A study of the development of the homemaker service with emphasis on the programs of selected private social agencies in southern communities, 1920-1949

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A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOMEMAKER SERVICE WITH
EMPHASIS ON THE PROGRAMS OF SELECTED PRIVATE SOCIAL AGENCIES
IN SOUTHERN COMMUNITIES, 1920-1949

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE ATLANTA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF
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FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY
EVELYN BERNICE WILLIAMS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Homemaker service is being used to supplement, give sustenance to, and help strengthen the home which should be conserved. This service may be defined as the placing of carefully selected persons by social agencies in homes to care for family members, especially children, in order to maintain their homes in spite of the temporary or permanent incapacity or absence of a parent-person. Supervised homemaker service in homes was started in the early 1920's. This program developed slowly until shortly before World War II when the expansion of this program grew rapidly due to the increased employment of women.¹

The United States Children's Bureau, recognizing the importance of homemaker service, called a conference on the matter in November, 1937, in Washington. The following year, the National Committee on Homemaker Service came into existence. Under the guidance of the Children's Bureau and with the participation of the Child Welfare League of America, this Committee has continued and progressed.²


²Frances Preston and Rika Maclean, "Homemaker Service Helps to Preserve Family Life," The Child, XII (August, 1947), 27.
Homemaker service has been directed by private social societies and child welfare associations. A few public agencies have employed homemakers, but the majority of the agencies supplying homemaker service are located in northern communities. Although the number of southern agencies rendering this service is small, southern agencies are becoming more and more aware of the need for such a program and are making plans toward incorporating homemaker service in their programs.

In view of the fact that this program is a relatively new development in southern social agencies, the writer felt it was expedient to study the extent and use of this service at present in southern private case work agencies.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to discuss the development and growth of the homemaker service, to point out the need for a homemaker program as a social case work service, to indicate changing points of view about this service, to show the trends and the progress that have been made in incorporating this service into the programs of selected southern private social agencies, and to evaluate the programs in these agencies.

Scope and Limitations

This study includes tracing the national and international

1Ibid.
development of homemaker service from its early beginning to
1949 with reference to selected private social agencies in the
South as far as possible. The study is limited to those private
southern social agencies which are members of the Family Service
Association of America and the Child Welfare League of America.

Method of Procedure

This study is primarily a social research project
implemented by interviews with some of the persons directly
concerned with the program. Literature pertinent to the subject
was secured from the Trevor Arnette Library, Atlanta University,
Atlanta, Georgia, the United States Children's Bureau and local
private social agencies of Atlanta, Georgia. On the assumption
that metropolitan areas would be the first communities to
incorporate a homemaker service program, the private social
agencies located in the largest southern cities were contacted.
Brief questionnaires were sent to private family and child care
agencies in the selected cities in the South to secure
information pertaining to their respective homemaker service
programs. These data were compiled, analyzed and interpreted.

Acknowledgement

Gratitude and acknowledgement is expressed to Mrs.
Wilhelmina Deas, Director of Homemaker Service and Miss
Lorraine H. Jennrich, Director of Casework, Family Service
Society, Atlanta, Georgia, Mr. Robert Taylor, Director of the
Community Planning Council, Atlanta, Georgia, Mr. Dwight H.
Ferguson, Regional Child Welfare Representative, Children's Bureau, Atlanta, Georgia, and the executives of those southern social agencies who made information about their programs available for study purposes.
Requests for homemaker service are usually for one of four general types, namely, long time, temporary, exploratory, or supplementary care. These classifications were made in terms of the degree of responsibility that must be assumed by the homemaker. Long time care is provided for motherless families and for those in which the mother is ill and will be incapacitated for a considerable length of time. In such situations, a homemaker who is able to establish a close relationship with members of the family is invaluable. On the other hand, she must guard against making the father of the family feel that she is competing with him for the affection of his children.

Temporary care is given to a family during the temporary absence or incapacity of the mother. This service may be given for any number of hours a day. Exploratory care, however, is offered in motherless homes for an indefinite period while the family and social agency are deciding upon a plan most suitable for its members. This placement is a very important one and can contribute to the case worker's

1Bessie B. Dreifuss, "Homemaker Service in a Public Welfare Agency," Presented at meeting of the National Committee on Homemaker Service, New York, October 21, 1948, p. 3 (Mimeographed.)
understanding of the needs of each child through observation of the family group. She will then be able to help the family make more satisfactory plans. Unlike the other three types, supplementary care is provided on a part-time basis to assist with household work when either the mother, another family member or a relative can be present and supervise the home and the children.¹

In general, homemaker service is based on the axiom that "children thrive best in their own homes."² It is a well-known fact that a young child often suffers emotionally when removed from his natural home. A warm parent-child relationship is the child's first opportunity for wholesome emotional and physical development. This relationship offers a child the best experience in learning to become consciously aware of other people, to form patterns of independence and cooperation and to develop self-confidence.

