



reporter

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Hmong in the Workplace

by Glenn L. Hendricks and Brad B. Richardson

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A fundamental issue in the process of Hmong resettlement has been the search for suitable employment. A variety of approaches has been taken to assist the refugee including formal training in vocational education units, employment placement by state and local welfare units, special public and private task force employment projects targeting refugees, and probably most effective, highly informal sponsor-initiated job seeking.

The problems encountered in job placement have been the now familiar litany of their lack of skills, lack of English, and unfamiliarity with American cultural patterns surrounding work and the work place. All of these problems have been exacerbated by a generally sluggish economy providing little incentive for employers to

take on the problems of marginal employees. Unfortunately, too often any description of the situation of Hmong unemployment is a product of the particular viewpoint from which an individual comes into contact with the situation. In images given out by the media, the Hmong are generally portrayed as industrious people, striving to find jobs but unable to locate them. The reality of the situation is hard to come by both because the Hmong are so new and still resettling and because Americans are unfamiliar with alternative patterns of social organization. As a consequence, what is, is not always what appears to be.

In order to assist the many public and private attempts being made to find employment for 10,000 Hmong refugees in Minnesota, we undertook a study of the local employment need and employer experience with Hmong workers. To examine employment levels within the Hmong community, complete household censuses were made of two clan-like groups, or *Pab Neej*, which are among the ten such subdivisions making up the local Lao Family Community, Inc. The groups are both Blue Hmong but come from different regions of Laos. Differences between the two groups include the length of time they have been in the United States and their religious affiliation. One is protestant and assembles for worship each week in a local Methodist Church. The other group is far from unanimous in its religious orientation but maintains frequent contact through visiting patterns and joint economic undertakings. Admittedly these groups may not be a random sample of the entire Twin Cities Hmong population. However, they represent a significant set of the total population for which we wished to draw conclusions.

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PLEASE NOTE: The next issue of the *CURA Reporter* will not be published until July due to the financial difficulties at the University of Minnesota.

The Need for Work

A few demographics of our sample of seventy-seven households include a mean size of 5.57 persons, 55 percent male and 45 percent female. Twenty-six percent were five years of age or less, 31 percent were between five and nineteen, while 4 percent were sixty or more years in age. The remaining 39 percent was assumed to be in the employable age between 19 and 59. No person in this group was known to be unemployed because of physical disability although obviously for many of the females their roles in child care precluded employment.

Of this employable group 66 percent of the males and 34 percent of the females were reported to be employed, while another 29 percent of the males and 34 percent of the females attended school (typically English classes). A small percent were going to school while at the same time working (17 percent males, 4 percent females). We have no information about the school situation (whether it is full or part-time, for instance).

Over one-quarter (27 percent) of those employed held jobs servicing other refugees. These jobs include interpreters, aides, and resettlement workers in welfare agencies, schools, and public health units as well as the private settlement agencies such as Catholic Charities.

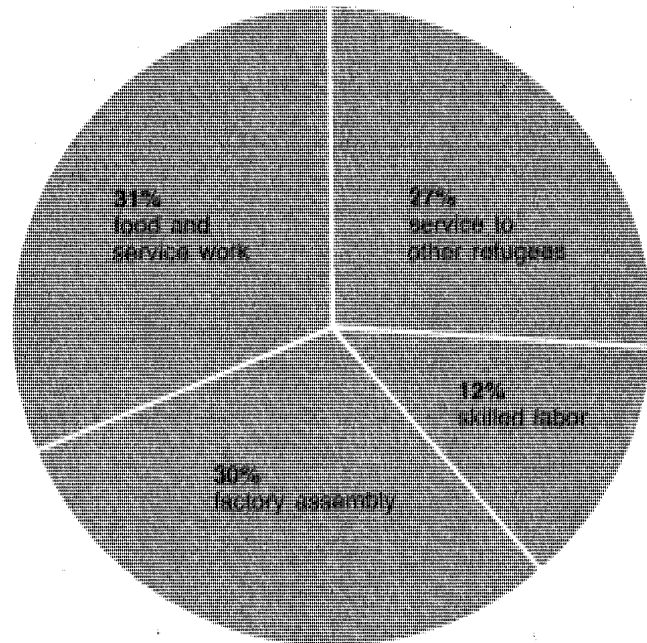
Of the remainder of those employed, 12 percent held jobs generally classified as skilled—electricians, welders, and machinists. Other categories of jobs included factory assembly workers (30 percent of those employed) and those in service fields such as handling food and cleaning, and maintenance work.

We do not have data about wages, length of employment, or other critical information from the perspective of the Hmong about their experience as employees. One of the important findings of this census is that unemployment rates are considerably lower than we had been led to assume. Unemployment, however, remains higher than is desirable.

Survey of Employers

We were also interested in obtaining information about Hmong as employees from the perspective of their employers. There was a twofold interest here. If an appeal was to be made to potential employers to take the risk of hiring the refugee, then it was thought that examining the experience of those who previously had been willing to employ them might be helpful. In addition, we were searching for lessons which might be learned from these experiences on how best to adapt to the admittedly special problems in employee/employer relations that would be encountered in the workplace. To this end structured interviews were arranged with twenty-five Twin Cities

JOB HELD BY EMPLOYED HMONG



employers who were known to be present or past employers of Hmong. In a few situations more than one person was interviewed at a workplace.

We purposely met with on-line supervisors rather than personnel representatives for we wished to have the perspectives of those who had direct experience with the issues to be raised. In some cases it was also possible to spend time observing the Hmong workers as they carried out their tasks. Work situations ranged from assembly lines in some of the cities' largest industries to the costume department of a local theatre.

The results of these interviews led to the following conclusions.

General Opinions About Hmong as Employees

To begin the focused phase of the interview, employers were asked, "What do you think of Hmong as workers?" Twenty-five, or 86 percent, of the twenty-nine respondents indicated the Hmong to be very good workers. In addition many went on to state that the Hmong were "some of the best workers" they had. This was particularly true in organizations where the Hmong were employed in assembly, or piecework occupations (for example, computer assembly).

Some typical statements made by employers were:

"They have worked out very well. Our company is very impressed by them generally. They are very good workers in our production department." (supervisor/computer assembly)

"Well, they're generally harder working than the American workers. For example, after lunch American workers like to take their time getting back to work while [name of employee] is on the job at the specified time, again on the dot." (supervisor/metal shop)

"Hmong are very good workers, never absent, work hard." (manager/metal shop)

In general, employers are impressed by the productivity of the Hmong. Initially there appears to be a period of some difficulty in training due to limited English language skills. Once trained, however, Hmong are reported to be better workers than the average American worker. As might be expected, this sometimes results in negative reactions by other members of the workforce because the Hmong are perceived as "rate-busters." Contrary to what might be expected, this "rate-busting" behavior did not contribute to any major difficulties concerning either efficiency or social relationships among employees.

As the Hmong become assimilated into the workforce, often their productivity becomes more consistent with that of the rest of the workers. At about this point in the Hmong employees' tenure, acceptance by

other workers also occurs further reducing antagonism. Indications are that the productivity of the Hmong remains slightly higher than that of other workers.

Employers not initially responding with statements of praise concerning the Hmong were influenced in their general opinions by cultural differences. The language barrier was particularly problematic for some.

In addition to language, one employer found the time orientation of the Hmong to be different and her impressions of the Hmong overall was:

"Hmong as workers want to make a go of it. They're very competent at what they do, but their sense of time is different. They are much more "relaxed." They're not always so prompt with getting information that they are sent out to obtain." (supervisor/social service)

One of the difficulties encountered by those employing Hmong in occupations servicing other Hmong is that the situation requires much more informal behavior than employers are accustomed to. This contrasts with typical behavior in a bureaucratic setting. Americans tend to be much more "business oriented," expecting more task oriented, formal communication patterns. In contrast, Hmong proceed at a much more deliberate pace discussing family and friends, perhaps accompanying a client to see someone else before addressing specific work-related tasks.

Only one other negative evaluation of Hmong workers came, this from a supervisor at a food processing plant who alluded to cleanliness problems when Hmong workers first came to the organization. In sum, however, she stated:

"Hmong attitudes toward work are generally better. They're actually good hard-working people. Sometimes communication can be difficult so you just have to go a little slower for them because English is not their first language."

Hmong Attitudes Toward Work and the Workplace

Many studies of organizations have focused on the relationships between job satisfaction, attitudes, and productivity. In line with these studies, one area of particular interest for our research was the degree of agreement between Hmong and American employees in their attitudes about work and the workplace. Employer perception of the Hmong refugees as contrasted to other members of the workforce was tapped by asking: "Do you see any difference in attitudes toward work and the workplace between the refugees and the typical American worker?"

