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“ Do the Attitudes of Policy Implementers Affect the Implementation of the Community Service Policy at a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority?” A Case Study

POS 495: Research in Applied Community Development

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I. Introduction to the Community Service Requirement Policy

According to Section 512 of the Quality and Work Responsibility Act of 1998, “every adult resident of public housing will be required to perform eight hours of community service each month, or participate in a self-sufficiency program for at least eight hours every month. This requirement does not apply to elderly persons, disabled persons, persons already working, persons exempted from work requirements under State welfare to work programs, or programs receiving assistance under a State program that have not been found to be in non-compliance with such a program” (Hunt, Schulhof, Holmquist, 1998: 5). This community service work is not a service for which a resident is paid.

Compliance with the public housing community service and self-sufficiency requirements is determined once a year, “30 days prior to the expiration of the resident’s lease, in accordance with the principles of due process” (Hunt, Schulhof, Holmquist, 1998: 5) by a public housing authority (PHA). “If the PHA determines that a tenant is not compliant, the PHA must notify the resident of the determination. [This] determination is subject to administrative grievance procedures (a court hearing also is not precluded)” (Hunt, Schulhof, Holmquist, 1988: 5). The burden that these requirements may have for non-exempt public housing residents is that the PHA may not renew the lease upon expiration of the term unless:

(1) The tenant and any other non-compliant resident, enter into a written agreement with the PHA , in the form and manner required by the PHA, to cure such non-compliance by completing the additional hours of community service or economic self-sufficiency activity needed to make up the total number of hours required over the twelve-month term of the new lease, and

(2) All other members of the family who are subject to the service requirements

are currently complying with the service requirements or are no longer residing in the unit (Federal Register, 2000: 70).

The burden these requirements place on the public housing community at large is participating in a self-sufficiency program or contributing to community service constitute non-voluntary transactions. Non-voluntary transactions occur in a power imbalance such that the public housing community may prefer to be exempted from these requirements but may have little choice but to fulfill these requirements because it is contingent upon their lease's renewal. "Non-voluntary transactions are characterized by non-legal pressure from formal and informal sources" (Rooney, 1992: 29).

"Formal pressures are exerted by agencies, practitioners, and referral sources outside the home" (Rooney, 1992:29). On the other hand, "informal pressure is exerted by family members, friends, employers, and disturbing situations" (Rooney, 1992: 29). For example, formal pressure may come under the guise of "public and private agencies [establishing] requirements, policies, and [defining] overall goals appropriate for client-practitioner contact" (Rooney, 1992: 29). In the case of the community service requirement for non-exempt public housing residents, each PHA must develop a local policy for administration of the community service and economic self-sufficiency requirements for public housing residents. Second, formal pressure is characterized when "problems are redefined to fit policies and resources" (Rooney, 1992: 30). This second example of formal pressure of a non-voluntary transaction may refer to each public housing authority's (PHA) use of discretionary authority in implementing the community service requirement to reflect local needs and priorities. Third, "agencies often use teams [of professionals] to make decisions about client contacts" (Rooney, 1992: 30) which may differ from client wishes. This third example of formal pressure of a non-voluntary

transaction may refer to the Executive Director of PHA's own interpretations of the community service requirement. This interpretation of the policy may be entirely different from the interpretation of the public housing community at large. Thus, the burden that the community service and self-sufficiency requirements place on the public housing community refers to its non-voluntary nature characterized by power imbalance along with its formal pressures.

Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the Social Service Advisor and the Executive Director, the human subject participants in the study and others associated with them. According to Allan Holly, Social Service Advisor to a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority, "this law will place a considerable burden on the existing staff at a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority (SICHA) because of the time and effort required to not only implement the community service requirements, but also set in place a system of on-going administration for a program of this magnitude. Those responsible for the implementation and management of this program will need to: 1) identify those residents who qualify for this requirement, 2) set in place and manage an on-going network of community service opportunities for residents, 3) develop and manage a tracking and monitoring system of resident compliance, 4) facilitate resident involvement through orientation and other in-service activities, and 5) manage non-compliance issues" (See Appendix I). As of January 2001, it is estimated that at least 150 current residents in this Southern Illinois county public housing facilities will be required to participate in this program.

A Southern Illinois County Housing Authority has established the following community service policy effective April 1, 2001 (See Appendix I).

II. Statement of Research Problem

The passage of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA) of 1998 gave public housing agencies (PHAs) greater discretion over many aspects of the public housing program, including the implementation of the community service requirement. In deciding how to exercise their discretionary authority, PHAs appear to be tailoring their policies to fit their own perceived needs and priorities. The challenge for PHAs in implementing this new initiative is to present it not as a punitive activity, but rather one which promises to become a rewarding, valuable, and beneficial contribution to the overall quality of life within their community. Additionally, community service offers public housing residents an opportunity to contribute to the greater community that supports them. “The Southern Illinois County Housing Authority (SICHA) believes that the community service requirement should not be perceived by the resident to be a punitive or demeaning activity, but rather to be a rewarding activity that will benefit both the resident and the community” (See Appendix I).

According to Sabatier and Mazmanian, “the crucial role of implementation analysis is to identify the categories that affect the achievement of statutory objectives throughout [the] entire [implementation] process” (1981: 6). These categories are “(1) the tractability of the problem(s) being addressed by the statute; (2) the ability of the statute to favorably structure the implementation process; (3) and the non-statutory variables affecting implementation” (1982: 7). The variables of successful implementation of a policy are dependent upon: precise and clear objectives, financial resources available to the implementing agency, and the commitment and leadership skills of implementing officials. The research question studied is: do the attitudes of

policy implementers affect the implementation of the Community Service Policy at a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority? In other words, do the ranking of statutory objectives (whether the Community Service Policy, the mandated community service program administration and the Community Service Initiative are high or low priorities), financial resources available to the Southern Illinois County Housing Authority with respect to the policy, and the commitment and leadership skills of implementing officials (evident in their attitudes) have an impact on the policy outputs (decisions) of the Community Service Policy?

In this analysis, the assumption is that the attitudes of the Social Service Advisor and the Executive Director at a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority about the Community Service Policy have an impact on the following decisions made before and during the first quarter of implementation of the policy: (1) timeline for implementation; (2) its relative priority among other issues affecting the Housing Authority; (3) the formation and dissolution of the Community Service Initiative/community service program administration; and (4) the written objective of the policy that states, “[The Southern Illinois County] Housing Authority believes that the community service requirement should not be perceived by the resident to be a punitive or demeaning activity, but rather to be a rewarding activity that will benefit both the resident and the community” (See Appendix I).

II. Review of Related Literature

A. Public Policy

Before beginning the task of studying if the attitudes of policy implementers

affect the implementation of the Community Service Policy at a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority; it is necessary to define public policy. Palumbo (1988) defines policy as “the guiding principle behind regulations, laws, and programs; its visible manifestation is the strategy taken by government to solve public problems”(10). Palumbo implies that “policy is like a moving target; it is not something that can be observed, touched, or felt. It must be inferred from the series of intended actions and behaviors of the many government agencies and officials involved in the making of the policy over time. Policy is process or an historical series of intentions, actions, and behaviors of many participants” (1988:8). “Policy, like politics, is complex, invisible, and elusive. It is an analytic category used by researchers who study government activity over time, not something that can be captured by pointing out a single event or decision” (Palumbo, 1988: 8).

B. Policy Cycle Overview

Explaining the conditions of successful or non-successful policy implementation requires a brief overview of the policy cycle. The policy cycle may be described in stages:

First, an issue gets placed onto the policy-making agenda, which means it becomes a problem that is dealt with by a government agency, such as a legislature, court, or administrative agency; second, the issue is discussed, defined, and a decision is made whether or not certain action should be taken with regard to that issue; this is the policy formation stage; third, the action or decision is given to the administrative agency to be implemented; fourth, the actions taken by the administrative agencies are evaluated to determine what impact they have on the intended audiences and clientele; and fifth, policies may be terminated if they lose political support, are found not to be achieving their goals, are too costly or for some other reason (Palumbo, 1988: 17-18).

C. Policy Cycle Drawbacks

The policy cycle simplifies reality as it distinguishes important components of a complicated set of behaviors in the policy-making process. However, it has several drawbacks. One is that many components of the process have not been included. “For example, the “outputs” of the system might be inserted after the implementation stage. These outputs are all of the actions taken by millions of government employees who actually implement policy”(Palumbo, 1988: 18). Another drawback of this view of the policy cycle is that it is too logical and sequential. Reality specifies that the various stages of policy-making overlap and intermingle. They sometimes occur simultaneously or are out of sequence (Palumbo, 1988: 18). In addition, policy is always being revised and reformulated. “It is never a single, clear, and non-contradictory set of objectives but most often a morass of conflicting goals, objectives, and behaviors. It is not made by only “policy-makers” at the top, but also by the multitude of street-level bureaucrats who actually deliver the services to the people (Lipsky, 1980; Protas, 1979). Michael Lipsky, a leading scholar of street-level bureaucrats, asserts:

I argue that decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, effectively become the public policies they carry out. I argue that public policy is not best understood as made in legislatures or top-floor suites of high-ranking administrators, because in important ways it is actually made in the crowded offices and daily encounters of street-level workers (Palumbo, 1988: 20).

“School teachers, police officers, welfare workers, public health nurses, sanitarians, judges, and prosecutors, and the multitude of other people who work

in governmental agencies in a very real sense, make policy as they carry out their day-to-day jobs. In this sense, policy is the *output* of the policy-making system (Palumbo, 1988: 20). This brief overview of the policy cycle is an abstract representation of the stages in policy making.

D. Implementation and its Analysis Factors

One of the stages in the policy cycle is implementation. Sabatier and Mazmanian define implementation as “the carrying out of a basic policy decision, usually made in a statute (although also possible through important executive orders or court decisions)” (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1981: 5). Sabatier and Mazmanian believe that the crucial role of implementation analysis is to identify the factors that affect the achievement of statutory objectives throughout this entire process. “These can be divided into three categories: (1) the tractability of the problem(s) being addressed by the statute; (2) the ability of the statute to favorably structure implementation process; (3) the political variables on the balance of support for statutory objectives” (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1981: 6).

E. Aspects of Implementation Stage

There are two aspects of the implementation stage of the policy-making process. The first one is at the *macro level* “which refers to the interaction among government agencies”(Palumbo, 1988: 93). For example, a federal government policy that needs to be implemented “requires the interaction and cooperation of federal, state, and local governmental agencies as well as private organizations” (Palumbo, 1988: 94). The second aspect of implementation is at the micro level, “which refers to the interaction of individuals and divisions *within* a department.

These are the interactions among an agency head, department chiefs, supervisors, and the street-level workers” (Palumbo, 1988: 94).

F. Street-level Bureaucrat

The implementers of policy include federal, state, and local, as well as, private agencies and individuals. Michael Lipsky (1976) stressed the importance of the street-level bureaucrat.