As a child grows, he can develop through contacts with a parent, a warm meaningful parent-child relationship, and with his brothers and sisters he can learn the "give-and-take" natural to children of the same family. He need not feel the parent's incapacity or absence as total rejection, and, moreover, because of the homemaker's presence, the absence of or the diminished attention received from a parent will not be

¹Ibid.

²Preston and Maclennan, op. cit., p. 28.
such a traumatic experience for the child. Security with at least one parent person for a child is made possible through the homemaker service.¹

This program was first introduced in an effort to avoid the problems that arose from having to make immediate plans for children away from their homes. Some families were fortunate enough to have relatives or friends to lend a helping hand. Those families who were not so fortunate were forced in their dilemma to either place the children or to maintain the home at the risk of neglect and inadequate supervision for them. Temporary placement often "needles" or "scrambles" the agency program when there is an attempt to give case work treatment to children in need of intensive or long-time care. Reviewing the effect of placement on the family, it can be seen that acute discomfort and unhappiness are often created. The children frequently are forced to adjust to strange people and different environmental settings. If the family is large, placement often means separation of the children and other family members. The father and working children are left practically homeless. As a rule, the mother is anxious and uneasy about the situation which adds to the strain of her hospitalization period.²

¹Ibid.
Early Development in United States

The first organized, systematic effort on behalf of families requiring housekeeping service in the home was made in October, 1923. The Jewish Welfare Society of Philadelphia at that time organized a staff of "visiting housekeepers" under the supervision of its Home Economics Department to serve as substitutes for mothers during their absence from the home. This plan, as a solution to the problem of temporary placement of family members originated in the mind of Mr. Morris Kind, a layman, who was president of the agency's Board. Through his efforts, a $2000 appropriation was made for a three-month trial period of his proposal and plan. In the beginning, the agency staff carrying out this program consisted of two women; but the next year, this number was increased to four.

Since that time, homemaker service has been utilized by private child-caring and family welfare organizations in some of the larger cities of the country. Moreover, government agencies have followed close behind.\(^1\) From 1938 to 1942 the Federal Works Progress Administration utilized "housekeeper service" as a project for unemployed women and furnished the service wholesale at the expense of a case work approach. There was much concern about the personnel and about what determined the selection and supervision of the "housekeeper"

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\(^1\) Salome S. Bernstein, "Mothers by Proxy," \textit{Survey}, LVI (April, 1926), 81-83.
International Programs

Similar to the private agencies and Works Progress Administration program in the United States, public groups in foreign countries have utilized homemaker service. For example, in each of the six states of Australia, such service can be obtained in case of an emergency that makes it impossible for the mother to manage her household. In the capital of New South Wales, Australia, the Housekeeper's Emergency Service of Sidney, a voluntary social agency subsidized by the State, provided about forty experienced housekeepers for that area. Similarly in Melbourne, several municipal councils and voluntary agencies provided "home-help" schemes. In addition the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department in South Australia operates an Emergency Housekeeping Service.

Likewise, the Red Cross, the Mothercraft Association, and the Country Women's Association provide "home-help" services. In Western Australia, the Lady Mitchell Emergency Housekeeper Service is the main service in operation. Moreover, the Red Cross Society in Tasmania has a "home-help" program that assists medically discharged servicemen and their

1 Jacob Kepecs, op. cit., p. 268.
families.\footnote{Ibid., p. 71.}

Finland, a second country that has recognized the value of homemakers, is using them on a large scale. In 1930, a section of the Finnish Red Cross, called the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, added homemaker service to its program. By the end of 1946, about 300 trained homemakers were working in Finland; the majority of whom were employed by local chapters of the Mannerheim League.\footnote{Sigrid Larsson, R. N., "Homemakers Help Finnish Mothers," The Child, XIII (July, 1948), 6.}

The Service as an Aspect of Case Work

Although international agencies have used the titles, housekeeper, traveling foster mother, homemaker, mother substitute and home-help almost synonymously\footnote{Hereafter referred to as homemaker because this title more adequately describes the homemaker's performance in the United States.}, they render a service which does not imply case work treatment which is discernible in the agency programs of the United States. The homemaker service of agencies of this country is not offered in addition to case work treatment but is considered a part of therapy in planning with a family. It becomes a vital part of the enabling process that facilitates a family's capacity to rehabilitate itself. As in rendering any other case work service, the social worker must have in mind
the total situation in order for the homemaker service to meet the needs of a particular family.