Indications are that employers generally perceive differences in attitudes. Eighteen respondents, or 62 percent of the sample, reported "yes," there are differences in attitudes. Twenty-eight percent (n=8) reported no difference in attitudes,

while 10 percent (n=3) reported neutral responses to the question. Table 1 illustrates further subdivisions of these general response categories with their corresponding frequencies.

Typical neutral responses are exemplified by statements such as:

"I think it could go both ways, some might see them as working harder, some might not." (coordinator/social service)

or

"I don't know about the American counterparts, but they are different from Lao in that they don't spend all their money;

they still take the bus even though they could buy a car." (supervisor/employment service)

Responses in the "no" category were often the result of organizational constraints (especially unions) which masked the ability to perceive differences within the workforce. Union shops in mass production factories are the best example of these constraints. According to respondents in these situations, production and job performance—the primary criterion on which most employers based their opinions for this question—are so routinized and regulated that attitudinal differences have little



Toua Yang works at Gokey's in St. Paul where he and a number of other Hmong make hand-crafted shoes and boots.

observable impact.

Where differences in attitudes were said to exist, numerous categories of responses emerged from the data. The most common response, however, as can be seen in Table 1, was that the Hmong were "harder working." Statements in this category included a perception of the Hmong as "believing in work in itself" with the resultant impression that Hmong are "generally harder working" than their American counterparts. Similarly, although categorically distinct, employers believed that because of this difference in attitudes, Hmong are able to "keep busy" or "find something to do" when they finish their specifically assigned tasks.

"If they would finish sewing they would want to clean to earn their money. One day I came back and asked where [name of employee] was and I was told she was in back cleaning because she had finished early." (supervisor/clothing production)

A third subdivision which emerged from the data was that the Hmong workers focused more on instrumental aspects of work (the task itself and the end product), as opposed to the expressive (social) aspects of work which Americans were said to emphasize.

"They keep to themselves, don't voice opinions, likes or dislikes, just do their job as they're told, not like American workers who are always questioning how things are done." (supervisor/accounting department)

"When they come to work, they come to work; not to run off and hide in the can or try to sneak outside for awhile or something." (supervisor/packing plant)

Absenteeism and Turnover

Although positive attitudes toward work and the workplace have not been shown to contribute directly to productivity*, some indirect relationships between attitudes, and absenteeism and turnover have been demonstrated by other researchers.

The data from the present study are consistent with these other studies; employers report that the absenteeism rate for refugees appears to be much lower than that of the general workforce. Table 2 illustrates this skewed distribution toward "less absenteeism."

As is clearly visible from the table, refugees are never reported to be absent more than "average." The majority of the employers place refugee absenteeism in the never absent category (44 percent), while very low absenteeism is reported by 32 percent of the respondents.

Due to the relatively short period of time refugees have been employed in Twin Cities organizations, it is not yet possible to demonstrate the relative percentages for

categories of the turnover rates, as it is for absenteeism; however, reports strongly support the notion that refugees are less likely to terminate employment once hired. Eight organizations did indicate that their termination rate among refugees was "none." Other respondents suggested that the turnover rate for refugee employees was very low.

"No one has quit in fourteen months." (supervisor/clothing manufacturing)

This is not to suggest, however, that Hmong never quit; indeed, two respondents from one organization indicated that there was a period early in their experience with Hmong employees in which there was a "wave of turnover."

"Since that first wave there has been little turnover" (supervisor/packing plant)

Reasons for turnover have generally been idiosyncratic and have little to do with the work situation.

"One quit because his brother died and he apparently had to take on other family responsibilities." (supervisor/metal shop)

"Some quit to have babies." (supervisor/food processing)

Language Barriers

To assess the extent to which language impinged upon the productivity of the Hmong worker, employers were asked, "Has language been a hindrance to proper work performance?" Responses were largely in the affirmative with 33 percent of the respondents indicating that language was a problem and 52 percent of the respondents indicating that language was "sometimes a problem." Only 15 percent found language not to be a problem. It is not surprising that this latter group found no difficulty arising from communication since

these organizations hired Hmong employees based on a language criterion (for example, as bilingual workers for social service organizations).

Organizations experiencing only minor communication difficulties or difficulties of a sporadic nature are distinguished from organizations experiencing major communication problems by their ability to adapt quickly to the idiosyncratic needs of the workforce. These adaptable organizations also experienced the most difficulty during initial stages of employment of Hmong workers with an ensuing pattern of reduced communication problems. When asked about language problems, supervisors in these organizations typically replied:

"At first there was some difficulty, but not any longer. Some of the older ones can communicate with them and many now understand English better." (manager/manufacturing)

"As far as sizing, yes, but interpreters help out and the problems are minimal." (supervisor/clothing manufacturer)

"You have to show them what to do as well as try to tell them. Once they understand what you want done they're very good workers. Now that there are others working here it is easier because they can show the newcomers." (supervisor/janitorial service)

Organizations where communication was perceived as a major problem area generally employed Hmong in jobs requiring more varied skills (such as, telephone contact with the public, metal working, or reading of blueprints) and were often more rigid in their training procedures.

"It's very difficult to train someone without good language skills."

In organizations where Hmong employees did not speak English well enough for supervisors to communicate directly with them two strategies were implemented.

Table 1. HMONG DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES TOWARD WORK AND THE WORKPLACE

("Do you see any difference in attitudes toward work and the workplace between refugees and the typical American worker?")

Difference	Yes	Neutral	No
"Work harder"	13		
"Keep busy"	3		
Instrumental focus	2		
Individual response		2	
Mixed opinion		1	
No difference			1
Not applicable (nature of job)			7

Table 2. HMONG ABSENTEEISM ESTIMATES

	Average	Very Low	Never Absent	Don't Know
Organizations Indicating (N = 25)	4 (16%)	8 (32%)	11 (44%)	2 (8%)

*In fact, one study found that performance precedes satisfaction and is the result of the equitable reward for effort.



Phoua Thao (center), a resident of the United States for six years, works as an interpreter at the Minneapolis Health Department. She interprets here for Yer Xiong and Ethel Stark, certified nurse midwife.

One was the use of interpreters to provide assistance in communication and the other was the use of a bilingual employee within the work group as a liaison between management and the workers. In each case, almost exclusively Hmong work groups were maintained in an effort to "more efficiently communicate" organizational expectations to the Hmong.

Recommendations for Future Employers

It is interesting to note that unanimously, respondents did not regret hiring Hmong employees and indicated they would hire these workers again. When asked, "If you had your choice, would you hire these workers again?" some of the more typical responses were:

"Definitely, I would fill every new vacancy with Hmong if the American workers accepted this practice."
(supervisor/ clothing manufacturer)

"I would definitely hire again."
(supervisor/packing plant)

"Yes, all I could get, but nationals give us trouble if we hire too many."
(supervisor/janitorial service)

One employer suggested that future employers not "just rush into the matter" of hiring Hmong employees. Rather, this respondent suggests a management oriented approach to the decision, first evaluating whether or not management "wants them."

"You have to evaluate if management wants them, if not it will never work out. If there is a union it can be problematic because nationals sometimes protest and this has to be a consideration in the management decision." (supervisor/ janitorial service)

Included in the decision to hire Hmong employees is the issue of training. Nine of the organizations involved in this research hired Hmong workers who had been trained prior to employment. Sixteen organizations hired Hmong for jobs in which they (the organizations) had to train the new employees on the job.

Organizations which hired Hmong with prior training indicated that these employees were quite competent.

"They have a very good program over there [at the community college]. They know exactly what to do once they come here. Of course we have to train them to use our equipment but basically they are trained well." (supervisor/ janitorial service)

Organizations providing training, found it to be a somewhat difficult task. Once trained, however, they felt their Hmong employees were good workers. The difficulty most often expressed was the pace with which training could proceed.

"It's very difficult to train without good language skills." (personnel/metal shop)

"[You] have to show them what to do as well as try to tell them. Now that there are others working here it is eas-

ier because they can show the newcomers." (supervisor/packing plant)

One respondent detailed the implementation of a preceptor system in which new employees are trained by other Hmong employees of longer tenure who both know the job well and are able to communicate with the new Hmong employees.

