Some implications of lower class cultural traits for community organization in the urban slum neighborhood

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SOME IMPLICATIONS OF LOWER CLASS CULTURAL TRAITS FOR
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION IN THE URBAN SLUM NEIGHBORHOOD

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY
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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
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DEDICATION

To God, my Creator, Redeemer, Life Giver, I humbly dedicate all that I do, including this study.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to acknowledge her gratitude to the many persons without whose encouragement and assistance this thesis would not have become a reality.

To the Faculty of the Atlanta University School of Social Work and especially the Thesis Advisors and Consultants, I am indebted for increased insights and suggestions in the handling of the subject.

To my mother, Mrs. Frank Smith, who has always been a source of encouragement as well as to my relatives and many friends in LaGrange, Illinois who have both encouraged and assisted, I wish to express appreciation. Mrs. D. B. Moore has been both encouraging and helpful, as has been Mrs. E. J. Smith. I also wish to express appreciation to my relatives and others for their assistance in typing.

There are many other friends who have encouraged and assisted me. They cannot all be mentioned but I must express appreciation to Mrs. A. J. Martin of Atlanta, Georgia, for her continued encouragement and assistance.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Significance

Many urban areas, in order to prevent material and cultural decadence, are involved in planning. Much of this planning concerns the lower class persons who inhabit the urban slum. The social worker practicing community organization must be aware of and able to deal with the culture of this class.

Many cities are designating certain geographical areas for various uses. Some of the uses are residential, educational, civic, health, welfare, commercial, cultural, recreational, and for other future community needs. Consideration for the movement of people and goods should be an integral part of the planning. In order to be adequate, plans should be based on current and projected demographic information as well as on change brought about by technological advance. These plans, certainly in their execution, but more ideally in an earlier phase, must involve the population and especially the residents of affected areas.¹

Much of the planning in the urban areas affects the slum neighborhood, a densely populated area characterized by squalor and wretched living conditions. The majority of the people who reside in such areas are of lower class status. This thesis is concerned with some of the

¹This paragraph represents the distillation of the ideas of many authors who are listed in the bibliography: Julia Abramson, A Neighborhood Finds Itself (New York, 1959); Warren H. Dunham (ed.), The City in Mid Century (Detroit, 1957); Murray B. Meld, "Housing and Planning; Today's Social Frontier," Social Work, II (April, 1957); and others.
culture traits of the lower class and the implications the traits have for community organization in the urban slum neighborhood.

The idea of class may be somewhat repugnant to the American ideal, but sociologically it seems to be a reality, not so much in rigid horizontal levels of people but in the sense that "...large groups of families are approximately equal to each other and clearly differentiated from other families...."¹

Traditionally social workers have been concerned with the needs of residents of the slum. This writer does not mean to imply that persons of lower class status are the only concern of the social worker. This is far from true, as persons suffering from social malfunctioning, whether caused by intrapsychic or environmental conditions, are to be found in every social class. Certainly, they are to be seen in the middle class where there is high motivation toward social mobility. Change in the class status, whether upward or downward, often brings about problems which may be the concern of the social worker.

From its beginning social work was concerned with poorly fed, poorly housed persons who were often in poor health and unable to afford medical care. These persons were mainly of the lower class. Much of the basis for social dysfunctioning, historically, could be found in the Industrial Revolution and the consequent shift in population from rural to urban dwellers. Currently, in our industrialized society, there have been technological advances that have further contributed to social dysfunctioning. Persons of the lower class, who comprise the mass of the semi-skilled and unskilled workers, are most affected

by these advances. In addition to problems of unemployment, the urban slum neighborhood in which they reside is the target of the city planners or other groups. No wonder there is a sense of confusion among these residents.