The worker must be cognizant of the family as an entity and, at the same time, appreciate the value of family life for both the children and the adults. In becoming alert to the total family situation, the caseworker must know what the family means to each individual member. Also, in this situation, it is necessary that she be aware of the total personality of the homemaker and her needs as a person.

It is not advisable to place a homemaker in the home of every family that might request one. In general, it has been proven practicable to use homemakers in certain family situations. One of these is a family situation in which there is a large family of children needing care because the mother has to work. The same is true when the children need care because of the mother's illness.

Another frequent use made of homemakers is to care for children temporarily while a mother is obtaining vocational training or attempting to find employment. The homemaker service is particularly worthwhile to a mother when she knows that with temporary assistance she can make her own plans and become financially independent.2

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1 Frances Preston and Rika Maclennan, op. cit., p. 27.

Jacob Kepecs recommends, in his article "Housekeeper Service in Motherless Families," that use be made of the homemaker service in several additional family situations. He calls attention to ways in which a homemaker can serve a family needing care during a long continued absence of the mother and in those families where there is some question as to the return of a mother to the home. A motherless family under the sole care of a father-person is considered a home where it is sometimes advisable to place a homemaker. This is also true for a family group including older children, which has been separated and re-established as a family unit. In addition, Mr. Kepecs suggested the further use of homemakers in a family where neglect is revealed; and, as a result, there is a need for a thorough study of the situation to arrive at a decision as to whether or not to keep the family together.\(^1\)

The merits of the homemaker service have been pointed out by other authorities in the field. For example, Herman E. McKaskle\(^2\) indicates the value of "visiting housekeepers" in needy homes for the purpose of teaching the family to make the most of its financial and environmental resources. Moreover, Madeline V. Manginelle who was director of a

\(^1\) Jacob Kepecs, *op. cit.* pp. 267-269.

\(^2\) Herman E. McKaskle, "They do Care how they Live," *Survey*, LXXI (March, 1935), 76-77.
homemaker service program during World War II described situations in which homemakers were used to serve servicemen's families. In one case, a serviceman while on furlough in a city had his family spend a short time with him. When he and his wife wished to spend an evening at the theater or in recreation and were concerned about leaving the children with some unknown person, the homemaker service was made available to them.¹

Difficulties Encountered

All families in which homemakers are placed are not able to use this service to the best advantage. Difficulties have been encountered when homemakers are provided in some homes. Some agencies have reservations about the value of the service in homes where the mothers are present but are unable, usually because of chronic illness, to assume active responsibility for the care of their children. In these families, the mother's illness often accentuated her need to maintain her status and control plus keep the children dependent upon her alone. Furthermore, it is difficult to use a homemaker when the parents themselves have not achieved emotional maturity and when their handling of their children is motivated by their own infantile needs. In such families the father has sometimes been helped to assume

¹ Madeline V. Manginelle, "In Times Like These," Journal of Social Case Work, XXIV (June, 1943), 152-153.
a more adequate adult parental role.

On the contrary, in some other families, the homemaker service has been found to be an artificial set-up in which there are more negative than positive values. Frequently, the presence of a homemaker can constitute a threat to an adolescent youth in a family. An adolescent girl who is striving to become independent may feel that she does not need the help of the homemaker. She may consider the homemaker a threat to her and as someone competing with her for a mother-substitute position which should rightfully be hers in the family group.

A similar situation may exist when a homemaker is placed in a motherless home where an adolescent boy is present. He may have lost his mother at a time when he had a keen need for her but yet was trying to wean himself away and to assert his independency. His struggle to be more adult and grown-up may be manifested by symptoms of rebellion and resentment against the homemaker. Often a case worker can help the homemaker understand why a boy with such feelings cannot take the "mothering" which other children in the family accept.

To a limited extent, homemakers have been placed by some agencies at the request of juvenile courts in homes

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1Preston and Maclellnan, op. cit., p. 28.

where children are neglected. These placements are often very
difficult because the parents may not accept the help
offered through a homemaker. Equally as difficult are
placements in homes where the children are neglected because
the mother who remains in the home is unable to manage her
household because of mental incompetence.¹

It would appear that homemaker services were established
to serve a specific purpose, namely, to keep the home
together. Gradually, other unpremeditated values in this
service were discovered both in national and international
social welfare programs. Private agencies using this
service in the United States have conceived of it as a case
work service geared to meet individual needs of families as
far as possible. In the promotion of a homemaker service
there are many important points to be considered if the
services are to be effective and meaningful to a family.