It describes those individuals who have direct contact with citizens; they are the people who actually are government as far as a citizen is concerned because they interact with citizens and interpret government laws, rules, and regulations for them. They include the millions of schoolteachers, police officers, judges, prosecutors, probation officers, social welfare workers, nurses, physicians working in public health departments, driver license examiners, internal-revenue auditors, high-school principals, housing authority managers, and unemployment office workers who supply government services and enforce government regulations.

Street level bureaucrats are not all lower-level employees in public/private organizations. In fact, many of them are rather high level and/or autonomous individuals such as judges, prosecutors, teachers, university professors, and public health physicians. Even though many street-level bureaucrats occupy a fairly low position within the organization, they nevertheless have an enormous impact on the direction of public policy (Palumbo, 1988: 95).

Thus, street-level bureaucrats are “public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work...” (Lipsky, 1980:3)

Lipsky argues that street-level bureaucrats attract controversy because of the “immediacy of their interactions and their impact on people’s lives” (1980:8). They tend to be the focus of controversy because the policy they deliver to citizens is often immediate and impersonal. Second, they “make decisions on the spot (although sometimes they try not to) and their determinations are focused

entirely on the individual” (Lipsky, 1980: 8). On the other hand, a policy that affects an urban renewal program may be prolonged, [has] many different stages, [and is] usually played out in arenas far removed from the daily life of neighborhood residents (Lipsky, 1980: 8). In delivering policy, “street-level bureaucrats make decisions about people that affect their life chances” (Lipsky, 1980:9).

To designate or to treat someone as a welfare recipient, a juvenile delinquent, or a high achiever affects the relationships of others to that person and also affects the person’s self-evaluation. Thus begins (or continues) the social process that we infer accounts for so many self-fulfilling prophecies. The child judged to be a juvenile delinquent develops such a self-image and is grouped with other “delinquents”, increasing the chances that he or she will adopt the behavior thought to have been incipient in the first place. Children thought by their teacher to be endowed in learning ability learn more than peers of equal intelligence who were not thought to be superior. Welfare recipients find or accept housing inferior to those with equal disposable incomes who are not recipients (Lipsky, 1980: 9).

The working environment of street-level bureaucrats includes the clients’ personal reactions to their decisions...(Lipsky, 1980: 9) “To say that people’s self-evaluation is affected by the actions of street-level bureaucrats is to say that people are reactive to the policy” (Lipsky, 1980: 9). Clients may react with anger to real or perceived injustices... “or act grateful...or sullen and passive in reaction to street-level bureaucrats’ decisions” (Lipsky, 1980: 9).

It is one thing to be treated neglectfully and routinely by the telephone company, the motor vehicle bureau, or other government agencies whose agents know nothing of personal circumstances surrounding a claim or request. It is quite another to be shuffled, categorized, and treated “bureaucratically”, (in the pejorative sense), by someone to whom one is directly talking and from whom one expects at least an open and sympathetic hearing. In short, the reality of the work of street-level bureaucrats could hardly be farther from the bureaucratic ideal of impersonal detachment in decision making. On the contrary, in street

level bureaucracies, the objects of critical decisions-people- actually change as a result of the decisions (Lipsky, 1980: 9).

Another controversy that surrounds street-level bureaucracies at the level of individual service provision is that street-level bureaucrats' discretion opens up the possibility of a favorable response on behalf of their clients. "Their general and diffused obligation to the 'public interest' permits hope to flourish that the [street-level bureaucrat] will adopt a benign or favorable orientation toward the client" (Lipsky, 1980: 10). These are some of the controversies that street-level bureaucrats face in their interactions with the people they serve.

Besides encountering these controversies, street-level bureaucrats in their roles as policy-makers are often seen as having relative autonomy from organizational authority (Lipsky, 1980: 16). Street-level bureaucrats will more or less conform to what is expected of them. "Organizational theorists recognize that there will always be some slippage between orders and the carrying out of orders, but this slippage is usually attributed to poor communication or workers' residual, and not terribly important, disagreement with organizational goals" (Lipsky, 1980: 16).

What if street-level bureaucrats do not share the same objectives of their superiors? "One can expect a degree of noncompliance if lower-level workers' interests differ from the interests of those at higher levels, and the incentives and sanctions available to higher levels are not sufficient to prevail" (Lipsky, 1980:17). Some of the ways lower-level workers may not cooperate within their organizations include such "personal strategies as not working (excessive absenteeism, quitting), aggression toward the organization (stealing, cheating,

deliberate wasting), and negative attitudes with implications for work (alienation, apathy)” (Lipsky, 1980: 17). These forms of non-cooperation described the lower-level workers’ lack of motivation and weak performance if there is conflict between the personal needs of the workers’ and organizations’ goals.

Another class of conflicts between lower-level workers and the organizations may “arise not from the personal needs of the workers alone but also from their positions within their organizations” (Lipsky, 1980: 18). The interests of street-level bureaucrats may be distinctly different from the interests of others in the agencies for which they work. “Moreover, certain features of their role make it possible for them to make these differences manifest” (Lipsky, 1980: 18). Thus, the differences in interests and the manifestation of such differences “permit the analysis of the structural position of street-level bureaucrats from a conflict perspective” (Lipsky, 1980: 18). The following describes the differences between street-level bureaucrats and managers.

One of the differences between street-level bureaucrats and managers is in the use of discretion (Lipsky, 1980: 18). Street-level bureaucrats’ use of discretion “in processing large amounts of work with inadequate resources means that they must develop shortcuts and simplifications to cope with the press of responsibilities” (Lipsky, 1980: 18). These coping mechanisms used by street-level bureaucrats are often unsanctioned by the managers of their agencies. Work processing devices utilized by street-level bureaucrats are part of an informal agency structure “that may be necessary to maintain the organization, even though the procedures may be contrary to agency policy”(Lipsky, 1980: 19).

This is a neat paradox. Lower-level participants develop coping mechanisms contrary to an agency's policy but actually basic to its survival. For example, brutality is contrary to policy, but a certain degree of looking-the-other-way on the part of the supervisors may be considered necessary to persuade officers to risk assault. Street-level bureaucrats have a role interest in securing the requirements of completing the job. Managers, on the other hand, are properly result-oriented. They are concerned with performance, the cost of securing performance and only those aspects of process that expose them to critical scrutiny (Lipsky, 1980: 19).

Another difference between street-level bureaucrats and managers is for the street-level bureaucrats' desire to maintain their autonomy. Managers try to restrict workers' autonomy "in order to secure certain results, but street-level bureaucrats often regard such efforts as illegitimate and to some degree resist them successfully" (Lipsky, 1980: 19). Non-compliance of lower-level workers from superiors' directives does not mean that the "managers' efforts to dictate service norms are regarded as illegitimate" (Lipsky, 1980: 19). Street-level bureaucrats have some claim to professional status. However, they have a bureaucratic responsibility to comply with their superiors' directives. "It does mean, however, that street-level bureaucrats will perceive their interests as separate from managers' interests, and they will seek to secure these interests" (Lipsky, 1980: 19).

One other difference between the interests of street-level bureaucrats and managers is "their continuous interaction with clients and the varying degrees of complexity in this interaction" (Lipsky, 1980: 22). For example, the interactions between street-level bureaucrats and their clients may be described as an apparent unfairness of treating people alike. The danger of grouping clients by their

“bureaucratically relevant characteristics- age, sex, place of residence, income level, etc.- a failure to recognize these differences sometimes seems unfair to itself” (Lipsky, 1980: 23). Like everyone else, street-level bureaucrats have personal standards whether or not someone is deserving. Applying the standards of service with respect to the personal characteristics of clients may be done on a case-by-case basis. “Street-level bureaucrats enjoy considerable discretion in part because society does not want computerized public service and rigid application of standards at the expense of responsiveness to the individual situation” (Lipsky, 1980: 23).

The relationship between street-level bureaucrats and managers is characterized in two ways. First, it is a relationship “best conceived in large part as intrinsically conflictual” (Lipsky, 1980: 25). Client-processing goals and the maximization of autonomy is associated with the role of the street-bureaucrat. However, managers’ roles are associated with “worker-management goals directed toward aggregate achievement of the work unit and orientations directed toward minimizing autonomy” (Lipsky, 1980: 25). Second, the relationship is characterized by its mutual dependence. Managers usually honor workers’ preferences if they are rewarded reciprocity in job performance. “To a degree, reciprocity will characterize all working relations; in street-level bureaucracies, however, the resources of lower-level workers are greater than those often possessed by subordinates in other work contexts” (Lipsky, 1980: 25).

When relationships between policy deliverers and managers are conflictual and reciprocal, policy implementation analysis must question assumptions that influence flows with authority from higher to lower levels, and that there is an intrinsic shared interest

in achieving agency objectives. This situation requires analysis that starts from an understanding of the working conditions and priorities of those who deliver policy and the limits of circumscribing those jobs by recombining conventional sanctions and incentives (Lipsky, 1980: 25).

G. Importance of Implementation in the Policy Cycle

Why is implementation an important stage in the policy-making cycle?

One of the many reasons why it is now recognized as one of the most important aspects of the policy cycle is that policy implementers “do not always agree with policy objectives specified in the laws. As a result, they may resist carrying it out” (Palumbo, 1988: 104). They may resist because they believe the objectives of the law are unrealistic.

Resistance may also occur if legislation upsets the established routines of a bureaucracy. Bureaucrats can resist carrying out policy they do not agree with by dragging their feet or by outright sabotage. If implementers do not agree with the goals of policy, they can engage in games that result in the diversion of resources away from their intended use, deflection of policy goals, the resistance efforts to control behavior, and the dissipation of personal and political energies in game-playing that might otherwise be channeled into constructive programmatic action. Administrators who change the goals of the policy during implementation are not necessarily neglecting their jobs. Instead, they may be attempting to find ways of making a vague or bad law work (Palumbo, 1988: 105).

H. Conditions of Effective Implementation

Paul Sabatier and Daniel Mazmanian in “The Conditions of Effective Implementation: A Guide to Accomplishing Policy Objectives (1979)” attempt to forecast what conditions promote or prevent policy implementation. “They argue that the likelihood of implementation is enhanced by the existence of a favorable or “optimal” set of conditions. Conversely, in their view, implementation is impeded or prevented when some or all of these conditions do not exist”

(Stillman, 1996: 382). Sabatier and Mazmanian have identified the following five conditions for effective implementation:

- 1) The program is based on a sound theory relating changes in target group behavior to achievement of the desired-end state (objectives).
- 2) The statute (or other basic policy decision) contains unambiguous policy directives and structures for the implementation process so as to maximize the likelihood that target groups will perform as desired.
- 3) The leaders of the implementing agencies possess substantial managerial and political skills and are committed to statutory goals.
- 4) The program is actively supported by organized constituency groups and by a few key legislators (or the chief executive) throughout the implementation process, with the courts being neutral or supportive.
- 5) The relative priority of statutory objectives is not significantly undermined over time by the emergence of conflicting public policies or by changes in relevant socioeconomic conditions that undermine the statute's "technical" theory or political support (1979: 484-485).