Individuals are detached from their old ties of family, neighborhood and community relationships by which their characters were forged in earlier days. Yet new allegiances and loyalties have not been created that can give our people a new center of being and a new order of life. As a consequence individuals are confused and bewildered.1

Born of this confusion and augmented by inadequate communication, the slum resident's reaction is often hostility or uncooperativeness when approached by representatives of the planners or others. Among the planners, the persons involved in urban renewal and public housing, "...is a growing recognition that the human component must be taken into account as neighborhoods and communities undergo change under pressure of current urban needs."2 Social work has, "...an appreciation of the intrinsic worth of every individual and a skill in helping people grow in their relationships with others and cope with pressures of environmental change....3

Using the method of community organization, the social worker can aid residents to participate cooperatively with their neighbors toward the enhancement of the neighborhood. Both the sociological and social work literature indicate that the middle class social worker and the

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2Murray B. Meld, op. cit., p. 32.
3Ibid., p. 33.
lower class client have different frames of reference. Often, these differing frames of reference are obstacles to meaningful communication between the middle class social worker and the lower class client. The cultural traits of the lower class, especially as they affect the work that the community organizer is trying to do in the urban slum neighborhood, will be delineated. The major reference will be Joseph A. Kahl, who, in his *American Class Structure*, relies heavily on the empirical studies of Allison Davis and associates, W. Lloyd Warner and associates, August B. Hollingshead, Robert S. and Helen M. Lynd. In addition to Kahl and his own studies other sources will be used as noted in the bibliography.

In determining the implications of some of the lower class cultural traits for community organization, it must be determined exactly what it is that the community organizer is attempting to do in the urban slum neighborhood.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this thesis was to examine some of the cultural traits of the lower class in light of the implications that they have for community organization in the urban slum neighborhood. This was done by determining the cultural traits, examining the process in community

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2 *op. cit.*
organization, and relating the traits to process in order to determine their implications.

Method

1) The sociological literature was explored and the most commonly agreed upon cultural traits of the lower class were delineated. Important to the concern of this thesis is the concept of class, so this concept is discussed in order to clarify its current sociological use and its use in this thesis. There is discussion of some cultural traits of ethnic groups as large numbers of the lower class in the urban slum are members of ethnic groups. There are Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Italians, and others. Some cultural traits related to ethnicity have implications for community organization. These traits are mentioned only as they have differing implications for community organization from those lower class cultural traits that are the focus of this thesis.

Kahl used the six variables derived from Max Weber's works in the stratification of class. These variables are personal prestige, occupation, possessions, interactional group for social life, class consciousness, and value orientations.

In 1955 with James A. Davis, Hahl reviewed the various indexes then in use to measure socio-economic status and concluded that the best measurable predictors of status in descending order were: occupation, education, source of income, dwelling area, house type, and amount of income.¹

In determining the cultural traits of the lower class which have implications for community organization in the urban slum, the writer has

used the variables of education, value orientation, occupation, interactional group for social life, and dwelling area and type.

2) The literature on the social work method of community organization was explored and what is relevant at the neighborhood level is discussed. There is an attempt to explain the social work method of community organization. There is some delineation of process, because only as what must be done is understood can we examine the cultural implications in the doing. The framework for the discussion of process in community organization are the core elements of fact-finding, which helps in the determination of need or focusing the discontent; program formulation or planning, which includes interpretation and education; and implementation and evaluation.¹

3) Some of the cultural traits of the lower class will be discussed as they relate to the community organization process. The implications that these cultural traits have for community organization at the neighborhood level will be discussed.

Following are the definitions of some of the terms used in this study. Within the body of the thesis there will be an elaboration of many of these terms as well as others which are not defined here. Some of the definitions have been taken from the Dictionary Of Social Sciences.² The definition of community organization has evolved from

¹Genevieve W. Carter, Johns and De Marche, Murray G. Ross as well as the other authors in the bibliography who deal with the theory and practice of community organization are the sources of information for this section.

