound judgement.

In addition, it would have, perhaps, been interesting to determine how
agencies react to these evaluations. Key, et. al. (1979, p. 161) suggest:
"A fundamental problem with applying these evaluative approaches located at
the hard-line end of the continuum is that they are informed by concepts from
commerce, industry, and science which do not really fit the dynamics of so-
cial activism." Deeper probing might have indicated whether our agencies
saw these evaluations as problemmatic. Indeed, this idea may help explain
the absence of hard-line evaluations in general in these agencies. Shane and
Oliver (1978, p. 617) have suggested that alternative agencies hold themselves
accountable to the consumer and the collective and not to the taxpayer and ad-
ministrators. All of our agencies received client feedback and 12 of the 19

stressed that they receive and/or solicit a high level of client feedback. The lack of objective procedures and techniques which are systematically employed may simply reflect a lack of staff time and resources.

We found that most of the agencies relied on informal staff grievance procedures. We have suggested that the small size of the agencies may have made the use of formalized procedures unnecessary. In most cases, "management" is synonomous with or just a step above line staff. On the other hand, we found a surprising lack of informal and formal client grievance procedures. It seems that this information must be taken in light of the fact that these same agencies report high levels of client feedback. Thus, it is difficult to draw conclusions. Lack of grievance procedures may very well indicate client satisfaction with the services offered, or it may indicate that these services are not available elsewhere and clients cannot afford to question what is offered. The lack of grievance procedures may, again, simply reflect a lack of resources to allow for planning and implementation.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSIONS

by

Carolyn Curnane
Richard Ono
Sarah Weisberg

During the late 1960's and early 1970's, innovative services were de-

veloped to respond to needs, especially of the young, which were not being

addressed by existing traditional agencies. Much of the literature about

these alternative services suggests that they were conceived with the energy

displaced by the civil rights movement. Moreover, they were part of a gen-

eral countercultural movement in this country and tended to reflect the op-

timism, romanticism, and informality of that era. Gordon (1978, p. 387)

comments:

> The early alternative services--hotlines, houses for runaways, free
> clinics, drop-in centers--were all over-whelmingly youth services. They
> were created in response to the needs of the thousands of young people
> who rushed to join the burgeoning counterculture of the late 1960's.
> Antibureaucratic, nonjudgemental, imaginative, and proteam, these ser-
> vices were permeated by the enthusiasm and optimism of their young
> clients. New people were added to the staff each day; new programs
> blossomed each month. No problem seemed insurmountable. With enough
> good vibes the bad trip turned good, a home for a teenager would ma-
> terialize, money would come somehow from somewhere.

The political and social trends operating in 1981 are considerably diff-

erent. A wave of conservatism is rapidly replacing the liberalism so preve-

lant a decade ago. We set out to study alternative agencies using the follow-

ing definition.

> An alternative agency can be differentiated from the traditional
> agency by the programs they provide, population served and/or me-
> thods used in that they provide services not otherwise available or
> acceptable to their clients.

Consistent with current trends, the agencies we studied appeared to be more

formalized and structured. Although they have some characteristics which

make them distinct from traditional agencies, they seem to be much more like traditional agencies than those which existed in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Likewise, their characteristics differ from those attributed to alternative agencies in much of the literature.

Gordon (1978) emphasized that these alternative agencies were founded in direct response to the needs of disaffected young persons. We found that 13 of the 19 agencies studied were started as a result of a personal cause of one or a few individuals. While these causes, in many cases, reflected social trends and/or emerging needs, the energy seems to have come from cause-oriented individuals rather than from a more general movement. On the other hand, these agencies, by and large, were not developed through rational community planning efforts characteristic of more established agencies and government bodies. For example, one of our agencies, a living center for quadraplegics, was developed through efforts led by a man who is himself a quadraplegic. While, in a sense, he was addressing the needs of many physically disabled persons who were searching for workable living situations, no needs assessment was performed and other solutions were not really considered. Instead, this man set about realizing his dream of a living center for quadraplegics.

Available literature gives somewhat of a mixed picture of the nature of the staff in alternative agencies. Galper (1976, p. 248) suggest that many of these agencies were founded by radical professionals who hoped to create a more responsive social welfare system. Gordon (1978, p. 379) found that professionals were used mainly as consultants, trainers, though not necessarily professional staff, providing services. Thirteen of the 19 agencies, however, were headed by professionals. Our agencies relied more on paid staff than on volunteers, although volunteers continue to fulfill important roles; generally, they are given specific training in how to perform these roles.

Since early alternative agencies were developed to provide services because of the unresponsiveness of the traditional agencies, we assumed that any linkage of services would be with other similar alternative agencies. How-

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ever, the data from this study indicates that they more frequently link with traditional agencies. In some cases this phenomena may only indicate that the agencies are one of a kind and there is no other similar alternative agency to link its service with. Nevertheless, there seems to be little indication of the friction spoken of by Baldwin (1975, p. 738). He indicates however, that these differences appear to diminish as these agencies become more established and as short term therapies such as crisis intervention are more accepted. This may also help to explain our findings.

Our data on decision making indicates the more traditional nature of the agencies. Jaffe (1973, p. 209) suggests:

> The crucial difference between an alternative service and more traditional organizations with similar dilemmas stems from the nature of the group process for resolving issues. The traditional solution is for the directors to institute a set of structures and procedures which define and set norms for services and the work of individuals. An alternative group prefers to work out issues in a small group process, with confrontation and negotiation across all levels and without the creation of perpetually binding limits and structures.