Sabatier and Mazmanian acknowledged that it is difficult for all of these conditions to be present (Palumbo, 1988:109). According to Palumbo,

although not explicitly stated, Sabatier and Mazmanian view effective implementation in an instrumental way. Their conditions imply that success or failure is a function of how goals are carried out. Implementation success is measured in terms of efficiency, economy, and effectiveness. The goals of policy, in this view, are treated as givens, and successful implementation is measured in terms of whether or not these goals are achieved. Implementation deals only with means, not ends. The question to be answered is, "Did the agency achieve goals intended by the policy in the most efficient and economical way possible?" (1981: 109).

Sabatier and Mazmanian's model is just one of the many that try to identify the conditions for effective implementation.

One of the conditions of effective implementation in Sabatier and Mazmanian's model is that the leaders of the implementing agencies must possess substantial

managerial and political skills and are committed to statutory goals” (Stillman, 1996:382).

I. Attitudes

Before beginning the task of studying if attitudes of the policy implementers affect the implementation of the Community Service Requirement Policy at a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority, it is necessary to provide a definition of attitudes. According to Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey, “attitudes are enduring systems of positive or negative evaluations, emotional feelings, pro or con action tendencies with respect to social objects”(Pratkanis, Breckler, and Greenwald, 1962: 139). Ajzen (1989) added that even though variations of defining attitudes exist, “most contemporary social psychologists seem to agree that the characteristic attribute of attitude is its evaluative (pro-con, positive-negative) dimension” (241). Thus, this definition conceives that attitude as having three components: cognition, affect, and conation (behavioural).

Attitude is generally acknowledged as a hypothetical construct or a latent variable.

Being inaccessible to direct observation, it must be inferred from measurable responses, and given the nature of the construct, these responses must reflect positive or negative evaluations of the attitude object. Beyond this requirement, however, virtually no limitations are placed on the kinds of responses that can be considered. To simplify matters it is possible to categorize attitude-relevant responses into various subgroups. Thus, we might distinguish between responses directed at others and responses directed at self, between behaviors performed in public and behaviors performed in private, or between actions and reactions (Ajzen, 1989: 244).

According to Ajzen (1989) cognitive responses in a verbal response mode consist of “expressions of beliefs about the attitude object; and cognitive responses in a nonverbal mode relate to perceptual reactions to attitude object” (Pratkanis, Breckler, and

Greenwald, 1989: 244). Affective responses in a verbal response mode involve “expressions of feelings toward the attitude object; and affective responses in a nonverbal mode may include physiological reactions to attitude object” (Pratkanis, Breckler, and Greenwald, 1989: 244). On the other hand, conative responses are “behavioral inclinations, intentions, commitments, and actions with respect to the attitudinal object” (Pratkanis, Breckler, and Greenwald, 1989: 244). Nonverbal conative responses involve overt behaviors with respect to attitude object.

Greenwald (1989) asked the important question: why are attitudes important? He discussed four types of answers to this question of which two are described next. One answer is that attitudes predict behavior toward their objects. La Piere (1934) criticized the usefulness of attitudes in predicting behavior. Festinger (1964) “critically noted the lack of published support for the reasonable expectation that changes in attitudes should lead to changes in behavior toward their object” (Pratkanis, Breckler, Greenwald, 1989: 2). In addition, Wicker (1969) “reviewed a body of research that revealed only weak correlations between measures of attitudes and measures of behavior toward their objects” (Pratkanis, Breckler, Greenwald, 1989: 2). However,

in the 1970s and 1980s, two major programs of research succeeded in clarifying attitude-behavior relations. The first of these, directed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen demonstrated that attitude and behavior are correlated (a) when the observed behavior is judged to be relevant to the attitude, (b) when attitude and behavior are observed at comparable levels of specificity, and (c) when mediation of the attitude-behavior relation by behavioral intentions is taken into account. The second major program, directed by Russell Fazio showed that attitude and behavior and changes therein are correlated (a) when attitude is based on direct experience with the attitude object, and (b) to the extent that the attitude is cognitively accessible (Pratkanis, Breckler, Greenwald, 1989: 2).

Although the successful Fishbein-Ajzen and Fazio research programs have established that attitudes can and do predict behavior toward their objects, these

programs have also placed important qualifying conditions on the attitude-behavior relationship.

The other answer stated that attitudes are a selective force in perception and memory.

It has long been supposed that perceptual and cognitive processes are guided by attitudes. The two most often stated principles regarding attitude-guided information processing are that persons selectively (a) seek information that agrees with their attitudes (e.g., Festinger, 1957), and (b) remember attitude-agreeable information in preference to disagreeable information (e.g. Levine & Murphy, 1943) (Pratkanis, Breckler, Greenwald, 1989: 3).

I. Theory of Cognitive Dissonance

According to Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance, "there is a tendency for individuals to seek consistency among their beliefs and opinions (cognitions). When there is an inconsistency (dissonance) between attitudes and behaviors, something must change to eliminate dissonance. In the case of a discrepancy between attitudes and behaviors, it is most likely that the attitude will change to accommodate the behavior" (<http://tip.psychology.org/festinge.html>).

Festinger believes that two factors affect the strength of the dissonance: "the number of dissonant beliefs and the importance attached to each belief" (<http://tip.psychology.org/festinge.html>).

He also noted that there are three ways to reduce or eliminate dissonance. They are:

1) Changing a behavioral cognitive element

When the dissonance under consideration is between an element corresponding to some knowledge concerning environment (environmental element) and a behavioral element, the dissonance can, of course, be eliminated by changing the behavioral cognitive

element in such a way that it is consonant with the environmental element. The simplest and easiest way in which this may be accomplished is to change the action or feeling which the behavioral element represents. Given that a cognition is responsive to “reality” (as we have seen), if the behavior of the organism changes, the cognitive element or elements corresponding to this behavior will likewise change. This method of reducing or eliminating dissonance is a very frequent occurrence. Our behavior and feelings are frequently modified in accordance with new information. It may not always be possible, however, to eliminate dissonance or even to reduce it materially by changing one’s action or feeling. The difficulty of changing behavior may be too great, or the change, while eliminating some dissonances may create a whole hosts of new ones (Festinger, 1957: 19).

2) Changing an environmental cognitive element

Just as it is possible to change a behavioral cognitive element by changing the behavior which this element mirrors, it is sometimes possible to change an *environmental* cognitive element by changing the situation to which that elements corresponds. This, of course, is much more difficult than changing one’s behavior, for one must have a degree of control over one’s environment- a relatively rare occurrence.

Changing the environment itself in order to reduce dissonance is more feasible when the social environment is in question than when the physical environment is involved.

Whenever there is sufficient control over the environment, this method of reducing dissonance may be employed. For example, a person who is habitually hostile toward other people may surround himself with persons who provoke hostility. His cognitions about the persons with whom he associates are then consonant with the cognitions corresponding to his hostile behavior (Festinger, 1957: 19-21).

3) Adding new cognitive elements

It is clear that in order to eliminate a dissonance completely, some cognitive element must be changed. It is also clear that this is not always possible. But even if it is impossible to eliminate a dissonance, it is possible to reduce the total magnitude of dissonance by adding new cognitive elements. In the presence of such dissonance, a person might be expected to actively seek new information that might reduce the total dissonance and at the same time, to avoid new information that might increase the existing dissonance (Festinger, 1957: 21-22).

Festinger (1957) also noted the avoidance of dissonance. He believes that under certain circumstances there are strong and important leanings to avoid increases in dissonance or to avoid them altogether.

The avoidance of an increase in dissonance comes about, of course, as a result of the existence of dissonance. This avoidance is especially important where, in the process of attempting to reduce dissonance, support is sought for a new cognitive element to replace an existing one or where new cognitive elements are to be added. In both these circumstances, the seeking of support and the seeking of new information must be done in a highly selective manner. A person would initiate discussion with someone he thought would agree with the new cognitive element but would avoid discussion with someone who might agree with the element that he was trying to change. A person would expose himself to sources of information which he expected would add new elements which would increase consonance but would certainly avoid sources which would increase dissonance (Festinger, 1957: 30).

Festinger (1957) acknowledges that there are certain instances in which persons will behave in a manner counter to their convictions and will make public statements which they do not really believe. It is necessary to discuss the situations in which this type of discrepancy between the public behavior and private belief occurs.

Let us imagine that influence or pressure is exerted on a person to change his opinions or beliefs or actions. Sometimes, such influence will not be successful in that no change is brought about. Sometimes it will be successful in the sense that the person will actually change his opinions or beliefs. Other times such influence may be successful in that the person changes his overt behavior or overt verbal expression of his opinions while privately he still holds to his original beliefs (Festinger, 1957: 84).

He attempted to state the theoretical conditions under which public compliance without private acceptance occurs. The following is a summary of those theoretical conditions.

Public compliance without an accompanying change in private opinion or belief will occur when the following conditions exist:

- 1) The compliance is brought about mainly through the exertion of a threat of punishment for noncompliance, the individual against whom

the threat is directed being sufficiently restrained from leaving the situation. Under such circumstances, the person is faced with the alternatives of complying or of suffering the threatened punishment. If the threatened punishment is stronger than whatever resistance he has to showing compliance, he will overtly change his behavior or statements. In this case, however, his private opinion will not be affected. If no other factors enter the situation, he will continue to believe privately what he has held previously.

2) The compliance is brought about mainly through the offer of a special reward for complying. Under these circumstances, if the reward is sufficiently attractive to overcome the existing resistance, the individual may comply overtly in order to obtain the promised reward. Once more, if compliance is obtained in this manner on an overt or public level, the private opinion will remain essentially unchanged for the moment and hence will be at variance with the public behavior or expression (Festinger, 1957: 86).

Festinger believes that there are two general ways where it is possible to identify the discrepancy between overt behavior or statement and private opinion. They are:

1) The first is by removing the source of influence or pressure. Assume that a person exhibits a certain changed behavior in the presence of others who have exerted pressure on him to behave in that manner. One may attempt to observe the behavior of this person when he is not in the presence of those people. If private change has occurred, the behavior should persist under these circumstances. If the change has been only on the level of public compliance, the behavior should revert to what it had been previously.

2) The second way to identify the discrepancy between overt behavior and private opinion is by direct measurement of private opinion. In addition to observing the public behavior, it is also possible to identify a discrepancy between public and private opinion by eliciting a statement under circumstances where the person is assured of anonymity. The latter may be regarded as reflecting private opinion. If the anonymous and public statements differ, there is evidence that public compliance without accompanying private change of opinion has occurred (Festinger, 1957: 87).

Festinger (1957) emphasized that there are certain individual differences among people “in the degree to which and in the manner that, they react to the existence of dissonance. For some people, dissonance is an extremely painful and intolerable thing, while there are others who seem to be able to tolerate a large amount of dissonance” (266-267).