reading the social work literature and the writer's field work experience. Cultural trait is a construct which refers to the simplest element in a culture: a way of using a culture object, a social norm, a social attitude, etc. Community organization ¹ will be taken to mean a social work method the goal of which is the enhancement of community life. This goal is effected by obtaining a thorough knowledge of the community, its residents, groups, institutions, resources and establishing an interactional pattern through which cooperative action toward this goal develops. Class is an aggregate of people who have the same status or rank in a given society. Ethnic group is a group of persons who have a distinct culture, or racial heredity or both. Urban area ² will refer to any incorporated or unincorporated place of 2,500 or more residents, as well as urban fringes, incorporated or not, which are located around cities of 50,000 or more people. Planning may be described as, "...the process of locating and defining a problem (or set of problems), exploring the nature and scope of the problem, considering various solutions to it, selecting what appears to be a feasible solution, and taking action in respect to the solution chosen."³


²John T. Zadrozny, op. cit. This definition varied with the different U. S. Census periods. The definition used was for the Census of 1950.

Neighborhood is a small area of primary contacts and personal relations. Stratification is the process by which several groups and categories of people are arranged into different status levels. It can also be taken to mean the existence of ranks in society. Social mobility is the change in attitudes, roles, opinions, and frames of reference that is often associated with a change in group affiliation.

Scope and Limitations

Due to the findings in anthropology and sociology, the social work profession is growing in its awareness of the cultural context of its clients. As Herman D. Stein states, "...to ignore social class patterns related to ethnic, regional and other considerations can affect accurate diagnosis...."¹ This is true whether the client be the individual, the group or the neighborhood. In this thesis the writer will be concerned with the cultural implications as they affect community organization at the neighborhood level.

This thesis will be limited as to practice aspects, as the writer has had only a six-month field work experience in the practice of community organization. In exploring the community organization literature for this thesis, the writer was able to grow in her grasp of theoretical knowledge, but continues to be limited in this area.

The study is limited to the urban areas of the United States. The libraries of Atlanta University, the City of Atlanta and the City of Chicago were the resources most frequently used.

CHAPTER II

SOME CULTURAL TRAITS

The focus of this chapter will be upon some of the lower class cultural traits. The cultural traits of ethnic groups which would seem to have differing implications for community organization will also be discussed. Before delineating these cultural traits, the writer will explore the socio-cultural concept of class; briefly explain the stratification process, and describe what is meant by "lower class" in this study.

Class and the Stratification Process

In even the most superficial observation of the society in which we live, one readily sees various groupings of people. There are the laborers, the owners, the lawyers, the clerical workers, the merchants, clerics, and teachers, to mention only a few. These are groupings based only on occupation. However, in arranging groups of people according to various status levels, which is stratification, it is necessary to be aware of additional variables such as style of life, education, social associates, prestige, and wealth.

An understanding of class and the stratification process is basic to the understanding of not only the society but also of the behavior of individuals and of the groups of which the society is comprised. Class greatly determines the milieu of the individual, and is the basis for his frame of reference.

Every complex society known to scholarship has been stratified. This has led many scholars to assert that it is a functional imperative for them to be stratified...group life could
not exist without it. The function most often mentioned for
the stratification system is the need to motivate men to do
the different kinds of work that have to be done in society.

From evidences of the very earliest societies, there are indica-
tions of the division of labor. The Bible mentions fishermen, shepherds,
rulers, soldiers and many others. From excavations of anthropologists,
there are many evidences of the varied occupations of the past civili-
zations. The power that some men exercised over other men, as well as
the varied occupations, supports the assumption of stratified societies.
Medieval western history refers to the landed gentry, the clergy, the
bourgeoisie, and the serfs. Until very recently, India's society was
divided into a rigid caste system. In America, "...our class order is
a product of our urban industrial stage of development, of our West
European cultural heritage, and of the circumstances of settlement in
a new continent."\(^2\)

Even though all known societies have been stratified, it was not
until the nineteenth century, when Karl Marx attempted to explain so-
ciety in terms of class and the class struggle, that a theory was ad-
vanced to explain the stratification of society.