"We used a preceptor system which works quite well since these are unskilled jobs." (supervisor/computer manufacturing)

In addition to training, respondents were also questioned about any advantages that more knowledge of the Hmong culture might provide. The general response was two-fold. First, respondents believe that, however interesting, knowing more about the culture in and of itself, would not benefit an organization in terms of meeting its goals. Second, even though general knowledge about the culture would not be a great asset, more knowledge about the individual employee might be helpful as a way to increase communication channels between employer and employee.

Three individuals indicated that more knowledge of the Hmong employment situation on the part of the business community might contribute to more Hmong being hired in the Twin Cities area. These respondents suggested that management personnel or executives from businesses presently employing Hmong could be very persuasive if they jointly addressed the business community to create an awareness of both the Hmong employment problem and the positive experiences these organizations have had with Hmong workers.

The positive reactions of employers concerning their Hmong employees led us to request comments on the potential for private support of employment services assisting Hmong in obtaining employment in the Twin Cities. Reaction was not favorable to this proposition. Present employers expressed opinions that they were already contributing to reducing the employment problems of the Hmong. Their help was in supplying jobs, but in times of a "slow economy," these respondents point out that it would be unwise to invest in something they viewed as corporate funding of a social welfare program.

Photos by Robert Friedman

Changing Populations in an Urban Renewal Area

by Richard Chase

Richard Chase is a graduate student in American Studies at the University of Minnesota. His study of Seward West was conducted for the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority (now part of the Minneapolis Community Development Agency). CURA aided in the research design and supplied computer services for the study. A limited number of copies of the full report (*Neighborhood Renovation and Residential Choice in Seward West: A Survey of Current and Former Residents*) are available from the Community Development Agency at 612/348-8520.

The language of urban renewal has come to equate population changes in improved neighborhoods with displacement, treating displacement as a basic ingredient in the renovation process. A recent study that I conducted for the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority examined the relationship between housing renovation and the changes in the neighborhood population.

Interviews were conducted with 280 randomly selected current residents and 59 former residents* of the Seward West Urban Renewal Area of Minneapolis (see map), an area which used both public and private investment to accomplish residential rehabilitation and redevelopment. The survey included four types of residents: 1) stayers, households that stayed in their existing homes, 2) shifters, those that changed homes within the neighborhood, 3) leavers, households that resettled outside the neighborhood, and 4) incomers, households that moved into the neighborhood. In addition to providing statistical data which could be used to compare the current neighborhood population with the populations in 1969, prior to urban renewal, my objective was to allow respondents to discuss their reasons for retaining, leaving, or selecting their residences. The survey examined both population change and residential choice, defining displacement as a real or perceived absence of choice.

*The most recent former residents were identified by taking a list of new residents and tracing who had lived there before them. In this way, 157 most recent leavers were identified. The sample of former residents included only those households that could be located for interviews (32 former owners and 27 former renters). In general, older owners were easier to locate. From partial information available from a number of sources it emerged that 30.5 percent of the leavers who were not located for interviews were former renters under the age of thirty.

Residents Before and After Renovation

The major change in Seward West since renovation has been the decline both in the number of elderly residents and in the number of two-parent families, particularly those aged forty through fifty-nine (Table 1). Overall, the percentage of young single and unrelated individuals has more than doubled, from 23.3 to 49.5 percent of the households; the percentage of elderly has slipped from

27.5 to 14.7 percent; and the percentage of middle-aged families has dropped from 23.3 to 8.1 percent of the total neighborhood households. The data also indicate that the incomers have smaller households and higher socioeconomic status than the residents they replaced. In general, most Seward West households are small, college educated, and white. They contain young singles, childless couples, or young families with one child, most likely a preschooler. The net result

Table 1. HOUSEHOLD TYPES BEFORE AND AFTER RENEWAL in percents^a
(absolute numbers in parentheses)

	1969 ^b	1980 Current	1980 Leavers ^c
Families aged			
18-29	16.5	12.5	6.2
30-39	9.4	15.2	13.8
40-49	10.9	3.0	6.9
50-59	12.4	5.1	8.5
Subtotal	49.2 (313)	35.8 (229)	35.4 (46)
Elderly-60+			
Couples	14.0	2.8	6.9
Individuals	13.5	8.0	22.3
Mixed Family	0	3.9	10.0
Subtotal	27.5 (175)	14.7 (94)	39.2 (51)
Non-Elderly			
Single and Unrelated	23.3 (148)	49.5 (317)	25.4 (33)
TOTAL	100.0 (636)	100.0 (640)	100.0 (130)

^aBased on adjusted neighborhood proportions (total units minus apartment units).

^bData from Minnesota Housing and Redevelopment Authority's Social Survey prior to urban renewal.

^cIncludes data from files and interviews.

Table 2. SHIFTERS AND LEAVERS: REASONS FOR LEAVING THEIR RESIDENCE DURING THE RENEWAL PERIOD*

	OWNERS			RENTERS		
	Shifters (N=20)	Leavers (N=32)	Totals (N=52)	Shifters (N=69)	Leavers (N=26)	Totals (N=95)
Wanted to sell	1	12	13	0	0	0
Benefits	0	0	0	7	6	13
Chose not to fix	4	6	10	1	0	1
Upkeep too difficult	1	6	7	0	1	1
Upkeep too expensive	0	1	1	0	0	0
Could not afford code improvements	8	6	14	0	0	0
Owner sold house	0	0	0	33	13	46
Forced out	7	7	14	7	4	11
Convenience	0	1	1	0	0	0
Other—personal	0	2	2	24	4	28

*Multiple responses included

of the population change is to almost double home ownership. Nearly half of the present owners are former renters who stayed in the city to purchase their first homes.

The findings also indicate, however, that despite extensive neighborhood changes, it is incorrect to assume that population change signifies widespread displacement. Twenty-three percent of the households stayed in their existing residences; 53 percent of those who moved did so voluntarily. The personal interviews revealed that neighborhood change, while displacing some households, more often involved residential choice, at times even offering some residents opportunities they had never expected.

Reasons for Shifting and Leaving

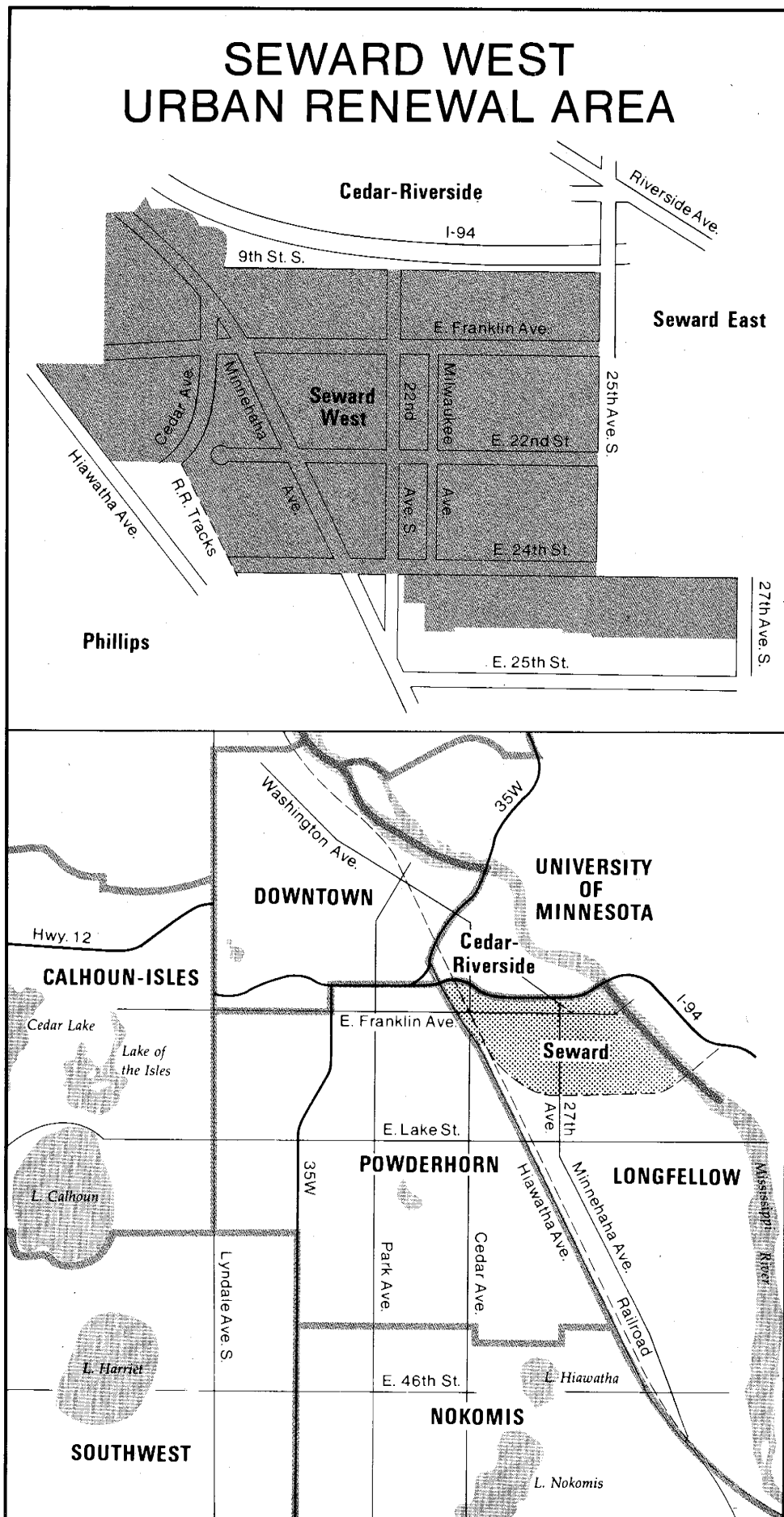
The presence or absence of choice can be assessed from the reasons people cited for moving out of their residences and, eventually, leaving the neighborhood.