This variation in tolerance for dissonance would seem to be measurable in at least a rough way. Persons with low tolerance for dissonance should show more discomfort in the presence of dissonance and should manifest greater efforts to reduce dissonance than persons who have high tolerance. One would expect a person with low tolerance for dissonance to see issues more in terms of “black and white” than would a person with high tolerance for dissonance who might be expected to be able to maintain “grays” in his cognitions.

A person with a low tolerance for dissonance would, perhaps, be unable to maintain such dissonances and would struggle to eliminate them (Festinger, 1957: 267).

In summary, the principles of Festinger’s theory of dissonance are: 1) “dissonance results when an individual must choose between attitudes and behaviors that are contradictory and 2) dissonance can be eliminated by reducing the importance of conflicting beliefs, acquiring new beliefs that change the balance, or removing the conflicting attitude or behavior” (<http://tip.psychology.org/festinger.html>).

J. Definitions of Community, Community-building, and Roles of Housing Manager and Community-building Facilitator that will foster community-building

The often unseen strengths of a public housing community involve “developing collaborative strategies” that would produce positive results around matters of shared concern (Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997: 97). Before describing how this is achieved through community building and through the roles of the housing manager and the community-building

facilitator that will foster these collaborative strategies, the words community and community building must be defined.

According to Larry Lyons, “a community involves...[people] living within a specific area, sharing common ties, and interacting with one another” (1999: 5). Community building on the other hand, is “an approach to fighting poverty that operates by building social and human capital.” [In other words], “the relationships fostered among individual residents and families by cooperative endeavors become the kind of invisible infrastructure of mutual trust and loyalty that makes other advances possible” (Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997: 29). “It is these networks that enhance resident participation and allow residents to incorporate their own values, insights, and needs into the process (Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997: 29). The housing manager’s primary job is to build the infrastructure that will foster community building. Three of these steps include: (1) “ hiring a community-building facilitator; (2) creating a representative organization, if one does not already exist; and (3) assuring that management is connected and responsive to residents” (Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997: 29). A community building facilitator is accountable for the implementation of the housing authority’s community-building process that includes:

- Managing the process through which residents choose, develop, and carry out community oriented projects.
- Organizing and running meetings of residents and others involved in the community building process, including service providers, financial institutions, employers, and city partners.
- Identifying, locating, and managing social resources that residents can use to further their goals.
- Developing partnerships with public housing managers.
- Linking residents with stakeholders outside the public housing community (Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997: 31).

The other roles that the community building facilitator may take are that of a teacher, listener, convener, organizer, facilitator, and a consensus builder. “With the support of strong leadership the facilitator can deliver on commitments made, build trust among community partners, and help residents achieve their goals” (Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997: 32).

K. Community Service

“Community service is thought to foster civic engagement and encourages the responsible resident to give something back to the community. In doing so, public housing residents are “learning the satisfaction of investing in the future of their community...” (Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997: 53). Community service projects are most effective when they address issues or problems that directly concern residents” (Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997: 53).

A Southern Illinois County Housing Authority: A Case Study

Contextualizing the Study

A. Brief Description of the Community Service Policy

The Community Service Policy requires each adult member of a public housing household, as part of their lease, to contribute eight hours per month of community service or to participate in an economic self-sufficiency program for eight hours per month. This policy includes several exemptions. This requirement is only for public housing residents who are not 62 years of age or older; blind or disabled; employed; a Section 8 recipient; a person engaged in a

work program as part of the state's welfare reform efforts; or anyone in a family receiving assistance in a state that has a welfare to work program and is complying with program requirements (NAHRO- FAQs on the The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998, 1999: 9).

B. Narrative of the Preparation for Implementation of the Community Service Policy and the Community Service Initiative by a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority

The Community Service Policy will place a burden on the existing staff at the Southern Illinois County Housing Authority because of the time and effort to implement the community service requirements and to set in place a system for an on-going administration of this program. As of January 2001, it is estimated that at least one hundred and fifty (150) current public housing residents in a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority will be required to participate in the community service program administration. "This law will also place a considerable burden on the Housing Authority to ensure compliance because this particular Southern Illinois County is a rural area with significant transportation issues and a limited number of organizations and public institutions that may absorb over twelve hundred (1200) volunteer hours a month" (See Appendix I).

Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the Social Service Advisor and the Executive Director, the human subject participants in the study and others associated with them. In February 2000, Allan Holly, the Social Service Advisor and the former Executive Director, Vera D.

Milo, met to discuss the community service requirement. Over the next several months, meetings between the Social Service Advisor and the Executive Director were held to outline how this particular Southern Illinois County Housing Authority would address the community service requirement.

In August 2000, the Community Service Initiative, a cooperative venture between the Southern Illinois County Housing Authority and the Department of Health Education and Recreation at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale was proposed to address the community service requirement. Dr. Dayna Salinger, Assistant Professor of Recreation of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIU-C), joined in the discussions with the Social Service Advisor and the Executive Director and recognized that there is much potential for the community service requirement to become “an opportunity for residents to not only contribute to the overall quality of life in their community but also use the [mandated] community service hours to take control of their own Community Service Initiative environment and build life skills” (See Appendix I). Dr. Salinger realized that if the mandated community service hours were invested within the public housing community, rather than in outside agencies, a stronger community could be built. Thus, a long-range goal of the proposed Community Service Initiative is to develop a program that is controlled, operated, and managed by a board of public housing residents at each public housing project.

Residents will have full ownership of and responsibility for planning and directing a range of on-site programs, special projects, and self-improvement activities at each public housing site that utilize [mandated] community service hours for staffing and management. Residents will determine the programs and activities that operate at each site but it is envisioned that these activities could include such things as operating an on-site baby-sitting co-op, staffing an after-school tutoring program or hosting education forums (Community Service Initiative Proposal).

In September 2000, a proposal to create a system of tenant councils emerged for the residents to identify problems affecting the community and to empower the residents on how to direct the mandated community service hours to be used to address those problems. The purpose of creating the Community Service Initiative that includes the creation of tenant councils is to empower the residents to utilize the mandated community service hours to improve the quality of life in their community rather than viewing the community service requirement as a punitive initiative. At this time, Allan Holly, the Social Service Advisor with the assistance of Norris Schaum, Graduate Assistant and Recreation Supervisor from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale began conducting bi-weekly tenant council meetings in Anna, Illinois.

In November 2000, Allan Holly wrote the first draft of the Community Service Policy. Vera D. Milo, the Executive Director at that time, advised Holly of her interpretation of the dates by which the policy would go into effect. By December 2000, Julie Paulson had been appointed as the new Executive Director and set the official dates for the new policy to take effect. These dates appear in the attached copy of the policy. In meetings

with Vera D. Milo and Julie Paulson, both Executive Directors realized that the administration of the community service program administration would place a great strain on the limited resources of this particular Southern Illinois County Housing Authority. Tracking and documentation of the mandated community service hours of each non-exempt resident doing community service as well as supervision are labor intensive. Therefore, the proposed cooperative venture between the Southern Illinois County Housing Authority and The Department of Health Education and Recreation at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale named as the Community Service Initiative is seen by the Executive Directors and the Social Service Advisor as a way to reduce what may become a considerable burden on the existing staff at a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority.

C. Research Methodology and Goal

A case study approach is used for this research. The participants are the current executive director and the social service advisor, of a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority. The purpose of this study is to identify the attitudes of the Social Service Advisor and the Executive Director about the Community Service Policy, community service in general and the proposed Community Service Initiative (tenant council meetings), and the public housing residents at large and study whether or not their attitudes about these factors affect the implementation of the Community Service Policy. Formal interviews were conducted from March to May 2001 at a Southern Illinois County Housing

Authority. The study consisted of one formal interview with the a Southern Illinois county Housing Authority Executive Director, Ms. Julie Paulson conducted in May 2001, and two formal interviews with Social Service Advisor, Mr. Allan Holly, conducted in March and May 2001. The participants were recruited with the help of a key informant and human research subject, Mr. Allan Holly, the Social Service Advisor to the a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority.

One of the difficulties of this research study was that the data collection was restricted to three interviews, one with the Executive Director and two with the Social Service Advisor. The researcher had limited access to the Executive Director who was only willing to do the one interview mentioned above because she claimed that she was overworked and did not have time. In addition, the Social Service Advisor resigned in the first quarter of the implementation of the policy. Therefore, this analysis is limited. Nevertheless, this study illuminates the attitudes of these participants before and during the first quarter of the implementation of this policy. The researcher feels that the interviews were adequate so she was able to gather the data pertinent to the research question.

The focal points of this investigation are the policy implementers: Allan Holly, Social Service Advisor and the current Executive Director, Julie Paulson. They were charged with implementing the Community Service Policy.

Findings

This analysis is divided into two themes. First, to describe the attitudes, perceptions, interpretations, and concerns of the Social Service Advisor and the current Executive Director about community service in general, the mandated community service program administration, the Community Service Initiative and the Community Service Policy. The second underlying theme is to describe the attitudes and perceptions of the Social Service Advisor and the Executive Director about the non-exempt residents who are mandated to fulfill community service hours as part of their lease and about public housing residents in general.

Allan Holly, the Social Service Advisor, defined community service as:

community service generally, I'm getting this definition from my time as a probation officer, is service required of some individual, usually for a specific reason, whether it be a punitive measure because they committed a crime and are now on probation or whether it be a student who needs to pay off some debt. Community service is service done by an individual for their local community hopefully for its benefit (Interview. March 16, 2001).

Holly understood his role in the implementation of the Community Service Policy by first voicing his attitude about it. "I have very mixed feelings on the Community Service Policy. "I wrote the rough draft but several other people were involved in the revision of that policy." He added that the "Executive Director had to sign-off on the policy and an advisory committee made up of residents had to review the policy and ultimately, [the] Board of Directors had to give the final approval for it." " So along the road, there were several changes made to it" (Interview. March 16, 2001).

The following comments addressed his understanding of definitions of exemptions to the policy and the timeline for implementation. Holly emphasized

that “it was not the product [he] initially wanted.” The final draft of the Community Service Policy has a very narrow focus and “at one point, I had thought that I may have as many as between 100-150 residents at any given time required to do community service hours. Now [as of May 2001] it’s probably about 15 people countywide.” Holly said,

My interpretation of the HUD guidelines was that the exemptions would not be automatic. Every individual would have to be evaluated. Every individual between the ages of 18-62 living in public housing would have to be evaluated and I would grade against a series of guidelines.

For instance, if they were a full-time student, they would be exempted. If they had a job, they would be exempted. If they were disabled, and that was the kicker. Right there is the “disabled” clause.

He acknowledged that the definition of disability he was using was a very narrow definition, in that, “you had to have a bonafide disability that prevented you from doing community service hours for your community” (Interview. March 16, 2001).

Initially, the information we got from HUD, led me to believe that in order for a person to be disabled, it was going to be a bonafide disability, in the common pop culture sense of the word.

People in wheelchairs, people who are blind, deaf, have a physical disability which would preclude them from being able to easily perform community service (Interview. May 25, 2001).