He believed that there was a single distinction between
men. Those who owned capital and those who did not.... He
maintained that every productive system established a limit-
ed number of types of work roles.... Each group of men who
stand in the same relationship to the means of production
formed a class. They not only did the same kind of work,
but had a basic interest in common which often put them in
conflict with other classes.\(^3\)

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 7.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 3.
It is true that a man's relationship to the means of production and his occupation are important variables in the stratification of class, but these variables are only parts in the pattern of variables that determine class. Marx's theory was far too limited to explain a society of men who also are spiritual entities. As he indicated, there has been a class conflict, but it has never resulted in one remaining class which both controlled production and also the producers. Marx did contribute to the theoretical knowledge of class and stratification.

The findings of Max Weber, the German social scientist, defined the concept of class, status and party, and showed the interrelatedness of status and class. These findings are significant in an understanding of the socio-cultural concept of class as it is used in this study. Weber's works, along with the works of American social scientists who have done empirical studies, have contributed to our theoretical and practical knowledge of class and the stratification process.

From the works of the social scientists have emerged certain variables or predictors which tend to converge; they form a pattern, and it is this pattern that creates social classes. Following are some of the variables that have been or are presently used in stratifying a population. Personal prestige is determined by the attitude of respect that neighbors have for an individual. Occupation describes the major work role of the individual. Possessions, whether capital

\[1\text{Ibid., p. 5.}\]

\[2\text{Ibid., p. 13.}\]
or consumer goods, indicate the wealth of the individual. Persons who share a given life style tend to have more personal contact. There is a class consciousness or an awareness of selves as a social grouping. Values are the convictions shared by people in a given culture about the things that they consider good, important or beautiful. Values define the ends of life and approved means of approaching them.\(^1\) In a more recent study with James A. Davis, Kahl concluded that the best measurable predictors of status in descending order were occupation, education, source of income, dwelling area, house type, and amount of income.\(^2\) Using this latter group of status predictors in a scale with certain weights assigned, the population of a given community can be stratified as to class.

Depending on who is doing the stratifying, there may be two, three, five or six classes. Hodge says:

> Historically there are two classes, the oppressors and the oppressed.... The division of roles is the source of stratification of society into different tiers: the guardian or leisure tier; the auxiliary or administrative tier; the laboring tier; and the indigent tier. The concept of tier is more precise than that of class because it connotes a series of social layers or strata which the concept of class does not.\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 12.

\(^2\)Vance Packard, op. cit., p. 32.

The idea of class stratification seems widely accepted among sociologists, and there seems general agreement that there is an upper, a middle, and a lower class. Now there is further division among these classes, and here there are differences of opinion among the sociologists. Since the interest in this study is the lower class, the stratification used by Vance Packard is suitable. "The real upper class and the semi-upper class are included in the diploma elite. The limited success class, the working class, and the real lower class are the supporting division."¹ It is the cultural traits of the "real lower class" that are the concern of this study.

Americans are often reluctant to verbalize their acceptance of the class concept as it does not seem to conform to the American tradition. "...traditions concern more "what ought to be" than "what is" and the differential distribution of the other variables creates a class system whether we recognize it or not."² The concept of class seems to have been internalized by many Americans even though they may use different terminology. Frequently the terms "high society," "the poor but honest working folk" are heard. The residents of the towns in which the social scientists, mentioned in the previous chapter, did their studies were often reluctant in stratifying their fellow residents formally, but were able to indicate where these residents ranked in the town's socio-economic system. Their criteria seemed to be: where the residents lived, their source and use of wealth, their ancestors, whether or not


they were esteemed, and their social associates. Lasswell has indicated that this type of stratifying, which seems based on preconceived generalizations, may be no more than stereotyping. It does seem to have some merit in that it is an expression by people that they believe that class divisions do exist in their society.

Even though the stratification process would indicate some rigidity in the class system, there is still fluidity due to the dynamic qualities of the variables and human motivation. Although social mobility is far less in range than it was during the early days of American society, when the economy was not controlled and there was a frontier to conquer, there is still mobility, and education would seem to be its most available vehicle.

...the studies of social mobility in the United States suggest that the rate of social mobility is high; the chance to get ahead, to move out of the lower strata, has improved in this century, largely because of changes in the occupational structure and the trend toward income equality; the range of movement, however, is limited; movement across the blue collar-white collar divide is less frequent than mobility within the two broad classes.... Because work in modern society demands greater abilities, education is becoming the main barrier to opportunity; but it is a barrier through which more and more people pass.