CHAPTER III

OPERATION OF THE PROGRAM

There are certain factors that are pertinent to the successful promotion of a homemaker program. For instance, the parents and older children must be accepting of the service as a means of aiding the family maintain some degree of solidarity and unity. Moreover, they should have a clear understanding of what is involved in the service. This should include the responsibilities that the homemaker and each member of the family are expected to assume. Moreover, the family can be helped to accept the homemaker by being made aware of her qualifications.1

It is also advisable that an agency permit the family to consider its own resources for meeting problems through the assistance of relatives or friends. If a father is the only parent in the home, he will probably need to assume many additional responsibilities which would normally be carried by the mother. Likewise, his participation in planning for the family should not be overlooked. Another factor is making certain that at least minimum household equipment is provided to work with in the home. This is particularly important in view of the fact that many of the homes using homemakers operate on a limited income and with inadequate facilities.2

1Ibid., pp. 8-9.
2Ibid., p. 9.
Qualifications for a Homemaker

Significant in the establishment of a successful homemaker program is the "finding" of well-qualified people who can fill homemaker positions, and it is a most difficult task. Several methods have been successfully employed by social agencies to ascertain them. One way of interesting people in this work is through the use of good advertising methods by means of well-written illustrated articles in local newspapers or widely read periodicals. Employment agencies and people responsible for courses on such subjects as the training of nurses' aides, first aid, home care of the sick, and the like may be able to suggest suitable individuals. Some agencies claim that one of the most effective methods of securing homemakers is through the homemaker's recommendation of the work to their friends.¹

After securing applicants for homemakers, an interview with the prospective homemaker is held. This personal contact will give the agency worker an opportunity to know the potentialities of the prospective homemaker and to decide whether the agency wishes to go further with her application. Also, a physical examination is usually required to protect both the family and the homemaker.

In selecting homemakers, agencies have found it necessary

¹Ibid., p. 13.
and justifiable to look for certain qualifications. The ideal homemaker must have demonstrated skill in managing a household and should know how to provide nourishing foods on an itemized budget. She must be an adaptable person who is able to gear her services to the needs of a particular family. In cities having a large foreign population, it is feasible to have women available of different religions and nationalities who can speak foreign languages. In addition, a homemaker who is familiar with foreign cultural patterns and food habits is a most valuable adjunct to the program.

The most important qualification for the homemaker is that she be able to work with people. She must have the capacity to work effectively with both the caseworker and the members of the family because each of these relationships is a vital one. She must see the needs of each member of the family with an objective, non-judgemental attitude. It is also necessary that she understand her function as distinguished from that of the case worker and be able to accept case work supervision.¹

Most agencies seem to prefer an "older woman" to fill the position because she is often more acceptable and does not constitute too much of a threat to family members. This is important because the family can regard her as an interested friend and not as a competitor for the affection of family

¹Ibid., pp. 14-17.
members. Older women are also less susceptible to criticism from neighbors when placed in a home where the mother is incapacitated. It is also thought that women who have had a more or less satisfactory marital life and who have reared children are more able to make a contribution as a successful adequate homemaker.¹

Just as important as the selection of a homemaker is the placement of the most suitable one possible in a home of an individual family. Careful placement is based on the agency's knowledge of the family and of the homemaker. All homemakers cannot work equally well with all families, and not all families can use the same homemakers. Often a homemaker has to be changed or shifted before she finishes her job in a family because the personality of the homemaker clashes and creates some disturbance in the family. The same homemaker, however, may adjust very well in another family situation.²

Training and Supervision

Another essential part of every homemaker program is the training and supervision of the homemakers. The amount of training and supervision needed may vary from agency to agency depending on the ability and capacity of the personnel.

¹Mrs. Wilhelmina Deas, Director of Homemaker Service, Atlanta Family Service Society, personal interview, March 10, 1949, Atlanta, Georgia.

²Ibid.
available for homemaker positions and on the length of time the homemakers have been members of the agency staff.

The training of homemakers can be accomplished in a number of different ways. One is the establishment of a training period prior to placement which includes such subjects as the purchase, preparation, and serving of food, some study and understanding of the behavior of people, habit training, and play activities of children. Some agencies have demonstration centers where the women can participate in planning, preparing, and serving meals. Agencies often encourage their homemakers to attend classes held in the community on home nursing, first aid, and household management.\(^1\)

The supervision of homemakers allows for the use of various methods, for example, in some agencies, their supervision is the duty of the person in charge of the program who works closely with the case worker directly handling the family. In other agencies, the case worker in charge of the family has full responsibility for supervising the homemaker after she is placed with a family. Agencies sometimes feel it necessary to make weekly visits to homes in which homemakers have been assigned. Whether this is a regular procedure or not, conferences are always held by the case worker with a homemaker working collaboratively with her periodically. At this time, problems centering around the homemaker's

work with the agency are discussed. The case worker in this way can help the homemaker in her acceptance and understanding of the family. The homemaker, in turn, because of her regular, daily association with the family, can contribute greatly to the case worker's understanding of the family and its situation. ¹