However, the final interpretation of the word disability was anyone who was, listed [in] Social Security as being disabled, was disabled. [Public housing residents] collecting Social Security Insurance are exempt [from the community service requirement] the way the policy was finally approved.

So even if their [public housing residents] disability was something like a learning disability, because they are collecting [Social Security] however a small amount of money it may be from Social Security, then they were exempted the way the policy was finally approved. And that gives me a far narrower base of people to draw out of (Interview. March 16, 2001).

Holly also discussed the timeline for implementation of the Community Service Policy. “The policy is to take effect after our 2001 fiscal year begins. For us, the 2001 fiscal year begins in April” (Interview. March 16, 2001).

His interpretation of the April 1, 2001 is that the Community Service Policy would take effect on that date. “The way other people (Milo and Paulson, the former and current Executive Directors respectively) interpret that was it would take effect when people sign their leases in the fiscal year 2001. Existing public housing residents are not affected by the policy until they sign their new leases in either September 2001 or March 2002. “But new residents, moving in after April 1st, if they meet the criteria are immediately affected because they signed their lease after April 1st”. He added that,

They (Milo and Paulson) saw this as a gargantuan undertaking that no one on the staff had the time for. They made it (policy) as small as possible.

As narrowly defined as possible to affect the smallest number of people as possible, [with] the longest timeline possible.

They did what they thought was best for myself, themselves, and the Housing Authority in general (Interview. March 16, 2001).

In summary, Holly reiterated that “after several discussions of definitions of who exactly is going to be affected by this policy; after discussing the timeline that the

policy will be implemented... the final policy was just less than what I had wanted.” [It has] a narrower focus than what I had wanted. It has a longer timeline for implementation than what I had wanted” (Interview. March 16, 2001).

After describing his own attitudes and perceptions about the Community Service Policy, Holly, in his first interview, said that the community service requirement should be seen not as a punitive program but as something beneficial for the public housing community. Holly wants to utilize the mandated community service hours into the various community-building activities he had initiated before the implementation of the Community Service Policy. He made his point by saying,

I don't want this to be a punitive program. I wanted to make the community service as broad as possible, so that in essence, I could bring in additional help for the various initiatives I've tried to start.

For instance, over the summer, we had a rash of break-ins within this community. Several residents wanted something done. My response to this was to start a neighborhood watch. What I found out was, once several people were arrested for burglary and the rate of burglary around this area began to drop again, no one was excited about the problem and nobody was willing to be up at 3:00 a.m. standing [at] a post.

I saw the community service program administration as a way to force people to get involved in their community.

I could've taken people who are required to do community service and assigned them to help out with after-school programs or [with a host] of other activities which I would like to do (Interview. March 16, 2001).

He also described a major influence for wanting to transform the community service requirement into something bigger. Holly reiterated that Dr. Dayna

Salinger, an Assistant Professor of Recreation at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale who has over 20 years of experience in community development, gave him the idea of what he could do with those community service hours. He said,

Dr. Salinger saw this as a great way to get people to get involved in their communities. She had a grand idea. She was the one that brought up the idea of a babysitting co-op, for instance, because it was something she had seen work in other places. She was very involved in giving me ideas for what I could do with those [mandated community service] hours.

I thought there would be much better use for the hours. I thought it would produce something tangible that people could then say, “Well, look at how much better my neighborhood is now because of me and what I’ve done (Interview. March 16, 2001).

At that time, Holly thought that “this was going to be a gargantuan undertaking... involving tracking...100 or so people at any given time to make sure they were keeping up on their hours.”

Rather than having people perform mindless tasks such as stuffing envelopes for the American Red Cross...I thought it would be better to have those hours put back into the Housing Authority as ways to build a better community (Interview. March 16, 2001).

Holly saw the importance of transforming the “mandated” community service program administration into the proposed Community Service Initiative, a cooperative venture between a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority and the Department of Health Education and Recreation at Southern Illinois State University at Carbondale.

The Community Service Initiative is a proposed system of building tenant councils in three Southern Illinois county housing projects. The tenant councils’ main responsibilities are to identify problems affecting the community and to

direct how those mandated community service hours may be utilized to address those problems. The tenant councils will also be used to gather input on policies affecting a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority, as well as act as a forum to air complaints that affect the community. The Community Service Initiative may also incorporate other community-building activities in the public housing community.

Holly planned to do a lot of community-building activities; to do the community garden; to have a babysitting co-op; to [establish] a neighborhood watch.

However, he also saw the limitations of his plans for the Community Service Initiative. Holly said,

Months ago, twice now, I had Karen Connors from Adult Ed out here to talk about GEDs, job training...I had flyers all over the place, going door-to-door, trying to get people out here. Karen came out and we had free food and a good spread and a half hour went by and nobody showed up.

In the past, I've tried different activities, I've tried to bribe people with food to come down and listen to Karen Connors talk about education; why you should go back to school.

Advertisement doesn't work, bribery [with food] doesn't work, you know, trying to coerce people doesn't work.

I had very poor turnouts for most activities (Interview. March 16, 2001).

Another limitation would be his dual roles of providing social services to public housing residents and performing duties as the security investigative liaison for the Housing Authority. Holly believes that it is "too much for one person to do lease-enforcement and conflict resolution and still have time to put in community development activities" (Interview. May 25, 2001).

Furthermore, he reiterated that successful implementation of the Community

Service Initiative is dependent upon more time, more funding, and dedicated volunteers.

I need time. I have so many collateral duties and so many people vying for my 37 ½ hours of work each week that trying to balance it all and give each program the sufficient amount of time it needs is very difficult.

If I have to go run all over town trying to track down a police officer to beg and plead with him to file a police report for an incident the previous night. Also, that I can have documentation trying to get a bad element out of the community. That eats up a lot of time.

Time that I could've better spent writing a grant, or trying to recruit volunteers, or trying to go down to the University (Southern Illinois University) to get more interns.

Money. I need funding to buy equipment. I need funding to pay for volunteers to come out here and help me.

Dedicated volunteers to come out here and help me. I need money to pay for training, to train people how to do these various programs (Interview. March 16, 2001).

During the second interview with Allan Holly, almost two months after the implementation of the Community Service Policy, Holly announced his resignation from his position as the Social Service Advisor to a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority. The researcher asked about his attitude toward the community service program administration and Holly responded, "good idea but it has no teeth".

It's going to be viewed as a punitive action, not a positive action to improve the community. It's a ridiculous waste of time. It's not going to be used to improve the community.

The objectives of the community service requirement are, you have a bunch of Congressmen and Senators who are trying to do something for PR purposes.

That we are going to get even with those lazy "dead-beats" who smooch off the system. Gosh darn it, people are not going to live in public housing for free, we are going to make them work for it. Just like they used to do with food stamps and public aid. You know, it didn't work

there, it won't work here.

Because Congress has mandated community service for other social service programs before. It never works. Because it is not about people doing service for the community. It is about getting even with "dead-beats" who are smooching off the system (Interview. May 25, 2001).

Holly negatively stated, "I expect no results. I expect a lot of pissed-off tenants. I expect a lot of calls and complaints directed at various levels of government" (Interview. May 25, 2001). He stressed that various problems have arisen that had an effect on performing his duties as Social Service Advisor but he declined to elaborate because he believed that it is not within the scope of the paper to really talk about some of the problems... over the past two months. Holly also made a point that since he has resigned his position, his Community Service Initiative will no longer be implemented.

But some of the projects I had been trying to implement, now that I'm leaving, my tenant council initiative is going away. Julie Paulson had officially made a decision that that will no longer exist.

My neighborhood watch initiative, Julie had made a decision that will no longer exist.

The babysitting co-op that we were going to attempt this summer will not ever exist (Interview. May 25, 2001),

Furthermore, Holly emphasized that his replacement will "concentrate on lease-enforcement and conflict resolution solely...not community development (Interview. May 25, 2001). Julie Paulson, the Executive Director and the Board of Directors of a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority deemed [that lease-enforcement and conflict resolution] are currently the most pressing issues facing the Housing Authority.

Julie Paulson and Allan Holly discussed community service in meetings "but...it's always in the midst of most pressing issues." We have things so much more

important than community service.” “That is a very low priority for us (Interview. May 25, 2001).

It has always been in passing, after we're done talking about the Ku Klux Klan trying to burn crosses on the front lawn, which would be a priority. You know, we get through talking about important issues and then, “Oh by the way, you know, we need to think about something with this” . (Interview. May 25, 2001).

The attitudes, perceptions, interpretations, and concerns of Julie Paulson about community service, the mandated community service program administration and the Community Service Policy are discussed next. She defines “community service” as “an empowerment for the residents, who are not, first of all, they have to be under the age of 62, not disabled, not going to school, not working.” “Sort of a motivational factor that [is] what I believe Congress’s intent was. How well it will work, I don’t know. That remains to be seen (Interview. May 30, 2001). Her attitude about the mandated community service is illustrated in the following points:

I would like to do away with the community service completely. It’s going to be an administrative nightmare. I mean, I feel like, if someone is going to do volunteer work, they would’ve been doing it on their own anyway. I just don’t see how this is going to work. I may be pessimistic but...

For a small housing authority, that is going to be a problem. Staffing restrictions, time frames. I know that large housing authorities have community service or family self-sufficiency departments to set aside for that. We are so small that we have to encompass everything.

It’s going to take a lot of paperwork...tracking....It’s going to take a lot of time to [implement].

I don’t see that making them be mandated as a part of their lease is going to be viable. I think it’s going to be hard because if someone... I’ve been a Girl Scout Leader for years so I’ve done volunteer work for years. But if someone, to tell someone that they have to do this is going to be a whole other issue. It’s going to be hard to deal with (Interview. May 30, 2001).

Paulson understood the implementation of the Community Service Policy. “The people like I said, less than 62, not disabled, not going to school, not working, or if they are complying with public aid work requirements, then they do not have to comply with our work requirement. But for anybody else that does [not] fall into these categories, they have to work at least eight (8) hours a month. It doesn’t necessarily have to be with the Housing Authority. It can be with another agency. It can be with any type of non-profit agency (Interview. May 30, 2001).

If after the first year, they [non-exempt public housing residents who need to fulfill community service hours] haven’t completed the 96 hours, then they get more of a warning, they have to sign an agreement. And then in the second term of their lease, they have to make up those hours and if they don’t make up those hours and continue on with 96 hours for the current year, then they are subject to lease violation and subject to eviction (Interview. May 30, 2001).

Paulson further understood that she can give suggestions as to the different community service opportunities that are available for the public housing residents affected by this policy but she cannot mandate to the resident where she wants them to work.

Paulson’s concerns about the Community Service Policy transcend beyond its implementation. She believes that this policy will place a considerable burden on the Housing Authority in terms of its already limited administrative and financial resources. She sees it as an administrative nightmare in terms of tracking the community service hours as well as putting in the extra hours the existing staff has to work to show the non-exempt residents what to do in case they choose to fulfill their community service hours with the Housing Authority.