Many writers see a much greater tendency toward rigidity in our stratification system. In The Status Seekers Vance Packard indicates that...

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layers, frustration is a commonly felt emotion.\footnote{op. cit., p. 270.}

He does see, however, a college education as one of the few opportunities for upward mobility.

There are many obstacles to upward mobility among the real lower class. These obstacles are an outgrowth of the culture pattern of this class. In looking at this class in light of some of the previously mentioned variables, some of the cultural traits will be seen; many of these traits are obstacles to social mobility.

**Lower Class Cultural Traits**

In speaking of the real lower class, Packard indicates

> These are the people that everyone else looks down on. They live in decrepit slum areas that just about every American town has.... They leave school as soon as legally allowed, if not before. They work erratically at unskilled or semi-skilled tasks and try to find their pleasure where they can.\footnote{Vance Packard, op. cit., p. 36.}

The writer will examine this description in light of some of the previously mentioned variables used in stratifying a population.

The lack of personal prestige is immediately alluded to in the description when the lower class is described as "the people that everyone else looked down on." Much of this lack of prestige is an outgrowth of the lower class' poor style of life. Our overall American culture so values possessions and evidence of material accomplishment that those who are without are generally held in poor esteem. Many in the lower...
class lack wealth. The writer has observed in a decade of public assistance work among the lower class in the urban slum that many seem to lack personal security. This is evidenced in the young by aggressive behavior and in the older adults by apathy.

It is important to emphasize the role of the self-image of a man who knows he is despised by respectable people. He can react in only two basic ways: withdraw and convince himself that respectable people are not worth worrying about, that they are snobs and stuffed shirts who have false values that emphasize cutthroat competition rather than human cooperation; or fight back. Young people in particular are inclined to fight. If the world despises them, why not kick the world? Such youthful aggression is commonly reported in the newspapers as juvenile delinquency. As people get older they tend to make an adjustment; they often learn that they cannot win by fighting because they are too weak. Instead they retreat into apathy. ¹

This lack of personal security contributes to a suspicious attitude toward others, which is often encountered by social workers and public health workers who work among the lower class in the urban slum. For adults social life may be limited to relatives and habitues of the neighborhood tavern. The personal relationships are sometimes characterized by aggressive behavior.

Another of the variables alluded to in Packard's description of the lower class is dwelling areas. "They live in decrepit slum areas." Many Americans are poorly housed, and the slum dwellers are the worst. The pitifully small, crowded, aged, dirty, vermin-infested units are unfit for human habitation. Public housing has relieved somewhat the housing problem, but a great deal more needs to be done in terms of providing more units and in helping the lower class individual adjust

to this more adequate housing unit.

Our large urban slums are breeding grounds for criminals.¹ Often, in these areas, the only person who seems to have any prestige (this is usually based on position, power, wealth, or skill in getting things done), is the ward politician, a prize fighter, or a hoodlum. These, then, are the persons whom the children and the adolescents of the urban slum have as role models. The politician in the urban slum neighborhood is often a manipulator of people and resources for the purpose of controlling votes. The fighter makes money through aggressive behavior; aggression is understood and appreciated by the slum inhabitant. The hoodlum or petty criminal has the material evidence of success. He has cash, car, clothes, and women. He exploits people, seemingly at times without interference from law-enforcement officials. Even the fighter is sometimes controlled by the hoodlum element. Such as these are often the role models for the young people of the slum.

The adults of the slum have been for so long in their sordid surroundings that they have become apathetic. Not only are they at the mercy of petty criminals because of poor law enforcement, but usually all city service is inadequate. It is not uncommon that escape is sought in alcoholism or other defeatist behavior. The slum area is a threat to the well-being of the inhabitants as well as exceedingly

¹Many writers who have focused on the urban slum, its lower class and ethnic group residents, have discussed gambling, prostitution, juvenile delinquency and other illegal behavior. Walter B. Miller, "Implications of Urban Lower Class Culture for Social Work," Social Service Review, XXXII(Sept., 1959), p. 224. In this article also note the author's comments on the high regard in which physical strength and endurance are held by the lower class male. Oscar Handlin, The Newcomers(Cambridge, 1959); note especially Chapter 2, "The Historical Background," pp. 44-45.
costly to the entire population of the city in terms of the loss in human potential and in terms of the high tax expenditure. Health services in the slum are often preventive but welfare and recreation too often have been provisional rather than preventive.