Moreover, group meetings can help the homemaker staff clarify their understanding of their job and give them an opportunity to present questions that do not arise in their individual conferences with the case workers. In this type of meeting the homemakers begin to realize that their particular problems are not unique but are common and experienced by many of the homemakers. They can begin to feel more comfortable about and accepting of their negative feelings and attitudes toward some of the families with whom they work and to feel freer to voice them openly. They are then a little closer to understanding their difficulties and are, therefore, in a better position to handle them. ²

In one agency, a club composed of homemakers was organized, and its members assumed the responsibility for electing the officers and planning the meetings. ³ It initiated several activities that were questioned as to their value and purpose

¹Ibid., p. 19.
²Mrs. Wilhelmina Deas, op. cit.
by the agency worker. Eventually, the members were able to convince the agency that the club experiences were indirectly helping them to make the homemaker program successful. Some of the activities planned and participated in were an all-day picnic for the children, a flower fund for the sick and a tea for the agency staff. The members formulated rules which were discussed each year for revision, and, at their meetings, various subjects related to their work were studied.\(^1\) This type of club can contribute much toward helping an agency maintain a more permanent group of homemakers. It also aids the homemakers in gaining more social and personal satisfaction from their work and to strive to be more adequate, helpful homemakers as they work with their respective families.

Compensation for Services

Another factor in the attracting and maintaining homemakers is offering satisfactory financial compensation for the services rendered.\(^2\) When devising salary scales for the homemaker, social agencies are compelled to take into consideration that most people in the higher occupational brackets are unwilling to accept positions as homemakers and that agencies are financially unable to pay homemakers top rating salaries. Yet, it is required that the homemaker have not only

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)United States Department of Labor Children's Bureau, "Meeting of the Committee on Supervised Homemaker Service" New York, N. Y., November 20, 21, 1942, p. 4 (Mimeoographed.)
the skills of an average domestic worker but also some understanding of people and their problems. Moreover, she must be able to work well with children, be able to relate well to people, and have countless other qualities that make her of real value to a family. Agencies realize that in order to attract the type of person who is able to meet the qualifications set, they must pay the homemaker a higher salary than the average domestic worker receives. This situation seems to create a range for the homemaker's salary from more than the domestic to less than the professional staff members of case work agencies.\footnote{Robert Taylor, Director, Atlanta Community Planning Council, personal interview, March 12, 1949, at Atlanta, Georgia.}

These salary scales vary in different localities in relation to the cost of living in the given vicinity. They sometimes vary from family to family, according to the amount of work involved. Some agencies pay homemakers by the hour, and other agencies by the week. In some agencies, they pay homemakers only for the time that they work. Others reimburse them at a regular salary whether they are working or not as long as they are considered members of the staff. In accordance with the homemaker being a member of the agency staff, she is entitled to the same personnel practices and is covered by the same staff policies that the other staff
members are permitted to observe.  

The family using homemaker service which has the financial means is encouraged to contribute to the cost of the service and negotiates directly with an agency. In planning financially, the case worker's skill and experience in understanding the relation between the use of money and the meaning of money to the client emotionally is of the utmost value. Encouraging the client to pay if he can afford to do so is in keeping with the deeply rooted case work concept of self-help. In order to stimulate and encourage financial independence, a family must be permitted to participate in its plans and to utilize the strengths within the family group.

Permitting a family that is financially able not to contribute to the cost of the service can encourage its members to become dependent on agencies rather than to grow stronger through making use of their own already existing resources. Additional matters, which must be taken into account before deciding with the family the amount that it will be asked to contribute, are the amount and regularity of

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1 Federal Security Agency, "Minutes of Meeting of the National Committee on Homemaker Service." Meeting held New York, New York, November 13-14, 1947, p. 4 (Mimeographed.)

2 Ruth McElroy, "Fees for Homemaker Service," Paper delivered at annual meeting of National Committee on Homemaker Service, October 20-21, p. 1 (Mimeographed.)

the income, fixed maintenance expenses, indebtedness and unusual expenses, and the estimated length of time the family will need the homemaker service.¹

Because the homemaker is a member of the agency staff she is paid directly by the agency just as other staff members even though the family may actually be defraying the entire cost of the service², and this practice has several advantages. First, it helps to discourage any feeling on the part of the family that the homemaker is their "maid," and second, to prevent the homemaker from feeling that the family is regarding her as a servant. Moreover, this method keeps the homemaker uninformed as to how much or how little the family is contributing to her salary, and is in accord with the case work principle of the confidentiality of information received from a family about its situations and affairs.