It’s going to be administrative on our part because [the community service hours] has to be documented.

The person who does the Occupancy, who is Sydney Stevens. She will be the one who will have to keep track, help offer assistance because they [non-exempt residents required to do community service] will not be eligible for, prior to when 12 months when their lease is up. You have to notify them ahead of time if they are [need to comply with community service hours]. Sydney will not be able to do a lease in general unless she knows they have complied with the community service. [The Social Service Advisor] will be the one who will be helping track those too.

And it can be a “stop and go” thing, if they worked for a while. They didn’t have to comply with it because they were working. But then [those non-exempt residents who are required to fulfill community service hours can change their status from employment to unemployment] it could stop. It is a start and stop situation. So, it is constant tracking (Interview. May 30, 2001).

If non-exempt residents are doing any community service for the Housing Authority, the existing staff must show them what to do and they are not supposed to be doing any job that would take away from another employee.

Besides placing an undue burden on the Housing Authority’s limited administrative staff, the policy would affect its limited financial resources as well. As Paulson pointed out, “So, Congress has mandated that it has to be done but they have not appropriated any extra funding for it. On top of that, if they [non-exempt residents] do any work for us [A Southern Illinois County Housing Authority], then that affects our worker’s comp because we have to keep track of the volunteer hours, which in turn increases our worker’s comp premium” (Interview. May 30, 2001).

Workers’ compensation. If they were injured on the job, they will be covered, if they’ll be working for us. What makes me wonder is if they are working for another agency, and the agency has signed an agreement with us, I’m just wondering, that’s why I’m thinking this is going to be challenged in court or something because if they wind up getting injured...

If they [non-exempt residents who need to fulfill community service hours as part of their lease] are being forced to do this, not if they want to do it and they are working for another agency and they are injured [while

performing community service with another agency other than the Union County Housing Authority] , whose worker's comp is going to pick that up and that has not been technically addressed yet (Interview. May 30, 2001).

Another concern that Paulson brought up is whether the policy will be challenged in a court of law. "I really wonder how well this is going to be held up in court. It hasn't been [challenged]. We (other executive directors in Southern Illinois) all have the same concern wondering, you know, if this is actually going to be held up in court. If they (housing authorities) have actually tried to take someone to court for violation of the community service" (Interview. May 30, 2001). Her attitude is well expressed in the following,

Personally, I was hoping it's going to be challenged long before this [implementation]. But at that point, it had not been in effect because we had our concerns about the worker's compensation.

Who is going to be covered on that... but we found out, as long as they were working for us... During the [time] they are working for us, our worker's comp has to cover which means that is another tracking purpose that we have to keep track of (Interview. May 30, 2001).

Finally, Paulson's overall attitude could be summarized as "I feel, like I said, if someone wants to do community service, they would be doing it without it being mandated by the Housing Authority, which has been trickled down from Congress."

There, I mean, there were different things in here like, oh they mentioned church activities, if you were taking care of the daycare, that was volunteer or if you were working on a newsletter or bulletin or teaching Sunday or Vacation Bible School.

If someone has wanted to do "community service", "volunteer work", or whatever you want to call it...

Some people have rejected the idea of "community service", thinking that meant, like when you see in the [newspaper] that they have been "fined" [penalized].

It's stated in there that you have to perform so many hours of community service, so now they are trying to get away from calling it "community service [but] rather to call it a "volunteer" program (Interview. May 30, 2001).

The second theme of the findings is to describe the attitudes and perceptions of the Social Service Advisor and the Executive Director about non-exempt residents who are required to fulfill community service hours as part of their lease and the public housing residents in general.

In his first interview, Holly discussed that he anticipates very few people who will be affected by the policy after its implementation on April 1, 2001. He anticipates very small numbers because "most people who move in to public housing for the first time may be suffering some setback in their life. For most of the time, they have some sort of employment or are attending some job training to get new employment or they are currently receiving a grant from DHS" (Interview. March 16, 2001).

Which in order to get that grant money, they have to perform 20 hours of community service already through TANF, I do not know what the acronym stands for. But through TANF, they have to perform community service anyway, so they are already in a sense, working.

So, I then can't [add] additional community service hours on to that. So, very few people will be affected by this.

About 10-15 people at any given time (Interview. March 16, 2001).

According to Holly, there are "about 670 or so residents between the ages of 18-62. He went on to describe the first two situations whereby two public housing residents met the criteria for the Community Service Policy.

You have one gentleman, who is in his late teens and then we have a married couple. They are [in their] mid-thirties to early-forties.

The gentleman, does not, even though, he's unemployed, he does not meet the requirements because he has a workman's comp suit pending, which may make him disabled, so we deemed inappropriate NOT to make him do community service. You know, it could aggravate his alleged condition.

But however, his wife is unemployed and we will be making her do community service. The woman, we had decided to offer her a position helping with the summer lunch program in Jonesboro. So, she will be helping with that a half-hour per day.

The young gentleman, we are going to ask him to help us with our parking problems. Mainly, he will be going around to all of our various public housing sites over the summer and painting numbers on each of our parking spaces.

Parking has been an on-going problem with us. This will be extremely beneficial to the well-being of our community and peace and enjoyment of people's accommodations because they will not have to worry about their neighbor parking in their parking spaces anymore (Interview. May 25, 2001).

Holly stressed that his Community Service Initiative such as the babysitting co-op, the neighborhood watches, cleaning up trash, doing beautification projects, [tenant councils], getting involved with the after-school program or the summer free lunch program [were ways] to build a better community.

I thought there would be a much better use for the hours. I thought it would produce something tangible that people could then say, Well, look at how much better my neighborhood is now because of me and what I've done.

That's very non-punitive (Interview. March 16, 2001).

His main concern is that those public housing residents that are required to do community service might see the Community Service Initiative as a punitive task.

His attitude is evident in the following:

Sending somebody over to DCFS to stuff envelopes; they [non-exempt residents who need to fulfill community service hours] don't want to be

there, doing a mindless, thinkless task. I could see where very quickly that could become a “punitive” task.

They are being punished because they are poor.

They are being punished because they are unemployed.

They are being punished because they live in public housing.

That’s very negative and that is not the way I wanted this viewed (Interview. March 16, 2001).

In Holly’s second interview, he believes that there are no tenants that would get concerned and agree to help [him] with those programs. Then he described why public housing residents might not participate in the Community Service Initiative and how they might view the Community Service Policy and his Community Service Initiative. Encouraging them to participate in community service is difficult since their basic needs of “shelter, food, and basic healthcare were taken care of” by the government. Holly illustrated his point by describing one family living in a Jonesboro housing project.

We had a family of seven in Jonesboro and for the longest time, neither parent was working. They had no income, so they had no rent. They did not worry about healthcare because they had health cards through the Department of Human Services.

They did not worry about food because they were getting food stamps. So, shelter, food, basic healthcare, the three very important life sustaining activities were taken care of. And they became very comfortable with the fact that they were not worried about where their next meal is coming from. Their kid got run over by a car, as one of their children was. They were not worried about living on the streets because they were living rent-free.

So, trying to get these people involved in community-building activities was very difficult ‘cause all they had to worry about is sitting on the couch to watch Jerry Springer and cooking methamphetamines in the kitchen.

Those were the only two activities that they were worried about. If people’s basic needs are being met, it is difficult to get them to see any bigger (Interview. March 16, 2001).

He believes “they don’t want to better themselves because their basic survival needs of [shelter, food and basic healthcare] are being met [by social service agencies]” (Interview. March 16, 2001). In other words, public housing residents become satisfied with what is less than the ideal existence.

Holly also shared his personal experience about his mother and how that shaped his attitudes about people living in public housing who do not want to better their lives through education and using the “System” to better their lives.

Bernie and I had been talking off-tape for just a brief second about my mother. She’d called a few minutes ago and this is the crust of who I am right here.

This explains it all.

When my mother was seventeen, growing up in a dysfunctional family [surrounded by issues such as] alcoholism and drug abuse among her siblings... It became a very bad situation. By the time she was seventeen, she was so fed up, looking for a way out of what she perceived to be a bad situation... got married at the age of seventeen, dropped out of high school even though she had already been guaranteed a full-scholarship to a private Catholic College.

By the age of eighteen, she already had her first child (Allan Holly, Social Service Advisor) and ended up having three more... At any rate, this was a woman, who when she divorced her husband, [she] had no marketable job skills, no education, you know, on the road to being a classic welfare case.

But rather than being hopeless, rather than seeing this as an obstacle, she saw this as something that was going to empower her. She went to college. After a semester in junior college, she was able to transfer to a fantastic private Catholic College...

And to make a very long story short... [My mother] possesses a Bachelor of Science in Education, a Master’s of Science in Counseling and a Doctorate in Rehabilitation. She’s been an officer in both the Navy and the Air Force and currently, she’s making \$75,000 a year managing a fantastic rehabilitation center.

Although there was a lot of ugliness growing up, I get pissed off and constantly want to grab these people by the throats and say,

“Hey, what the hell is the matter with you?” “What the hell is the matter with you?” “Why can’t you?”

That is why I get frustrated with people who live in public housing because they let the System run them instead of using the System to better their lives.

They become complacent. They become satisfied with what is less than the ideal existence. They don’t want to better themselves because their basic survival needs are being met and they’ve lost sight of their God-given right to something better (Interview. March 16, 2001).

The researcher asked Holly why he resigned from his job. His response was, “because I want to work with good people.” A follow-up to that was if his resignation had anything to do with the Community Service Policy. He answered, “No, it’s a symptom of the problem.” Finally, Holly gave his personal account of the catalyst that prompted him to resign his position as the Social Service Advisor to a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority.

I was holding a tenant council meeting, an open forum where tenants could come to discuss their problems, bring things to the attention of the administration, bring things to the attention of their neighbors and to hash out problems to make the community a better place.

We had three people show up. Following the tenant council meeting, one of the three people present [from the tenant council meeting], came back to the main office to tell me that she was fearful to go back to her apartment because she had several of her neighbors waiting on her front doorstep. Their [her neighbors’] perception was she was tattle-taling on her neighbors. And they wanted to have a long talk with her.

I escorted her back to her apartment and spent the next hour and a half with a group of about 12 to 15 residents talking about racial issues, talking about the involvement of the Ku Klux Klan, making accusations about child molesters living in public housing. It became very negative.

There were times where I thought they were going to turn into physical violence. It was a very ugly, nasty, tense situation.

Twenty minutes previous to this, these same people could have come to the Community Center and sat down in a roundtable format, had a cup of coffee and talked about their problems the way adults are supposed to talk about problems.

Instead, they chose to act like a bunch of kindergartners, trying to solve their problems in the schoolyard. And that was when I made the decision. It was time for me to go.

It was not the environment that I want to live and work in. I want to deal with people who want to behave like disciplined professional people and handle their problems in constructive ways.