The description goes on to indicate that "children leave school as soon as legally allowed if not before." The variable of education was found to be second in importance in the scale for predicting status. Many lower class children drop out of school at the age of sixteen, when school attendance is no longer compulsory. Long before they drop out, however, they have difficulty, and school has not provided them with a meaningful learning experience. Although much of the difficulty lies in the child's low motivation for learning due to the poor home environment and the lack of interest on the part of the parents, much of the difficulty lies in the school. It is a middle class institution operated by middle class administrators and teachers. They lack understanding of the lower class culture, and are unable to communicate meaningfully with children of this class. The child, then, has little motivation for attending school. The school rejects him by not understanding his culture and not being able to communicate with him. His parents are often interested in his going to work and helping the family or at least in his becoming self-supporting. They give little thought or concern to the child's becoming prepared for an occupation or a career. To the sixteen year old the job, when he can find one, is an escape from school and also, often, from a problem-ridden family. It is an entree to cash, cars, and girls. He cannot appreciate that his job opportunities are limited by his lack of education.
Even in the early grades, school attendance among the lower class is sometimes irregular. These children often display a good deal of hostile behavior in the school, and the middle class teacher is unprepared to cope with this. The child is sent to the office, and sent home. Sometimes because of the parent's negligence, sometimes because the school cannot cope with him, the child is out of the classroom. Regardless of the reason, this limits his learning, but still he passes. His lack of basic learnings makes each succeeding grade more difficult, and his school adjustment is so poor that, when he drops out at sixteen, the school is relieved. Hopefully, the growing awareness of the cultural conflict between the lower class child and the middle class education system will interrupt this pattern. At the White House Conference on children in 1950, Allison Davis discussed this cultural conflict, and told of the findings of empirical studies relating to it. He urged, "...the schools to discover and train more effectively many more of the able children of the lower socio-economic group." Failing to do this we will, of course, fail to utilize one of our greatest resources for the nation's development and growth toward the ideal of a good life for all.

The large number of school dropouts would indicate that little, if any, progress has been made in the school's adjusting its teaching to the needs of the child in the lower socio-economic group. At present some attention is being given the idea. On March 31, 1962, a group of

leading educators, sponsored by the National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators, met in Washington, D. C. These educators urged that the public schools design an educational plan especially tailored for the children of the slums. They urged teachers to see the smallest success of these disadvantaged children as praiseworthy. The praise can be used as an aid in motivating these children. They urged smaller classes (twenty or less), remedial teachers, guidance counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, and school social workers.¹

In relation to the variable of education, the inability to communicate well either by writing or in speech is noticeable. The vocabulary is limited, and invectives may be used freely. The ability to read is also limited. Budgeting and credit buying are not really understood because of a lack of basic arithmetic. Behavior is usually spontaneous response to feelings and seldom the result of intellectual processes.

Packard's description of the lower class continues, "...they work erratically at semi-skilled or unskilled tasks." The occupations open to individuals with limited preparation are those which require brawn rather than intellect or training. They may also be jobs which are dangerous or are unacceptable to better trained persons. There is usually limited opportunity for upgrading and often the lower class employee, because of what has been an undisciplined early life, has

poor work habits. In addition to this, the semi or unskilled jobs which he has are often the hardest hit by layoffs whether due to technological advance or economic recession. The work is usually hard, irregular, hazardous and the wage small. Often because of the smallness or the irregularity of income, the family may suffer deprivation. Because of the nearness to deprivation, the lower class individual's behavior is focused on immediate gratification. There is so much concern for the present that the future is left to chance. Because of the occupational limitations, the lower class individual must often request public aid. Here again he has problems as difficulties arise due to the lack of meaningful communication between the middle class social worker and the lower class client.