Because of the importance people attach to "paying one's way" in modern society, some people have a tendency to permit the financial status of a person to influence their behavior toward him. Likewise, knowing the sum the family is contributing, might cause the homemaker to consciously or unconsciously adjust or alter her efforts to satisfy the family in accordance with the amount. Moreover, there is the possibility that the salary the homemaker receives is more

¹Ruth McElroy, op. cit., p. 2.

than the amount that the head of the household is receiving; and, consequently, there may be some danger of the family's members' becoming resentful if they were aware of the homemaker's earnings.

In operating a homemaker service program the personnel responsible for the program is of major importance. Although the homemaker is not a professionally trained person, the program is immeasurably strengthened when such a person has the capacity to work with people, is sensitive to their needs, is able to take supervision, and to adapt herself to the agency's way of operating. Compensation for the services of such a person is always difficult to estimate in terms of amount of time an agency must devote in finding such persons, in training and supervising them, and in interpreting their duties to them in such a way that the purposes and goals of social case work can be realized.
CHAPTER IV

HOMEMAKER SERVICE IN SOUTHERN COMMUNITIES

The South has consistently been slow in establishing social services and only recently has become socially aware of its responsibility to dependent families. Not until the Social Security Act of 1935 did the South gain any impetus in providing social welfare services to the needy.¹ Moreover, southern private agencies were very limited in their financial ability to provide adequate social services until the establishment of community chest programs which developed in southern cities most recently. Likewise, provisions in southern private agencies for a homemaker program have been made slowly and painstakingly. Causes for this, whether economic, social, or psychological, can be attributed in part to cultural patterns and the social background of the South.

Difficulties Encountered

The homemaker service is still in an infant stage in the South. It is an expensive service and southern agencies, for the most part, have limited funds.² Moreover, the people are not sufficiently socially conscious of welfare needs to support social services to any great extent. Remnants of the


²Robert Taylor, *op. cit.*
Elizabethan belief that "The individual who was in need had brought that condition upon himself through his own shiftlessness, ignorance, or incapacity"\(^1\) can still be found in the South. According to Gunnar Myrdal, an explanation for its economic backwardness can be traced to the rigid institutional structure of the economic life of the region which, historically, is derived from slavery and, psychologically, is rooted in the minds of the people.\(^2\)

Most southern agencies lack adequate funds to pay homemakers sufficient salaries if they are able to employ them at all. As previously stated, salaries must be adequate to attract people who are capable of qualifying for the position. Moreover, salaries must be sufficient to support the interpretation to the public that the homemaker service is not domestic work but a specialized kind of service. Moreover, the program continues to be affected by the stigma attached to domestic service. Since slavery, a domestic service position has been conceived of in the South as a "Negro job." White women who have capacity to follow any other line of work are anxious to do so. Frances Trollope says that most southern white people believe that "the most abject poverty is preferable to domestic service."\(^3\) Therefore, the only southern

\(^{1}\)Fink, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 19.

\(^{2}\)Gunnar Myrdal, \textit{An American Dilemma} (New York, 1944), p. 221.

\(^{3}\)Frances Trollope, \textit{Domestic Manners of the Americans} (New York, 1927), p. 44.
white women available for homemaker positions would be those who are unable to find any other kind of work. This is unfortunate in that the position ideally requires a person with certain definite attributes.

Employing all Negro homemakers does not solve the problem in the South. It is necessary to have some white homemakers in the program in order to comply with the segregation pattern existing in the South. For instance, in a situation in which there is need for a homemaker to establish a close relationship with a family and, perhaps, actively participate in the children's outside life, that is, attendance at parent-teachers' meetings as a representative of the family, a Negro homemaker would not be acceptable.

Another impediment to a smoothly operating homemaker service program in the South is the class system that exists among the Negroes. Many Negroes feel that their social status is considerably lowered if they work for other Negroes as domestics. They prefer working for more comfortably situated white people; and some believe that stigma attached to being a domestic servant affects their status less in a Negro community if they work for a white family than if they

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1 Myrdal, op. cit., p. 223.

2 Mr. Albert Whiting, Professor of Sociology, Atlanta University, personal interview, May 8, 1949, Atlanta, Georgia.
work for even an "upper-class" Negro family. Because of this attitude and the belief that the homemaker service is "glorified maid service," southern social agencies have a difficult time finding Negro women willing to work for clients who are considered to have a "lower-lower class" status in a Negro locality.