For some residents, neighborhood renovation was viewed as "a gift" because it offered them a chance to sell unwanted homes and to leave what they considered an undesirable neighborhood. One-quarter of the owners that left their residences, primarily the leavers, reported they wanted to sell their homes (Table 2). Renters, also, who could take advantage of relocation payments and who found it possible to buy their own homes were similarly pleased with the benefits offered through urban renewal. Thirteen and seven-tenths percent of the renting households reported the chance to benefit as their chief reason for leaving existing residences. This reason was mentioned by more leavers (23.1 percent) than shifters (10.1 percent). Young families and singles benefited more often, 40.6 percent of the renters becoming owners. Another 29.5 percent of the renters, especially single persons and young childless couples, cited personal preferences as a factor in their leaving an existing residence. Reasons such as "privacy" and "to live with friends" lead their list of reasons for moving out. Since the question asked was open-ended, many respondents provided multiple and overlapping reasons.

Why did some households leave the neighborhood altogether? Table 3 shows that former owners and renters left the neighborhood for substantially the same reasons. Only those who were unable to find suitable housing within the neighborhood can be considered to have been forced out. Sixty-three percent left voluntarily, finding more preferable housing and locations outside Seward West.* Mobility, freely exercised by owners and renters alike, often at the city's expense, rather than any lack of choice, then, accounts for a sizable portion of the population turnover.

For others, however, neighborhood renovation was an unmistakable intrusion.

*Most households relocated elsewhere in Minneapolis. See the full study for an analysis of where they moved.



The choice of staying in their homes was not available for many owners. Forty percent in the sample of shifters and 19 percent of the sample of leavers reported the high costs of code improvements as their reason for leaving their homes. Typically, these elderly respondents "thought we were through with that expense" and "couldn't put the extra money in the city wanted." The lack of choice was bitterly apparent to a number of households, 21.9 percent of the leavers and 35 percent of the shifters perceiving that they were forced out of their homes.

Renters, whether or not they resettled in the neighborhood, moved most often because former owners sold the units they were renting. Almost half of the former renter households reported that they were displaced because their landlord decided to sell the house to the city. Overall, mostly well established households (44.2 percent) were affected by these sales, more than half leaving their residences after living there for ten years or more. Despite relocation benefits, 16.9 percent of these households, according to their perceptions, were victims of displacement and forced to move.

Finally, 36.8 percent of the leavers eventually left the neighborhood involuntarily. The inability to find suitable replacement housing was cited by more households than any other reason for leaving the neighborhood. The problems, affecting primarily large families and older households, centered on timing, size requirements, and costs. Replacement houses simply were not available for reoccupancy when the first households were ready to move, especially early in the project, 1973 and 1974. Official residential standards prevented large families from reoccupying the small houses in Seward West, most of which have only one or two bedrooms. Some households, especially elderly households, could not afford the higher costs of living in a renovated residence.

Dynamics of Choice and Displacement

An analysis of the reasons households cited for moving into their residences and to the neighborhood and the differences among household types provides another viewpoint of the dynamics of choice and displacement during neighborhood renovation. Looking only at incomers living in single family houses and duplexes, 32.3 percent of these households reported the size, character, or quality of their residence as a reason for moving to it. Financial considerations were also important; 29.2 percent cited affordability as another reason for moving to their residence. The next most common reason, reported by 25.5 percent of the sample, was the chance to own their own home. Not surprisingly, 46.2 percent of the owners chose their new residences because of the opportunity to afford their own home. Convenience of

Table 3. LEAVERS: REASONS FOR LEAVING THE NEIGHBORHOOD DURING THE RENEWAL PERIOD*

	Owner (N=31)	Renter (N=25)	Rent-Free (N=1)	Total (%) (N=57)
Unable to find suitable housing	10	11	0	21 (36.8)
Residential preference	7	7	1	15 (26.3)
Undesirable, did not want to stay	8	5	0	13 (22.8)
Locational preference	8	4	0	12 (21.1)
Did not look or care	0	2	1	3 (5.3)

*Multiple responses included.

Table 4. INCOMERS: REASONS FOR MOVING TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD*

	Number (N=343)	Percent
Convenience of location	202	58.9
Community preference	74	21.6
Financial	59	17.2
Residential preference	46	13.4
Idea of rehabilitation	35	10.2
Diversity	20	5.8
No reason	20	5.8

*Multiple responses included.

Table 5. SHIFTERS AND INCOMERS: REASONS FOR MOVING INTO THEIR RESIDENCE*

	SHIFTERS (N=93)		INCOMERS (N=404)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Convenience of location	8	8.6	148	36.6
Neighborhood preference	4	4.3	38	9.4
Residential preference	20	21.5	89	22.0
Ownership	20	21.5	52	12.9
Affordability	27	29.0	111	27.5
Displaced—no choice	42	45.2	13	3.2
Other—personal	10	10.7	114	28.2
No special reason	0	0	9	2.2

*Multiple responses included.

location, finally, was mentioned by 21.4 percent of the households living in the single-family houses and duplexes. This last response, convenience of location, was the most common reason that all incomers gave for moving to the neighborhood (Table 4). The next most common reason was community preference, liking the neighborhood for its diversity, quiet atmosphere, and strong sense of community spirit. For incoming owners, financial reasons outweighed communal reasons; new owners were particularly attracted to the new construction and rehabilitation programs offered by the city.

In contrast, shifters most often cited that they had no choice; 45.2 percent responded that they moved to their new residence, at least in part, because they were displaced from their previous residence. Most of these choiceless shifters live in government subsidized residences and in the large apartment buildings in the

neighborhood. Affordability was mentioned by 29 percent of shifter households, the stock phrases "the chance to afford" and "the opportunity to buy" used frequently.

Lower income shifters, then, were clearly at a disadvantage in their choice of replacement housing. Elderly residents make up 45.2 percent of this group. The next largest affected groups were single-person households between the ages of 40 and 49 (16.7 percent) and single-parent female-headed households (12 percent). These are the types of households one might expect would have difficulty competing with higher-income and younger two-parent families and singles for available housing. Table 5 compares the reasons shifters and incomers gave for moving into their residences. The incomers group as a whole was dominated by unrelated and one-person student households living in apartment buildings.

The personal interviews revealed, then,



the interrelated dimensions of residential choice and displacement. Just over half of the households that left their residences moved out by choice, often to take advantage of city programs and relocation benefits. The long-term residents who moved from their homes to allow for rehabilitation and decided to resettle in the neighborhood faced competition for a desirable and conveniently located new home. The neighborhood's efforts to preserve and restore rather than demolish—testimony to neighborhood pride and direction—attracted many households from outside the neighborhood for whom renovation, much of it with their own hands, was the only way they could afford a first home. These new residents (singles, childless couples, and small family households, primarily in the 18 through 39 age group) attracted by the renovation opportunities, competed for neighborhood housing, especially for the reduced number of rental houses, with

the large number of students already in the neighborhood and the previously established larger families and older residents who had no choice but to relocate to allow for renovation. The new residents now occupy 59 percent of the houses and duplexes in the neighborhood. The elderly and lower-income and those with larger households were ill-equipped to compete with the incomers and younger shifters who could better afford, both financially and physically, to live in a neighborhood undergoing extensive rebuilding.