In looking at occupations among the lower class, some attention should be given to the occupations of women. Among the real lower class it is not uncommon to find the mother as the chief breadwinner because of the father's absence from the home, or because of his irregular income. Women of this class also do unskilled work that calls for little training or skill. The semi or unskilled work may include such jobs as waitress, maid, janitress, etc. Often the woman of the lower class must assume the role of provider of necessities for the family as well as play her own role as mother. In any event it is difficult for the mother, who may have difficulty in occupying her own role adequately, also to assume the father's role. This situation also contributes to a lack of comprehension on the part of the children as to society's expectations of parents. This breakdown of the socialization process in families beset by many other problems often afflicts succeeding generations.
Hostile or aggressive behavior is often the characteristic response of the lower class child of the slum. This response is learned early, and is fostered by the slum. The child sometimes sees his parents or other adults being verbally or physically abusive to each other. The parents are often physically abusive in correcting the child. They encourage him to fight with his peers and to defend himself. In this way the slum child knows aggressive behavior as a necessary and acceptable response to his environment. The chief characteristic of his neighborhood role models is aggressive hostility. The apathy of the slum adult is another expression of the lack of ego-strength that the slum child expresses by his aggressive behavior. The parents, themselves, are so lacking in personal security that they are unable to invest the necessary love in their children. This becomes a cultural trait as it is passed from one generation to the next.

Miller\(^1\) indicates that the one-sex peer group is important throughout the lower class. Because of the aggressive and destructive behavior of gangs of young people, attention and service have been focused on these gangs. Pre-adolescents usually associate with their peers of the same sex. In the lower class these gangs often continue through adolescence and into adulthood. In the lower class such gangs take over some of the socialization functions of the family, and help the boy in his male-role identity, especially if there is no father figure. Even where there is a father, the adult male's role may be so poorly

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\(^1\)Walter B. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
performed and so transitory in the lower class family that the male child has difficulty in developing male identity. In part the poorly defined male-father roles may be ascribed to the fact that the male-father roles are in process of change throughout the social system of the United States. The reciprocal role of female-mother and child are also in process of change. In Harlem a study was made of gangs. "If properly guided the street club could give the adolescent increased emotional security, develop his loyalties along positive lines and help to stimulate a sense of community responsibility. It is not surprising that many of the youth of the slum indulge in delinquent behavior. It is more surprising that some children bred in the slum are never delinquent and that some are upwardly mobile.

Another manifestation of the one-sex peer group among the lower class, is the adult female group. According to Wilensky and Lebeaux one in every four lower class families is headed by a female. These women often seem insecure as evidenced by their distrust of others. They have a great need to discuss their problems and rely a great deal on relatives. Many are too distrustful but others become friends with neighbors. They often discuss marital difficulties, lack of adequate funds, their illnesses and the neighborhood gossip. Their groups are seldom as structured as are the youth groups unless formalized through some community institution such as the school or a neighborhood center.


2Harold L. Wilensky and Charles N. Lebeaux, op. cit., p. 106.
The informal groups may get together for coffee and in times of need share their limited resources.

The male, because of his lack of training, is a poor provider. Because he often comes from a family where his father was absent or inadequate as a provider and head, he is not prepared to assume satisfactorily the father role. He has little personal prestige and often little respect from his wife and children. He may turn to drinking and the companionship of other males in the same position as the neighborhood tavern. Because this drinking may interfere with the little that he is able to provide for his family, he becomes even less acceptable to them. He may eventually leave the family and attempt to escape through alcoholism, drug addiction, or other acting-out behavior. It is not at all unusual for these men to be involved in criminal activity or drift to the "skid rows" found in many large cities of the United States.

Values would seem to be a part of all the cultural traits. The inability to delay physical gratification for future goals, especially educational, seems to keep many in the lower class.