I don't want to deal with people of low intelligence, low means, and low education who are so controlled by basic survival needs, you know, food, shelter and that is what all these people see.

They don't get into those, you know, Maslow's hierarchy of needs. They do not get into the higher needs. They are concerned about food and shelter.

I tried to do things like the babysitting co-op, to get people affordable childcare so that they could go out and get jobs and have more income and be able to start rising on the hierarchy of needs.

They don't see it. They don't see past these bottom two (food and shelter).

That is not where I want to be. I am working on the last [which] is self-actualization. That is where I am at. I have almost got it.

But you know, I want to be with other people like myself (Interview. May 25, 2001).

Julie Paulson, current Executive Director also discussed her attitudes and perceptions about the non-exempt residents who are mandated to fulfill community service hours as part of their lease. First, Paulson emphasized that "if someone wants to do community service, they would be doing it without it being mandated by the Housing Authority, which has been trickled down from Congress" (Interview. May 30, 2001).

Then she said, “I’ve got two people that will start next month (June 2001) because they actually moved in this month [May 2001]. So, I pro-rated their hours for this month [May 2001].

It’s going to be their choice. One [that] I mentioned was the [summer lunch program] because [she] lives in Jonesboro. Now, also too, let me stress, in this case, her husband is disabled but she’s a stay-at-home mom. But she has to comply with this. It doesn’t go by the head of household. Any adult member over the age of 18. So, she has to comply with it too. I mentioned the summer lunch program with her and she said that was fine with her. [I told her] she can bring herself and her children and [eat free lunch]. Once the summer lunch program ends, maybe she might be willing to help in one of the children’s activities that we have.

The other person [who needs to do community service] was living in a site where it needs parking spaces numbered. I mentioned that to him that we needed to get those numbered. But it’s going to be coming up with ideas every month; where they [non-exempt residents] are supposed to go. That’s what I’m saying. Once we ran of things like that, then it’s going to be up to them, the residents to find somewhere to do their volunteer time at. And that is what I’m saying... If... I don’t see that making them be mandated as part of their lease is going to be viable (Interview. May 30, 2001)...

Paulson gave her opinion about the attitudes of the two residents who are required to do community service as part of their lease. She believes that “one was receptive. “She didn’t see any problem with it. The other was, I don’t really think that he cared much for it but I told him that it was a condition of his lease and time will tell whether he does or doesn’t” (Interview. May 30, 2001).

Paulson also heard that “well, someone mentioned it to me, last year, how the husband worked, they live with the Housing Authority, they have for a couple of years... The husband worked [and] she’s a stay-at-home mom by choice. Her children are very well-behaved and they were saying, “Why should we have to comply with this?” I understood their concern. However, [I told them] you are going to have to because this

was out of my hands. This [policy] came down from Congress and it is an official law, and it is a part of our regulations and we had to make it a part of our lease” (Interview. May 30, 2001).

In her only interview with the researcher, Julie Paulson, Executive Director did not express any particular attitude or view about public housing residents in general. However, Allan Holly, Social Service Advisor in his second interview with the researcher gave a glimpse of what is important to Julie Paulson. According to Holly, the safety of the public housing residents “is very important. It is paramount to Julie. Being Julie, once upon a time, lived in public housing herself (Interview. May 30, 2001).

In summary, it is important to describe the attitudes, perceptions, interpretations, and concerns of the Social Service Advisor and the Executive Director (policy implementers) about community service in general, the mandated community service program administration, the Community Service Initiative and the Community Service Policy to see if there is a linkage between their attitudes and the implementation of the policy. It is also important to see whether their attitudes about the non-exempt public housing residents who need to fulfill community service hours and the public housing residents in general affected the implementation of the policy. In other words, it is important to see whether the ranking of statutory objectives (whether the Community Service Policy, the mandated community service program administration and the Community Service Initiative are high or low priorities), financial resources available to the Southern Illinois County Housing Authority with respect to the policy, and the commitment and leadership skills of implementing officials (evident in their attitudes) have an impact on the policy outputs (decisions) of the Community Service Policy.

It is also important to see whether their attitudes about the non-exempt public housing residents who need to fulfill community service hours and the public housing residents in general affected the implementation of the policy.

Literature-based Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Sabatier and Mazmanian (1982) defined implementation as “the carrying out of a basic policy decision, usually made in a statute. Ideally that decision identifies the problem(s) to be addressed, stipulates the objectives to be pursued, and in a variety of ways, ‘structures’ the implementation process” (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1982: 6).

The following are the stages in the implementation process:

The first stage is the policy outputs of implementing agencies, followed by the compliance of target groups with policy decisions, third, the actual impacts (intended or unintended) of those outputs, next is the perceived impacts of agency decisions, and finally the major and attempted revisions in statute (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1982: 6). Sabatier and Mazmanian believe that the “crucial role of implementation analysis is to identify the factors that affect the achievement of statutory objectives throughout the entire process” (1982: 6). These three broad categories are: (1) the tractability of the problem(s) being addressed by the statute; (2) the ability of the statute to favorably structure the implementation process; and (3) the non-statutory political variables affecting implementation (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1982: 6).

This analysis concentrates on the second and third categories of the implementation framework. The second category is the ability of the statute to favorably structure the implementation process. Sabatier and Mazmanian believed that precision and clear ranking of objectives; incorporating validity of the causal theory into the

statute; financial resources available to the implementing agency; the extent of hierarchical integration with and among implementing institutions; the extent to which decision rules of implementing agencies are supportive of statutory objectives; recruitment of implementing agencies/officials committed to statutory objectives; and the extent to which opportunities for participation by actors external to the implementing agencies are biased toward supporters of statutory objectives are factors that greatly enhance the attainment of statutory objectives (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1982).

In this analysis, the precise and clear ranking of statutory objectives, the financial resources available to the implementing agency, and the commitment and leadership skills of implementing officials (evident in their attitudes) are factors used in discussing the findings.

The findings of this study seem to confirm that both Holly, the Social Service Advisor, and Paulson, the Executive Director, consider the Community Service Policy as containing ambiguous directives. According to Holly,

My interpretation of the HUD guidelines was that the exemption would not be automatic. Every individual would have to be evaluated. Every individual between the ages of 18-62 living in public housing would have to be evaluated against a series of guidelines.

I had the policy written before Julie Paulson came on board. And it was [revised] based on new information that surfaced. [The new information from HUD include] just things such as definition, you know, what I considered to be [a] disabled person.

Initially, the information we got from HUD led me to believe that in order for a person to be disabled, it was going to be a bonafide disability, in the common pop culture sense of the word. People in wheelchairs, people who are blind, deaf, have a physical disability which would preclude them from being able to easily perform community service.

The final interpretation of the word “disability” was anyone who was, is listed [in] Social Security as being disabled, was disabled. Anybody who is collecting Social Security Insurance (SSI)...is what we have later found out qualify for disability. Any person on SSI which we have many able-bodied eighteen-year olds collecting SSI, [however, able-bodied they are] are exempt (Interview. March 16, 2001).

Julie Paulson, the Executive Director was concerned more about indirect policy directives of the Community Service Policy such as worker’s compensation.

Sabatier and Mazmanian believed that “a statute assigned for implementation to an already existing agency clearly indicate the relative priority that the new directives are to play in the totality of the agency’s programs” (1982: 10). “If this is not done, the new directives are likely to undergo considerable delay and be accorded low priority as they struggle for incorporation into the agency’s operating procedures” (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1982: 10).

Besides the ambiguous policy directives that the Community Service presented, Holly and Paulson considered the policy and the community service program administration a very low priority for them. In addition, Holly emphasized that lease-enforcement and conflict resolution are what Paulson and the “Board of Directors deemed as currently the most pressing issues facing the Housing Authority” (Interview. May 25, 2001).

In terms of the timeline of when the Community Service Policy is to be implemented, Paulson said, “This (Community Service Policy) has been rolled back probably for the last two years. We first started hearing [about] this probably two years ago and they (Congress) kept postponing it and while questioning how it’s going to work. It’s a “go” now” (Interview. May 30, 2001). Holly gave his interpretations of the timeline for implementation of the policy.

After discussing the timeline that the policy will be implemented... The final policy was just less than what I had wanted. [It has] a narrower focus than what I had wanted. It has a longer timeline for implementation than what I had wanted. The policy is to take effect after our 2001 fiscal year begins. For us, the 2001 fiscal year begins in April.

My interpretation of April 1, 2001, the community service would take effect. The way other people (Milo and Paulson, former and current Executive Directors of a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority respectively) interpret that was it would take effect when people sign their leases in the fiscal year 2001 (Interview. March 16, 2001).

Therefore, technically, the Community Service Policy and the mandated community service program administration would not take effect until September 2001 for those public housing residents listed as “disabled” head of household. According to Holly, “so for us, any of the disabled head of households will sign their new leases in September of 2001. Most of those people are going to be exempted because they are disabled” (Interview. March 16, 2001). Existing public housing residents are affected by this policy when they sign their new leases on March 2002. Holly stated, “so, that only leaves people who are moving in for the first time after April 1, 2001. “Those people, as they move in and sign their new leases for the first time will be affected by this policy” (Interview. March 16, 2001)... Therefore, the former and current Executive Directors of a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority interpreted the timeline for the implementation of the policy, according to Holly.

Sabatier and Mazmanian identified that another factor that would affect the achievement of effective implementation are the financial resources available to the implementing agency. They stressed that

Money is obviously critical...and important to hire the staff and to conduct the technical analyses involved in the development of regulations, the administration of programs and the monitoring of compliance (1982:

11).

Paulson stressed that Congress has mandated this policy “but they have not appropriated any extra funding for it.” She acknowledges that this policy is an “administrative nightmare and requires the existing staff of the Housing Authority to actually show public housing residents who need to fulfill community service hours as a condition on their lease what to do. “You actually have to have somebody with them showing what to do. We have a lot of parking spaces that need to be numbered. I have that in mind. But somebody has got to go and show them, so the person [knows] what you want done” (Interview. May 30, 2001).

Holly stated that he “needs funding to buy equipment. I need funding to pay for volunteers to come out here and help me. Dedicated volunteers to come out here and help me. I need money to pay for training, to train people how to do these various programs” (Interview. March 16, 2001).

Finally, the third factor is the commitment and leadership skills of implementing officials to the realization of statutory objectives. Sabatier and Mazmanian (1982: 19-20) said, [that] the variable most directly affecting the policy outputs of implementing officials [is] the commitment of agency officials to the realization of statutory objectives. One of these components is the ability of implementing officials “to go beyond what is reasonably expected in using available resources” (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1982: 20). The importance of both attitudes and skill, of course, varies with the amount of discretion afforded administrators” (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1982: 20). The commitment to statutory objectives by implementing officials is a function of “professional norms [and] values...” but this must be accompanied by leadership skills characterized by their

willingness “to go beyond what is reasonably expected in using the available resources in support of statutory objectives...” (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1982: 20).