Conclusions

While housing renovation in Seward West has markedly improved a deteriorating neighborhood, the demographic and socioeconomic composition of the neighborhood has also changed. In general, fewer elderly and large families now live in the houses that underwent renovation. Some of these

residents were displaced, other younger and smaller households benefiting from their absence of choice. It is incorrect, however, to assume that every household which moved to allow for renovation suffered displacement. To repeat, displacement is defined as a real or perceived absence of choice that prevents a household from remaining in a residence or neighborhood. The interviews indicate that 53 percent of the households that vacated their residences moved out voluntarily and, moreover, that 63 percent of the households that resettled outside the neighborhood left Seward West by choice.

The inevitable question is, How much displacement is acceptable? For the city, the rehabilitation of the housing stock, the increased home ownership and owner occupancy, the retention of young families, and the elimination of blight were the most prominent advantages of urban renewal in Seward West. The extensive rehabilitation and the restoration of resident satisfaction also met neighborhood goals. The neighborhood, once described as unsafe and blighted, is now most frequently described as safe, quiet, and a good place to raise a family. The increased cost and reduced availability of rental housing and the upwardly mobile status of some households, assisted into ownership, are arguable disadvantages. Finally, many households benefited from neighborhood renovation in Seward West—those with and even those without the opportunity to choose. Some households that wanted to leave the neighborhood were finally given the chance to move. Other households that wanted to remain in the neighborhood were forced to move; yet the majority of those interviewed are satisfied with the results of their moves. The benefits of housing renovation in Seward West predominate and, on balance, serve to minimize the undeniable hardships of displacement.

Map by Gregory Chu

Photo by Henry Hall

Senior Centers in Minnesota

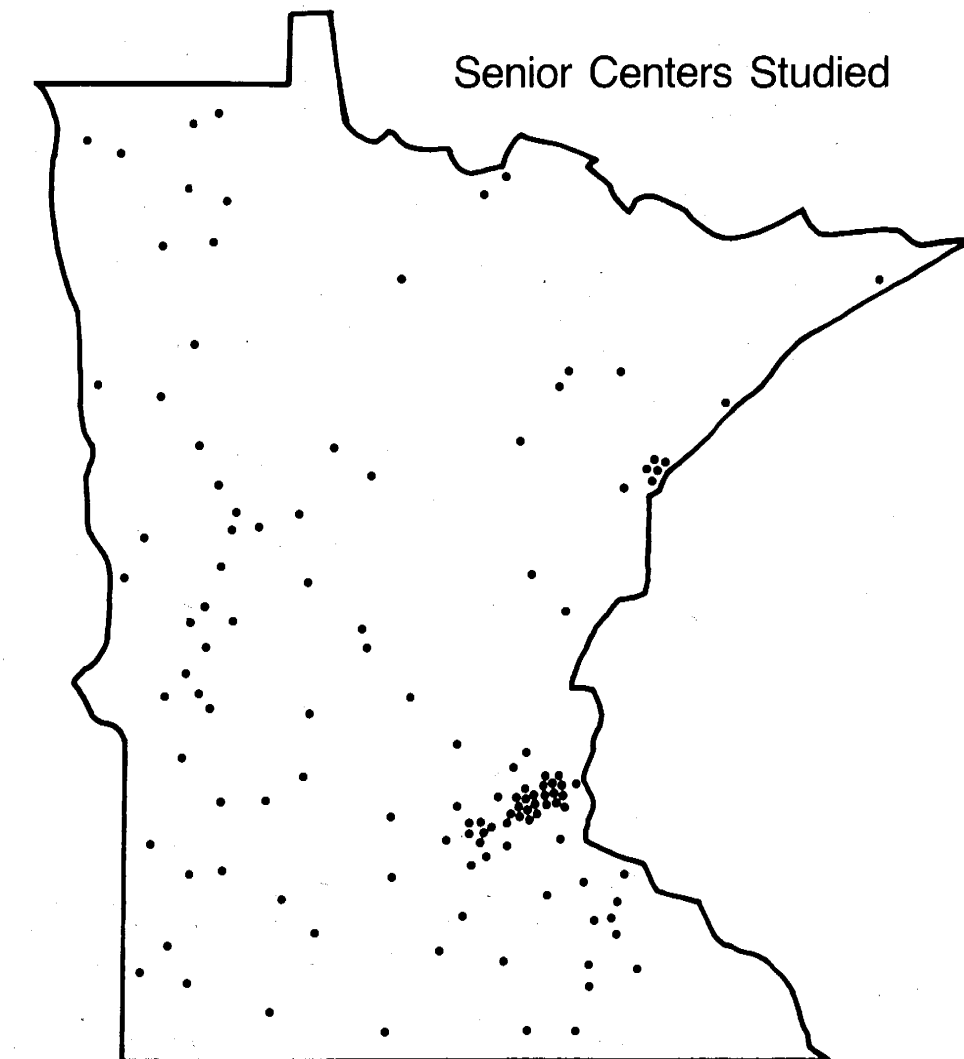
by Theodore R. Anderson and Jan Benson

Ted Anderson is a professor in the Department of Sociology where he specializes in quantitative methods and urban sociology. Jan Benson is a graduate student in sociology who is specializing in the study of quantitative methods and organization theory. This paper presents parts of a study they pursued with several other sociologists for the Minnesota Board on Aging in 1980. Two unpublished reports were prepared for the board: "Characteristics of Senior Centers in Minnesota," and "Analysis of Six Minnesota Communities and their Senior Centers."

On Main Street in downtown Stillwater, a storefront drop-in center is run for seniors by a local group of older citizens. The front room includes sofas, stuffed chairs, a few card tables, and a small kitchen where the coffee pot is always full. In the back room, meetings alternate with bingo and quilting. Periodically a community health nurse comes to the Stillwater Senior Citizens Drop-in Center to do blood pressure checks on the fifty or so persons who are liable to drop in during a typical day.

In Roseville between 100 and 200 older citizens gather every day in a converted junior high school where low cost lunches are served. They share the building with a number of other community programs. The Lakeview Senior Center runs a boutique where items made by seniors are sold. Two full-time staff persons provide information and referral, coordinate the center programs, arrange transportation, and publish a newsletter. The center is managed by a non-profit corporation, the North Suburban Senior Council, and various community agencies offer their specialized services to seniors through the center.

These two centers are typical of the approximately 200 senior centers in Minnesota. There are, of course, smaller centers in the more rural communities of the state and larger, more complex centers in the central cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. But the centers in Stillwater and Roseville represent two quite distinct types of senior centers that are to be found throughout the state. The differences between them are striking. The Stillwater Senior Citizens Drop-in Center was created by a group of seniors to meet their limited set of needs. It has a small budget and is financed through private donations. The Lakeview Senior Center is considerably larger and depen-



dent on government financing. It has a much more ambitious program, which is targeted at all 5,000 seniors in the Roseville area.

Growth of a New Institution

The development of organizations designed to serve exclusively the needs of the seniors in the community is a relatively new phenomenon. The first senior center in this country was established in New York City in 1944. Today there are more than 5,000 senior centers across the United States. The first center in Minnesota was established in Minneapolis in 1952.

Senior centers are not to be confused with nursing homes. They are not designed

to care for those who can no longer live independently. Rather they serve as places where the older citizens of the community, people who are active and living independently, can come for a variety of activities and personal services.

The rapid growth of senior centers seems to have occurred in two ways. One source of growth has been the activity of seniors themselves who founded senior centers to carry out their own goals and objectives. In many cases, they have worked with the aid of a local group or organization. The senior center in Stillwater is representative of this group.

Another source of growth has been through government programs at the federal and state level that provide funds and

Figure 1. TYPES OF SERVICE PROVIDED IN SENIOR CENTERS

Participatory Services	Problem-Solving Services	Mixed Services
recreation and socialization adult education arts and crafts discussion groups newsletter information and referral individual advocacy outreach for new members senior involvement programs senior volunteer programs	congregate nutrition blood pressure checks medical screenings legal assistance dental services protective services drug and alcohol abuse counseling day care	transportation employment assistance benefit counseling in-home services social work counseling

administrative assistance for the establishment of senior centers. The center in Roseville is representative of this group.

Whereas centers of the first type serve the needs of those elderly that use the center, centers of the second type provide services directed at segments of the elderly population that traditionally did not use senior centers. These segments include the frail, the poor, and the isolated. Federal programs that fund senior centers, such as the Older Americans Act (passed in 1965) are specifically designed to assist those segments of the senior population that might be forced out of the community and into nursing homes if the services of the senior center were not available. The importance of such programs is illustrated by the fact that over 90 percent of the senior centers in Minnesota were established after 1965.