Not only has the public not accepted the homemaker as an agency staff person performing a specialized task, but also some agencies have not regarded them as staff members. In some of the communications from the agencies studied "homemakers' wages" were mentioned in contrast to "case workers' salaries." Similarly, homemakers were "hired" whereas case workers were "employed." These connotations illustrate to some extent a difference in attitude toward each occupation.

Programs in Selected Agencies

The programs of twenty-five social agencies in twenty-two cities located in thirteen southern states were examined in order to ascertain those that include the homemaker service. Seven agencies, approximately one-fourth of the agencies contacted, had a program of this kind for their clients. The seven agencies were located in six states; four states on the southeastern coast, namely North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, and Maryland; and two further west, Texas and Tennessee.

1Ibid.
Five of these agencies that provided homemaker service were family agencies, and the other two were a combination of family and child care agencies.

These agencies had begun their homemaker service programs recently with the exception of the Family Service Society in Richmond, Virginia which initiated its program in 1943 as an outgrowth of the Works Progress Administration Housekeeping Service which ended that year. The supervisors of the Works Progress Administration project and the ten released visiting housekeepers were employed by the Richmond Family Service Society which similar to the other agencies began their program with housekeepers and, gradually, through supervision and training, helped them to become homemakers. Another starting point with these seven agencies in developing their programs, was providing only temporary care and then, gradually, including other types as the program expanded, namely, long time, exploratory and supplementary care.

The Family and Children's Society in Baltimore was the only agency studied that offered all four types of services. Moreover, all seven agencies having a homemaker program directed their service toward the care of children; and all with the exception of one agency later gave some consideration to the ill and physically handicapped person. There were three agencies however located in Baltimore, Houston, and Richmond which finally had extended its homemaker service to the aged individual in the home.
The policy of all these agencies was to render this service to any client or applicant regardless of race, color, or creed. Some agencies, however, refused to accept families for service when certain other circumstances were present. The Family Service Society of Richmond was reluctant about rendering this service to people who were not clients or who were able to finance the service independently of agency help. This policy was designed to keep the agency from infringing upon the function of commercial employment agencies. Unlike the Richmond agency, the Family Service of Savannah found that it could only accept families which were able to pay for at least a part of the cost of the service.

Most of the agencies listed shortage of funds as the major problem faced in their efforts to operate homemaker service programs. This was true of the agencies in Atlanta, Savannah, Winston-Salem, and Baltimore. These agencies with the exception of one had programs which were supported by the Community Chest. On the other hand the Family Service Society in Atlanta financed its service through private funds from the W. L. Shallenberger Estate Fund.$^1$ This Atlanta agency reported that one of its areas of concern was securing well-qualified homemakers who were interested in keeping positions as homemakers. The Family Service of

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$^1$Mrs. Wilhelmina Deas, op. cit.
Savannah reported a similar problem, and the Executive Secretary of this agency added that "It is easier to recruit colored than white homemakers because of the unfortunate association of the homemaker's work with domestic work."¹

Three agencies reported services which appeared to be the beginnings of homemaker service programs. There were a family agency in Miami, Florida and child care agencies in Charlotte, North Carolina and in New Orleans, Louisiana. One of these agencies stated that the reason it could make no further progress in setting up a homemaker program was that it lacked sufficient funds for that purpose. In a child care agency in Shreveport, Louisiana, an account was given of a housekeeper service that operated over ten years ago. It was found to be very unsuccessful because the policies determining the agency's and the family's responsibility toward the housekeeper were not clearly defined.

Fifteen agencies of the twenty-five corresponded with had no semblance of homemaker service in their programs, but four of these agencies mentioned the value in the service. Of the thirteen states contacted, five states and Washington, D. C., had no agency which gave a service that even resembled the beginnings of a homemaker service program.

¹ Letter from Mr. Frank P. Baker, Executive Secretary, Family Service of Savannah, Georgia, March 28, 1949.
Trends in Program

Southern agencies, as are northern agencies, are regarding the homemaker program as a case work service. Those who have provided housekeepers as a service to their clients see the need for a more specialized type of service. The executive secretary of one southern agency wrote that "We see the job as quite different from the old time W.P.A. visiting housekeeper, and when the need is more for a domestic than anything else, we do not handle the request." Moreover, these agencies are beginning to see "not providing the service" as a deficiency in the agency program. This recognition of the value of the service is indicated by such statements as this one by the executive secretary of a family agency, "I am sorry to say we do not have such a program, although there is much need for it in the community." 

In recent years, increasing thought has been given to the service as a means of helping and keeping aged persons, and in some situations, mentally incompetent persons, in their homes. However, southern private agencies have not reached this stage in the use of the program, and those programs in

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1Ibid.


existence usually began with service to children.