Some of the agencies in this study continued to use a form of collective decision making. Many, however, have a more formal, hierarchical decision making structure. We did find, however, that these agencies have refrained from instituting a formalized grievance procedure. This may relate more to size than their philosophy. Some do continue to use radical therapy and small groups to resolve issues. Furthermore, we found little evidence to support Gordon's (1978, p. 380) position that clients frequently particpate as peer counselors and decision makers. The majority of decisions are made by staff, the director, or the board of directors.

Another characteristic of early alternative agencies was strong client advocacy. This appeared to be one of the major functions of the early agencies whose clients developed difficulties when dealing with traditional agencies. While we found that most of our agencies provide advocacy for their clients, two-thirds of our agencies also mentioned advocating for their agency. Thus, there seems to be some indication that these agencies must concern themselves

with their own survival as well as client issues.

When looking at evaluation procedures, it was found that the agencies in this study were fairly unsophisticated in their understanding and use of this tool. By and large, they depended on very informal procedures. This is probably not an unexpected finding, given that social services are just beginning to develop accountability systems. The agencies seemed to be a few steps behind traditional agencies, ostensibly more handicapped by small staffs and limited resources. On the other hand, they did tend to place a high value on client feedback and there was some indication that they continued to hold themselves accountable to the consumer rather than to the administrator or taxpayer.

Nonetheless, on-going funding is crucial to these agencies. Gordon found that alternative agencies have financial difficulties:

> The desire to work with whoever comes to them regardless of economic compensation; their attempts to provide comprehensive preventive and often unreimbursed services; their unwillingness to take funds which restrict their work with clients; the complexity of federal, state, and local funding procedures; and the general reluctance of many agencies to fund service programs that are neigher certified by a professional establishment nor proved in "scientific terms" all conspire to keep most alternative services chronically underfunded.

The majority of agencies in our study, however, were financially stable; most having developed several funding sources. They also appear to have developed a degree of expertise in dealing with government funding, as well as creativity in developing other sources. The fact that many also charge private fees may indicate they place a higher value on their services or are more realistic about their need for money. On the other hand, we did find that six of our agencies still strive to maintain a measure of autonomy and alternative goals by limiting the funds taken from any one source and through fundraising and donations.

Funding was the one area in which our agencies mentioned long range planning. This will, no doubt, become increasingly important as government funds decrease. It is interesting to note that in a few of the agencies studied,

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there appears to be a trend toward entrepreneurship. For example, one agency hopes to obtain future revenues from operating a roommate matching service. In other ways, these agencies evinced a lack of long range plans, again, probably reflecting their lack of staff and resources. It is important to note, however, that these agencies have adapted to changing times. This process of adaptation has involved developing new funding sources, governing structures, serving new populations, modifying programs, and chaning location. Most, however, have not changed their original goals.

In conclusion, we seem to have detected a trend toward conservative operating procedures in the area of decision making, staffing, evaluation, advocacy, and linkage. In addition, we have noted that these agencies appear to develop less in response to needs and to be products of causes furthered by certain highly motivated individuals. We have suggested that this may be in line with the current political and social trends. Furthermore, we found these agencies are more financially stable than we had assumed or than was predicted by the literature. We have mentioned, however, that this has, for many, involved a process of adaptation.

It should be mentioned that this very process was only looked upon at a single point in time. For this reason, we would like to recommend that another study be conducted which investigates agencies who fail to survive. This would give a more complete picture and, perhaps, indicate if more alternative (less structured) agencies have shorter life spans. We found cases in which agencies had just recently closed their doors and thus could not be included in our study. In addition, it should be noted that there was one agency that refused to participate in this study and a few that could not be reached. These agencies may have biased our findings slightly toward more structured traditional agencies. Nonetheless, a trend does seem indicated. Also, some very young agencies were studied (one less than two months old) whose characteristics were very much in line with this trend toward a more conservative approach.

Thus alternative agencies examined in this study do in fact possess

many of the characteristics of their forebearers, namely, offering services

which are not provided by more traditional agencies. Remaining relatively

small in size, the alternative agency still remains responsive to their client's

needs with some offering assistance 24 hours a day. Much of the "anti-

establishment" feelings of the early alternative agencies are no longer pre-

sent in the majority of the agencies examined in this study. Even though to-

day's alternative agencies have become more traditional in their administra-

tive structure, staffing patterns and financial resources, their pioneering

efforts to offer and deliver alternative services remain.

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November 19,1980

Dear

Your agency has been selected to participate in a study
conducted by a graduate thesis research group from the
School of Social Work at Portland State University. The
exploratory study will examine alternative human service
agencies in the Portland Metropolitan area.

We are requesting your cooperation in gathering information
regarding your agency in the following areas;

- historical information
- eligibility and intake (a copy of fee scale requested)
- financing (a copy of current fiscal budget requested)
- staffing patterns (a copy of job descriptions requested)
- administrative structure (organization chart, by laws requested
- feedback and linkage structures

We would like to personally interview you to secure the above
information. We anticipate the interview will take an hour to
and hour and a half. A member of the group   will contact
you within the next 10 days to arrange for an interview.

When the study is completed, we will provide you with a summary
of the results.

Please feel free to contact Prof. Gerald A. Frey, Ph.D. at
229-4897 if you have any questions regarding the purpose of
the study.

Thank you for your consideration.

                              Sincerely,

                              _____
                              Research Assistant

                              _____
                              Research Advisor