Our Survey

Until recently, little was known about these senior centers. In the spring and summer of 1980 we conducted a study of the senior centers in Minnesota for the Minnesota Board on Aging with the primary objective of discovering precisely what activities and services they offer as well as something about their history, organization, and means of support. The board was aware of the existence of many centers, particularly those centers that apply for support through the several programs it administers. However, no comprehensive inventory of all the centers existed. In addition, we studied six of the centers and their communities in depth with the objective of determining in detail the relationship between the senior center and the local community.

We mailed questionnaires to 391 senior organizations and received 248 responses. Of these, 123 fit our definition of a senior center.* Discussions with local profession-

als familiar with senior centers lead us to believe that we have data on 70 to 75 percent of all centers.

The Variety of Senior Centers

The senior centers in our sample are widely scattered throughout the state (see map). They are also distributed in communities of various sizes. Slightly over one-third of all the centers are located in communities with fewer than 1,000 residents. On the other hand, about 31 percent of the centers are in metropolitan areas.

In examining the characteristics of the senior centers themselves, we found a great deal of variation. For example, 18 percent of the centers have fifty or fewer users per week, while 27 percent have two hundred fifty or more users per week. With respect to staffing the center, 22 percent of the centers are run entirely by volunteers (always senior citizens), 14 percent pay for the equivalent of over two and one-half full-time professional staff members. The remaining centers have some professional staffing, but at a lower level.

Forty-seven percent of the senior centers were founded by a unit of local government or a government agency (such as the school district or park board). Fifteen percent originated through a private organization (such as the YMCA or a service club) and the remaining 38 percent began through the efforts of an individual senior or group of seniors. Looking at the current status of the centers, 25 percent continue to be sponsored by a local unit of government, 15 percent are sponsored by a private organization, and fully 60 percent are totally independent of another organization. Sixty-one percent of the centers receive government funding.

These data indicate again the two sources of senior center growth (through the activity of seniors themselves and through government programs) and establish that in Minnesota both sources are important. The impact of differences in how the senior center was founded and how it is currently maintained can be seen in the services that are offered by different centers.

Types of Service

To gather data on services, the questionnaire included a checklist of twenty-three specific services. The list of services was developed by examining the services specified in legislation and governmental administrative procedures and through discussions with senior center directors and other professionals in the field. The list included virtually all the services actually offered by senior centers. We asked respondents to identify other services offered but received very few additional listings.

The twenty-three services can be divided into three groups.* Ten services clearly enhance the participation of seniors in the community (Figure 1). Eight services are designed to help seniors solve personal medical and other problems while five services have components of both a participatory and problem-solving nature.

A particular senior center may be categorized in terms of how many services of a participatory type and how many of a problem-solving type are offered at the center. Ignoring the five services which are mixed, a center can offer between zero and ten participatory services and between zero and eight problem-solving services. A center is said to offer *few* participatory services if it offers seven or less of these services and it offers *many* if it has eight or more. A center is said to offer *few* problem-solving services if it offers two or less and it offers *many* if it has three or more problem-solving services. Table 1 shows the distribution of the 123 senior centers on these two scales. As the table indicates, there is no relationship between these two scales. That is, a center is no more likely to offer many services of one type because it offers many or few services of the other type. There must be other explanations for why certain kinds of services are offered in a particular senior center. In fact, several of the characteristics of centers discussed

*For the purposes of our study we defined a senior center to be a relatively autonomous organization with at least some regular contact with human service professionals in the community, some involvement of seniors in governance, and providing more than a single activity or service. The center also had to be potentially available to all seniors in a given community. This definition simply specifies the common usage of the phrase "senior center" in various agencies in Minnesota dealing with seniors, as well as laws involving seniors.

*This classification was made by factor analyzing 23 variables where each variable indicated the presence or absence of a particular service. Two factors emerged. Those variables which loaded on the first factor are the participatory services, those which loaded on the second are the problem-solving services and those services which loaded on both factors are the mixed services.

earlier are related to the type of services offered at the center.

Factors Affecting the Types of Service Offered

Table 2 reports the effect of some of these characteristics on participatory services. Among centers in metropolitan areas there is a strong positive relationship between government funding and offering many participatory services. Of 35 senior centers in metropolitan areas two-thirds (64 percent) of those with government funding offered many participatory services while only one-third (30 percent) of those with no government funding offered many services of this type. However, among the 77 senior centers in non-metropolitan areas there is no such relationship. It is likely that this result is due to rules and regulations that appeared first in metropolitan area agencies on aging, mandating that centers provide certain other services if they were to receive government funds.

The degree of community affiliation that a senior center has also affects participation. We measured community affiliation by looking at the origins of the center and its current local affiliations. The higher the level of affiliation, the more likely it is that the senior center will offer a variety of participatory services (see Table 3). Nearly three-fourths (74 percent) of the independent senior centers offer relatively few participatory services, while only approximately one-fourth (29 percent) of the affiliated centers offer relatively few such services.

Turning to problem-solving services, Table 4 provides the basic information. Problem-solving services are most likely to be numerous in centers that receive government funding and are located in metropolitan areas. On the other hand, such services are least available in centers that receive no government funding but are located in metropolitan areas. The relationship between government funding and problem-solving services is much stronger in metropolitan than in non-metropolitan areas.

Conclusions

Our data show that there is considerable variation in senior centers in terms of the services they offer, their relationships with other organizations in the community, and whether or not they receive government funding. Senior centers grow and develop both through the efforts of their own members and through the efforts of other organizations. These two sources of growth may lead to different ideas about what a senior center should be and what services it should offer.

When seniors themselves decide on their own needs they seem to develop a center with a small number of services directed at the needs of the current mem-

Table 1. SENIOR CENTERS DISTRIBUTED ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPATORY AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SERVICES OFFERED

		Problem-Solving Services		
		Few (0-2)	Many (3-8)	Total
Participatory Services:	Many (8-10)	24	38	62
	Few (1-7)	30	31	61
	Total	54	69	123

Table 2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SIZE OF COMMUNITY, GOVERNMENT FUNDING, AND PARTICIPATORY SERVICES

Community Size: Government Funding:		Non-Metropolitan		Metropolitan	
		No	Yes	No	Yes
Participatory Services:	Many (8-10)	16 (47%)	18 (42%)	3 (30%)	16 (64%)
	Few (1-7)	18 (53%)	25 (58%)	7 (70%)	9 (36%)
	Total	34 (100%)	43 (100%)	10 (100%)	25 (100%)

Table 3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEGREE OF COMMUNITY AFFILIATION AND PARTICIPATORY SERVICES

		Community Affiliation*		
		Low	Medium	High
Participatory Services:	Many (8-10)	10 (26%)	14 (42%)	29 (71%)
	Few (1-7)	28 (74%)	19 (58%)	12 (29%)
	Total	38 (100%)	33 (100%)	41 (100%)

*Degree of community affiliation was assessed as follows: High—the center was founded by another organization and is presently a unit in another organization; Medium—the center was either founded by another organization or is presently a unit in another organization; Low—the center was neither founded by another organization nor is it presently a unit in another organization.

Table 4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SIZE OF COMMUNITY, GOVERNMENT FUNDING, AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SERVICES

Community Size: Government Funding:		Non-Metropolitan		Metropolitan	
		No	Yes	No	Yes
Problem-Solving Services:	Many (3-8)	18 (53%)	26 (60%)	3 (30%)	18 (72%)
	Few (0-2)	16 (47%)	17 (40%)	7 (70%)	7 (28%)
	Total	34 (100%)	43 (100%)	10 (100%)	25 (100%)

bers. They are likely to have limited resources as well. When outside agencies participate in the development of a center these agencies tend to provide services to seniors who do not currently use the center and to provide services of a particular type. The particular type of service provided varies depending on which outside agencies are involved in the center. Our data show that receiving government funds promotes the establishment of problem-solving ser-

vices and the affiliation of the center with local community organizations promotes the establishment of participatory services.

There is no question that the availability of government funds through the Older Americans Act and the development of state aging offices has promoted the growth of senior centers and is providing services to seniors that would otherwise not be provided. This seems to be especially true in the metropolitan areas of the state.

Typically, a local agency (government or private nonprofit) will apply for and receive a government grant to establish a senior center. The center will be likely to provide both participatory and problem-solving services that did not exist before and it will also provide an organizational framework which fosters the participation of senior citizens in providing for their own needs.