Public funds administered by the Children's Bureau and made available to state public welfare agencies under the Social Security Act can be used to establish projects of homemaker service.¹ This service is offered as a basic part of the child welfare program. It is also significant that this service is listed as a special project in a federal manual giving instructions to state public welfare agencies for the fiscal year beginning July, 1949. Although these public measures have not been utilized in southern states, it is expected that they will be included within a few years.

The administering of this service by public agencies will naturally affect the service in private agencies. Public agencies in many cities are providing homemakers for their clients and are reimbursing the private agency that provides the service at least to the extent of the homemaker's salary. The cooperation of the public agency and the private agency in establishing and operating homemaker service programs will undoubtedly strengthen the service and make less intense some of the problems which private agencies are facing in their endeavor to make the service available. Regardless to whichever steps the public agencies take to facilitate this service, it is anticipated that southern

agencies will concentrate on interpreting to the public the need and value of the homemaker service.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis indicates the progress or lack of progress that has been made in incorporating the homemaker service into the programs of private social agencies in southern communities as a case work service. It may be defined as the placing of carefully selected persons by social agencies in homes to care for family members, especially children, in order to maintain the homes in spite of temporary or permanent incapacity of a parent person.

The homemaker service is based on conservation of the home and the family unit and makes possible security for the child with at least one parent. The presence of the homemaker lessens the emotional feeling and damaging experiences that a child lives through upon the absence or incapacity of a parent person.

This service is still relatively young and had its beginnings in 1923 when the Jewish Welfare Society of Philadelphia organized a staff of "visiting housekeepers" to act as parent substitutes for mothers during their absence from the home. In foreign countries, however, this service lacks a case work approach which is its major emphasis in the United States.

Providing homemaker service is part of the treatment plan in working with a family. Consequently, a case worker
must be cognizant of the family as an entity appreciating the value of family life for all its members. Private agencies using this service in the United States have conceived of it as a case work service geared to meet the individual needs of the family as far as possible.

In operating a homemaker service program, the personnel responsible for the program is of major importance. Although the homemaker is not a professionally trained person, she is considered a member of the agency staff, and her work should be seen as an integral part of the function of the agency. The program is immeasurably strengthened when such a person has the capacity to work with people, is sensitive to their needs, is able to take supervision, and is able to adjust to the agency's way of working.

Compensation for the service is always difficult to estimate in terms of amount of time the agency must devote to recruiting personnel, training and supervising them and interpreting their duties to them in such a way that the purpose and goal of social case work can be realized. Moreover, the case worker's skill and experience in understanding the relationship between the use of money and the client's emotional and psychological patterns are of utmost value. Permitting a client, who is financially able, to reimburse the agency for part of the cost of homemaker service encourages him to utilize his resources. Allowing the client to help himself in this way is instrumental in accomplishing
self-development.

It was reported that seven agencies, slightly more than one-third of the twenty-five contacted had homemaker service programs. The states in which these agencies were located were Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Texas and Tennessee. Three agencies had services which resembled homemaker service to a small degree, and fifteen agencies were entirely without such a service.

Public funds are being made available for homemaker service. Moreover, in many cities the public agency is reimbursing the private agency that provides the service. It is expected that many of the difficulties faced in operating this service will be alleviated through the cooperation of the public and private agencies. The circumstances that directly and indirectly affect the progress of homemaker service in the southern communities can be summarized as follows: the poverty of the South, the stigma attached to domestic service, the system of segregation separating Negroes from whites, and the class system existing among Negroes.

These circumstances could probably never be annihilated by social agencies, but the blockage to the success of the homemaker service can be overcome to a great extent by interpretation to the public. This interpretation should be designed to interest the public in the welfare of their fellowmen and to help them understand homemaker service as a valuable, specialized kind of service which is in keeping
with the functions of the private social agency.
APPENDIX
Dear Friend:

I am writing a thesis on the subject, "Home-maker Service Programs in Private Social Agencies", in compliance with the requirements of the Atlanta University School of Social Work.

It will be helpful to know whether or not you have a home-maker service program in your agency. If you do have this type of service, I will welcome information regarding it in terms of type of program, extent of the program, policies under which it is operated, and difficulties which you have encountered in operating your program. I will also be interested in knowing whether you are planning such a program if you do not have one now.

It will mean much towards accomplishing this study if you are able to mail this information to me no later than the first of April.

Very truly yours,

(Miss) Evelyn B. Williams
SCHEDULE

Name of Agency

Location (city and state)

Does this agency provide homemaker service?

Type of homemaker service

Extent of program

Policies under which it is operated

Difficulties encountered in providing service

Future plans regarding service

Any additional information regarding service
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