The findings seem to confirm the commitment and leadership skills of Holly, the Social Service Advisor, in his first interview, illustrated by his mixed but pro-active attitudes towards the policy, the community service program administration and his Community Service Initiative before the implementation of the policy but not after the policy took effect. His attitudes made an impact on the formation and dissolution of transforming the community service program administration into the more elaborate Community Service Initiative.

Although Holly had mixed feelings about the Community Service Policy and its program administration, at first, he portrayed his commitment and leadership skills by taking his role as Social Service Advisor seriously. He went beyond what is reasonably expected and tried to use available resources in support of the statutory objectives of the Community Service Policy. He wanted to utilize the mandated community service hours into the various community-building activities he had initiated. He said,

I wanted to make the community service requirement as broad as possible so that in essence, I could bring in additional help for the various initiatives I've tried to start. I saw community service program [administration] as a way to force people to get involved in their community.

I could've taken people who are required to do community service and assigned them to work with the neighborhood watch or assigned them to a babysitting co-op or assigned them to help out with the after-school program or [with] a host of other activities, which I would do (Interview. March 16, 2001).

In addition, Holly did not want the program to be perceived by the residents to be a punitive program. He emphasized that Dr. Dayna Salinger was a big influence in his

pro-active attitude about transforming the administration of the community service program into the more elaborate and complex community-building activity called the Community Service Initiative. Holly said,

She had a grand idea. She was the one that brought up the idea of a babysitting co-op for instance, because it was something she had seen worked at other places.

She was a big influence on me wanting to make this [community service] big. Wanting to make this important.

I wanted a bigger program 'cause I wanted to influence some lives and show people that there is a way out of this pit that they have been born into (Interview. March 16, 2001).

Paulson, the current Executive Director, on the other hand, in her sole interview with the researcher, presented a more reactive attitude against the Community Service Policy. She was more concerned about the “bare-bones” of the statutory objectives of the policy rather than transforming the community service program administration into the Community Service Initiative that the Social Service Advisor was in the process of initiating. She reacted by stating her feelings. Paulson said,

I would like to do away with the community service completely. It's just going to be an administrative nightmare. I mean, I feel like if someone is going to do volunteer work, they would've been doing it on their own any way. I just don't see how this is going to work. I may be pessimistic but...

I don't see that making them be mandated as a part of their lease is going to be viable... I think it's going to be hard because if someone... But if someone, to tell someone that they have to do this is going to be a whole lot of issue. It's going to be hard to deal with. That's why I'm wondering if it will hold up in court” (Interview. May 30, 2001).

Paulson also made a comment that she attended conferences sponsored by NAHRO (National Association for Housing and Redevelopment Officials). “They put it on to

give a little bit more detail on how the implementation...[will proceed].” According to Paulson, “some people have rejected the idea of “community service” thinking that meant like when you see in the paper that they (public housing residents) have been “fined” (punitive). So now, they (NAHRO staff and corporate trainers hired to come up with an interpretation of federal regulations) are trying to get away from calling it “community service [but] rather to call it a “volunteer” program (Interview. May 30, 2001).

In summary, Holly and Paulson exhibited a mixture of proactive and reactive attitudes about their commitment and leadership skills in the administration of the community service program and the Community Service Initiative. They also illustrated their disparity in attitudes as evident in goal conflict. Executive Director Paulson’s primary goal is to facilitate the overall efficiency of the organization (looking for predictability and ease of operations). On the other hand, Social Service Advisor Holly’s primary goal is to implement the Housing Authority’s community building process. One other thing that needs to be stated is that Paulson emphasized that to an extent, the resident who is required to do community service has a choice of opportunities to serve.

According to the theory of cognitive dissonance, “there is a tendency for individuals to seek consistency among their beliefs and opinions. When there is an inconsistency between attitudes or behaviors (dissonance), something must change to eliminate the dissonance. In the case of a discrepancy between attitudes and behavior, it is most likely that the attitude will change to accommodate the behavior. Thus, the principles of cognitive dissonance may be summarized into 1) dissonance results when an individual must choose between attitudes and behaviors that are contradictory and 2) dissonance can be eliminated by reducing the importance of the conflicting beliefs,

acquiring new beliefs that change the balance or remove the conflicting attitude or behavior” [by changing an environmental cognitive element]

<http://tip.psychology.org/festinge.html>).

There is dissonance between the principles of community-building which is defined as “an approach to fighting poverty that operates by building social and human capital” (Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997: 29) and Holly’s belief that “trying to get these people involved in community-building activities was very difficult ‘cause all they had to worry about is sitting on the couch to watch Jerry Springer and cooking methamphetamines in the kitchen” (Interview. March 16, 2001).

There is dissonance between the objective of community service that states “community service programs...help build good work habits, positive attitudes, and the self-esteem necessary for success in the job marketplace” (Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997: 24) and Holly’s belief that

The objectives of the community service requirement are, you have a bunch of Congressmen and Senators who are trying to do something for PR purposes.

That we are going to get even with those lazy “dead-beats” who smooch off the system. Gosh darn it; people are not going to live in public housing for free, we are going to make them work for it. Just like they used to do with food stamps and public aid (Interview. May 25, 2001).

The Community Service Policy states that [the Southern Illinois County Housing Authority] “believes that the community service requirement should not be perceived by the resident to be a punitive or demeaning activity, but rather to be a rewarding activity that will benefit both the resident and the community” (See Appendix D). However, Allan Holly, the Social Service Advisor said in his second interview, that the community service program “is going to be viewed as a punitive action, not a positive

action to improve the community. It's a ridiculous waste of time. It's not going to be used to improve the community" (Interview. May 25, 2001).

The findings seem to confirm that Holly tried to reduce the importance of the dissonant beliefs stated above and add consonant beliefs before the implementation of the policy, that would support the statement, "...the community service requirement should not be perceived by the resident to be a punitive or demeaning activity, but rather to be a rewarding activity that will benefit both the resident and the community" (See Appendix I). Holly reduced the importance of the conflicting statements by implementing his Community Service Initiative supported by his comments in his first interview.

I wanted to make the community service requirement as broad as possible, so that in essence, I could bring in additional help for the various initiatives I've tried to start. I saw the community service program as a way to force people to get involved in their community.

I could've taken people who are required to do community service and assign them to help out with after-school program or [with] a host of other activities which I would like to do. And I don't want this to be a punitive program.

I still plan to do a lot of community-building activities.
I still plan to do the community garden.
I still plan to do the babysitting co-op
I would still like to see a neighborhood watch.

I would find new ways to recruit people (Interview. March 16, 2001).

Holly, in the beginning, changed his attitude to accommodate the behavior that would allow him some consonance to his role as a community-building facilitator. However, as time went on, his negative attitude toward the public housing residents in general conflicted with his role not only as a community-building facilitator but also as a as that of a teacher, listener, convener, organizer, facilitator, and a consensus builder.

"With the support of strong leadership, the facilitator can deliver on commitments made,

build trust among community partners, and help residents achieve their goals”

(Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997: 32).

Holly’s resignation and hence a contributing factor to the limited implementation of the policy may also be tied to cognitive dissonance. The presence of dissonance gives rise or pressures to eliminate or reduce the dissonance. One of the ways in which existing dissonance may be reduced or eliminated is to change an environmental cognitive element.

A change in the environmental cognitive element means that changing the environment itself is accomplished to reduce the dissonance. This method of reducing dissonance is employed when there is sufficient control over the environment.

For example, a person who is habitually hostile toward other people may surround himself with persons who provoke hostility. His cognitions about the persons with whom he associates are then consonant with the cognitions corresponding to his hostile behavior (Festinger, 1957: 20).

Holly described his personal account of the catalyst of what prompted him to resign his position as the Social Service Advisor to a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority. In his account, Holly said that he was holding a tenant council meeting and only three people showed up. Then, one of those three people present came to him and asked him to escort her back to her apartment because she was fearful to go back to her apartment because she had several neighbors waiting in front of her doorstep. Holly then spent the next hour and a half with a group of about 12-15 residents and they talked about racial issues and other things. He emphasized that it became very negative. Holly eliminated the dissonance by resigning his position with the Housing Authority. His cognitions with public housing residents are then consonant with the cognitions corresponding to his negative attitudes towards them in general.

Conclusion

Do the attitudes of policy implementers affect the implementation of the Community Service Policy at a Southern Illinois County Housing Authority? In other words, do the ranking of statutory objectives (whether the Community Service Policy, the mandated community service program administration and the Community Service Initiative are high or low priorities), financial resources available to the Southern Illinois County Housing Authority with respect to the policy, and the commitment and leadership skills of implementing officials (evident in their attitudes) have an impact on the policy outputs (decisions) of the Community Service Policy?

In his analysis the precise and clear ranking of statutory objectives, the financial resources available to the implementing agency with respect to the policy, and the commitment and leadership skills of implementing officials (evident in their attitudes) are factors used in discussing the findings.

The findings seem to confirm that both Social Service Advisor Holly and Executive Director Paulson believed that the Community Service Policy contain ambiguous directives and rate the policy and the mandated community service program administration, as low priorities for them before and during the first quarter of implementation regardless of their attitudes. This may be due to other variables such as the environment, the different roles Holly and Paulson play within the organization, and the different goals they have within the bureaucratic agency.

Sabatier and Mazmanian believed that one of the components of commitment and leadership skills of implementing officials is the ability “to go beyond what is reasonably expected in using available resources. The importance of both attitudes and skill, of

course, varies, with the amount of discretion afforded administrators” (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1982: 20).

Holly exhibited his commitment and leadership skills by going beyond what is reasonably expected in using available resources in support of statutory objectives of the Community Service Policy before its implementation. He wanted to utilize the mandated community service hours into various community-building activities he had initiated. Therefore, his attitudes (proactive, positive) may have a limited impact on the formation of the Community Service Initiative whose main purpose was to fulfill the objective in the Community Service Policy that states “...the community service requirement should not be perceived by the resident to be a punitive or demeaning activity, but rather to be a rewarding activity that will benefit both the resident and the community” (See Appendix D). The findings seem to confirm the commitment and leadership skills of Holly, the Social Service Advisor illustrated by his mixed but proactive attitudes towards the policy, the community service program administration, and his Community Service Initiative before the implementation of the policy but not after the policy took effect. On the other hand, there is dissonance between the principles of community-building which is defined as “an approach to fighting poverty that operates by building social and human capital” (Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997: 29) and Holly’s belief that “trying to get these people involved in community-building activities was very difficult ‘cause all they had to worry about is sitting on the couch to watch Jerry Springer and cooking methamphetamines in the kitchen” (Interview. March 16, 2001). His negative, reactive attitude has an impact on the dissolution of his Community Service Initiative, which is highly dependent on social capital.

Executive Director Paulson's concerns about the policy and its program administration were within the confines of her role as the housing manager and her goal of facilitating the overall efficiency of the Housing Authority (looking for predictability and ease of operations). This research was limited and restricted to three interviews. Nevertheless, this study illuminates the attitudes of these participants before and during the first quarter of the implementation of the policy.

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