The situation is somewhat different for an established senior center that is an independent organization but becomes involved with other agencies in the community either to obtain new resources or because the other agencies wish to become involved in the center. During the process of change, the members of these centers may experience a loss of control

over the center. Participation in certain programs makes new demands on them ranging from the type of building they must have, the necessary financial reports, and the legal structure to particular services that the center must offer.

In our discussions with the people in various centers we have noted several responses to this situation. In some cases there is outright hostility toward outside programs and the attitude that involvement in them is to be avoided at all costs. In other cases there is substantial tension between the seniors who were the core of the old independent center and the professional staff that come along with the new government programs. In still other cases the transition has been successful, with seniors

maintaining substantial control over the new program. We have also observed centers where a group of seniors wants government help but does not know where or how to find it.

Our overall impression, as a result of this study, is that senior centers make important contributions to the communities in which they are located. Some emphasize participation of the elderly while others emphasize delivering needed services. Virtually all centers have at least some programs of each type. On the whole, the centers we have studied appear to be viable and strong. The participation of local and state agencies in their development has been beneficial.

Rethinking Child Care Issues: The Family Day Care Option

by Esther Wattenberg

Esther Wattenberg is associate director of the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota and also coordinator of community social services for CURA. Her interest in the issues of child care is a long standing one. She coordinated a study and demonstration program in family day care supported by CURA from 1975-1979. Results of the study were published in 1977 (Wattenberg, Esther. "Characteristics of Family Day Care Providers: Implications for Training." *Child Welfare* 56 (1977): 211-19). More recently she has published a critical review of research efforts and current problems associated with family day care (Wattenberg, Esther. "Family Day Care: Out of the Shadows and Into the Spotlight." *Marriage and Family Review* 3 (Fall/Winter 1981): 35-62). Her article here presents a distillation from her earlier publications plus new information derived from a recent interview with Gary Winget, director of the Child Care Council of Ramsey County. A limited number of reprints of Esther's 1981 article on family day care are available from CURA (phone 612/373-7833).

There is general agreement that the spirited child care debate which raged with so much vigor in the late 1970s has now deadlocked, caught in the crossfire of conflicting ideologies and social policy uncertainties. That debate, in its simplified form, pitted "expansionists," with their support for more and better subsidized child care, against "minimalists," who disputed the need and even the desirability of an enlarged role for the public sector in child care provision. Sharp disagreements unfolded on such issues as objectives, standards of quality, staffing patterns, and the fundamental social policy issues of cost and the public role.

Although the debate has subsided from public view, the issues of how to care for the children of working parents remain. There is hesitancy, it seems, in confronting the implications of a major social revolution: the normative family is now one in which both parents work. Single parents also work. And a growing number of infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers and school age children spend a large portion of their day in the care of "providers."

In the past, most children did not enter childcare before the age of two and a half. Now the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that infants account for four-fifths of the "initial entry" group for child care services. The new pattern of women returning to work shortly after the birth of their children and maintaining a steady relationship to the labor market is unprecedented in this

country. Social policy has not caught up with this dramatic change in family and work patterns.

Patterns of Child Care

Unlike other western European industrialized countries, the United States reveals an enormous diversity of arrangements for child care (see Table 1). Studies on child care arrangements tumbled into print in the 1970s, but one searches in vain for reliable estimates on the extent of the demand for various modes of child care. While discrepancies amongst the data are difficult to reconcile, a few facts emerge. Less than 10 percent of children are cared for in day care centers. Over 50 percent of child care is assumed by fathers, older siblings, and unpaid relatives. Further, most families use at least two modes of child care, paid and unpaid, formal and informal, center and family day care. A chief determinant is the cost of care and the woman's wage is the best predictor of what form of care will be chosen. A large part of child care is obtained through a barter system but imprecise data are available on the extent and pattern of this arrangement. Generally, child care in a family setting is the chief mode for working parents. It is the dominant arrangement for infants and toddlers.

Family Day Care

Family day care is an arrangement in which care of children takes place in a private

home by a "provider" who generally cares for up to six children, including the provider's own, for all or part of a day. Frequently described as the last of the cottage industries, it has for the most part, escaped regulation and serious professional attention. Yet it is the most frequently used child care option, after care in the home or by relatives.

Family day care began to emerge as a focus of attention in the 1970s when government subsidies for child care became available under Title IV-A, WIN, CETA, and, more recently, Title XX. Perplexing questions arose in determining the public role and interest in an enterprise that is largely private, and informal. Should family day care, essentially a small business enterprise based on an informal exchange between parents and a provider be forced to meet standards of health, safety, group size, physical setting, and cognitive and social development for young children? Standards had already been developed for day care centers.

The political nature of the controversies exposed the ideological differences that exist in the country on the changing role of women and family structures. In the debates, the "pro-family, pro-decency" faction insisted that center care "sovietizes" the children of working parents, undermines family values, destroys family prerogatives, and crushes the already crumbling unity that sustains this nation's nuclear families. The political impact of these charges are not entirely clear, but legislatively, there has been a perceptible shift away from the previous absorption in center-based care. Further, no serious sponsorship of child care legislation has taken place since Senator Alan Cranston's ill-fated attempt in 1979.*

Family day care strikes an amiable resonance in a decade that focuses on "family" concerns. The value of neighborhood-based family day care with its implicit strengthening of kin and friendship networks broadens the political appeal of family day care as a "family centered" approach.

Regulation

If out of home care is a necessity for millions of children, what then is the governmental role in establishing standards of care? The fact that strangers are caring for vulnerable and inarticulate children behind closed doors moved most states and local communities to establish licensing for family day care. Further, only licensed family day care is eligible for use by those who receive public assistance. Unresolved questions, however, continue to plague the regulation of this largely informal system. Is family day care chiefly custodial? It is often described in terms of toddlers sitting in a dark base-

ment watching TV and eating junk food. Proponents contend that family day care is valued because it is the closest form of child care to the intimate environment of the home. But there has been no agreement that licensing can prevent the dreary consequences of custodial care or encourage the best features of family care in the home.

The following standards proposed in the Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements disclose how the governmental role in the protection of children of working parents has been perceived:

1. A planned program of developmentally appropriate activities which promote the social, intellectual, emotional, and physical development of the children must be provided.
2. Specialized training must be taken on a regular basis by all caregivers except those with nationally recognized child development credentials.
3. Caregivers shall provide adequate and nutritious meals and snacks.
4. Caregivers shall abide by specified health, safety, and physical environment standards.
5. Social service resources and referrals must be made available to parents, as needed.
6. Caregivers must provide opportunities for parental involvement.
7. The staffing ratios must conform to one adult for every three children from birth to two years; one adult for every four children from two to three years; and one adult for every nine children from three to six years.

The resistance to these standards has been pervasive. Family Day Care Associations maintain the standards are geared to center care and their inappropriateness for family care will dry up the pool of providers. State and local governments protest the increased costs associated with implementing the regulations. But perhaps the most salient resistance comes from working parents of all income levels, fearing that government regulation will drive up costs. Parents generally perceive the "fuss" about regulation as overkill. Parents favor reliance on their intuitive judgments concerning the suitability of the child care arrangement for their children. Indeed, action on these proposed regulations has been postponed indefinitely.

The question of public responsibility, however, remains to be answered. Gary Winget, a long time professional in the field of child care with a national perspective, proposes that at the very least, local agencies should check that the providers have no record of child abuse, emotional illness, or chemical dependency. Beyond ruling out the grossly unsuitable providers, consumer sophistication must be raised from the simple procedure of requesting letters of reference to inquiring about behavioral responses to discipline. "Why shouldn't parents ask a family day care provider what they do when an infant cries?"

Economic Reality

Unfortunately, concern about the quality of care is rarely the primary factor for parents seeking child care arrangements. Cost is the overriding concern. For female-headed

Table 1. ARRANGEMENTS FOR DAYTIME CARE OF CHILDREN OF EMPLOYED MOTHERS (in percents)

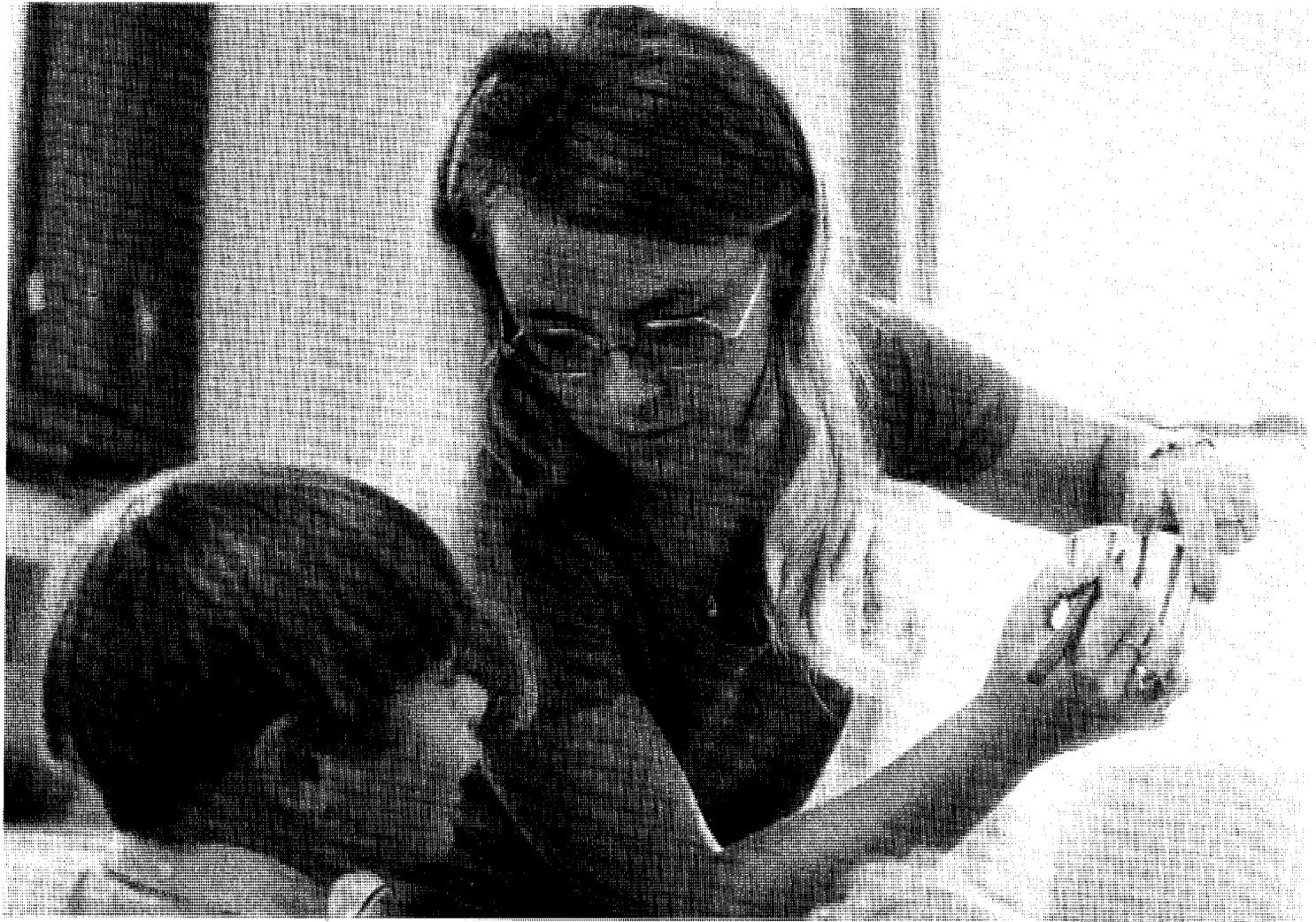
	Child 3-6	Child 7-13	Child 3-13
Care in own home			
Child's parent	54.0	64.0	61.1
Child care for self	0.4	13.8	9.9
Other relatives	7.4	10.2	9.4
Nonrelative	3.2	2.7	2.9
Subtotal	65.0	90.7	83.3
Care in someone else's home			
Relative	12.2	3.2	5.8
Nonrelative	16.6	3.5	7.3
Subtotal	28.8	6.7	13.1
Other arrangements			
Day care center	4.1	0.8	1.7
Other	0.0	0.6	0.4
Not reported	2.1	1.3	1.5
Subtotal	6.2	2.7	3.6
TOTAL^a	100%	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 298, 1976, p. 6.

^aTotals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.

Note: Reprinted from *Child Care and Public Policy: Study of the Economic Issues*, ed. P. K. Robins and S. Weiner (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1978), p. 20.

*For an enlightening review of the controversies surrounding the Mondale-Brademas Bill and succeeding attempts to introduce child care legislation, see Gilbert Y. Steiner, *The Futility of Family Policy*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1981), pp. 89-96.



families particularly, affordability is an acute problem since almost half of them live below the poverty level.

Government subsidies for child care have made a significant difference. But now, with the advent of "the new federalism" and reduced allocations for social programs, these subsidies will undergo marked changes. Tightened eligibility for AFDC and a ceiling on exemptions for child care expenses may, in fact, diminish the need for child care if these policies discourage AFDC recipients from working. On the other hand, the loss of child care workers who have been subsidized by CETA, will drive up the cost of center care.

With a budget cut in the block grant for social services amounting to 24 percent and more to come in fiscal 1983, states are struggling to sort out their responses. Centers that care for children of low income but working parents, dependent on Title XX allocations, are already closing down in New York. In Minnesota fewer children will receive publicly financed child care. At least 2,668 children of poor working parents will be cut from assistance, according to Barbara Kaufman, director of the Minnesota Association of Voluntary Social Service Agencies.

Though it is too early to see all the changes new policies and cutbacks will signal, three distinct trends have already emerged. First, direct subsidies will be made to parents, rather than facilities. Hennepin County has already introduced a voucher system for 1982. Second, local decisions are being made to withdraw funding from information and referral services and to eliminate support for advocacy, staff training, and other support services for child care systems. And third, middle income parents are pushing to have tax deductions for child care extended. Changes in the tax structure, however, will not help the neediest families, with incomes so low that they pay little or no taxes.

The economic picture that is emerging clearly favors an upsurge in the use of family day care with the lower costs it allows.

Recommendations

Family day care is already recognized as the most widely used mode of child care. It clearly deserves both professional and policy attention. If it is in the public interest to preserve for very young children a home based environment as a central part of their

life experiences, the decade ahead should concentrate on strategies to enhance, stabilize, and ensure minimum standards for this largely invisible system of child care.

Supportive programs for recruitment, training, and retention of providers of family day care are crucial. Further, two additional issues need attention: regulation, to protect the interests of very young children, and information and referral, to respond to the desperate need of working parents for child care options.

REGULATION. Expanded experimentation with registration as the mode of regulation should be encouraged. There is little evidence that licensing performs its intended function. Too few home-based child care providers are attracted to licensing, which is often controlled by welfare departments. Registration will give parents greater responsibility for monitoring compliance and with a check system may be more effective in regulation and in increasing the number of family day care providers. A system of registration might incorporate the following. 1) All providers would be required to meet standards established by the state. Persons with a history of child abuse or other personal characteristics that might be harmful to children would be ex-

cluded at this point. 2) Procedures would exist for spot checking participating homes and providers. 3) Providers meeting these standards would have access to a publicly supported and recognized information and referral system. 4) All parents being referred would be given easily understood information on how to file complaints and request inspections of child care providers whom they believe are not operating in compliance with the standards.

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS. Systems to aid parents in finding child care should be developed on a neighborhood basis. The public role should concentrate on gathering information on available caretakers. Finding arrangements for initial care and changed circumstances have been identified as the most serious concerns of working parents.

The current information and referral system appears to work chiefly through want ads and laundromat bulletin boards. This system encourages parents to hand over young children to virtual strangers and perpetuates an entirely unregulated mode of child care. How to keep an information and referral system current, accessible, and reliable is still a puzzling problem. New resources should be made available to stimulate this aspect of the enterprise. A recent experiment by Honeywell in design-

ing and installing a computerized system is being watched with great interest in Minneapolis and nationwide. Consumer guides to enable parents to choose child care wisely should be prepared and widely distributed.

The care of children, and especially very young children, is one of the major family policy questions confronting society today. Out of home care for children during work hours is likely to become the norm in

the 1980s. Families and work places are now grappling with ways of handling this new reality. Lamentably, the public debate on child care has subsided just at the moment when public and private solutions are most needed.

Photo by Robert Friedman

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The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs was established to help make the University of Minnesota more responsive to the needs of the larger community and to increase the constructive interaction between faculty and students, on the one hand, and those dealing directly with major public problems, on the other hand.

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- what CURA projects are doing
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- related programs in other Minnesota colleges and universities, and
- actions outside the educational establishment which affect our plans and programs.

Comments and contributions are welcome. Thomas M. Scott, director; Thomas L. Anding, associate director; William J. Craig, assistant director; Judith H. Weir, editor.