Some cultural traits found among the lower class in the urban slum have been discussed, other implied. The reader's attention will now be directed to ethnicity. Ethnic groups do have some cultural traits which have differing implications for community organization in the urban slum neighborhood.

Cultural Traits Related To Ethnicity

During the last decade social workers have come to realize the importance of cultural factors in dealing with ethnic groups such as Italians, Negroes and Puerto Ricans. Certain
different patterns of behavior may be identified as derived from distinctive ethnic traditions and thus may be regarded as normal or expected rather than deviant. 1

During and subsequent to World War II most urban areas have again experienced in-migrants. There have been Negroes from the rural South; Mexicans, many of whom were first railroad workers and more recently seasonal farm laborers; and, over the past decade, Puerto Ricans and Southern Mountain Whites. Agriculture has become mechanized and no longer has need for vast numbers of unskilled laborers. Many of the migrants have come to the urban areas seeking a better living. The more affluent members of these ethnic groups seldom migrate. It is usually those who have been unable to make an adequate living where they were. These in-migrants come from cultural patterns which in many ways differ from the prevailing cultural pattern into which they have moved.

The writer believes that it is necessary to make the statement that some cultural traits ascribed to ethnic groups are more common to the lower class than a particular ethnic group. In New York City in the 1850's it was the Irish who accounted for the major proportion of the arrests and pauperism. 2 According to the Chicago daily papers it is Negroes who are proportionately the largest group receiving public assistance in 1962 in Chicago. In the 1850's it was the Irish who were the low group as to socio-economic status but today it is the Negro along with Puerto Ricans and Mexicans. In the 1850's, criminality and pauperism were ascribed to the Irish. Today these traits are

1 Walter B. Miller, op. cit., p. 220.
2 Oscar Handlin, op. cit., p. 17.
ascribed to Negroes. Much of the behavior can be ascribed more correctly to socio-economic circumstances and the slum environment. Much of the illegal activity of the slum is supported by persons who do not reside there. Among ethnic groups a lower class cultural trait may vary in its expression, and so may be ascribed to the ethnic culture.

Some writers indicate that dwellers in the slum are preponderantly Negroes and more recently Puerto Ricans.¹ This writer does not have statistics which are definitive. It is apparent, however, that, because of widespread educational and occupational discrimination, the majority of Negroes are frozen into the real lower class. The South, especially the rural areas of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi, has practiced this discrimination so rigidly that Negroes from those areas who migrate to urban areas are especially handicapped. Many are completely illiterate. Most have only an elementary grasp of the tool subjects. Those who have been tenant farmers or sharecroppers, and most who migrate have been, are completely intimidated by fear of physical violence from the white man. Lynchings, beatings, castration have occurred in the rural South. These events often went unpunished prior to World War II. The Negro leaves this situation often under cover of darkness. It is impossible, however, for him to leave the cultural and emotional effects of this system. The instilled fear causes this Negro, unconsciously, to hate himself and covertly to hate the white man. In urban areas, at its most pathological, such

fear is expressed in crimes of violence but more commonly in petty dishonesty and sexual promiscuity. When the social worker can understand the culture from which these people come and the psychological damage perpetrated by the southern system, the behavior can be understood.

It is essential to understand that all socio-economic classes are represented among ethnic groups. As in the predominant culture there are fewer persons in the real upper class, so it is with the ethnic groupings. In the United States because of limited education, the low prestige of the occupations usually open to members of ethnic groups and the severe discrimination practiced against them, the majority are in the lower socio-economic class. As Italians, Jews and some other ethnic groups are less identifiable in appearance than Negroes, Mexicans and some Puerto Ricans, they are therefore more rapid in their upward mobility.

Cultural implication as related to ethnicity constitutes a subject in itself, and cannot be adequately handled in this paper. There are many members of ethnic groupings found among the lower class in the urban slum. The community organizer in order to be effective must be aware of these differing cultural traits.

The former plantation culture of the Southern Black Belt is responsible for many socio-cultural traits which are often manifested in the life of the Negro in the urban slum. Rigid discrimination and segregation have prevented large numbers of Negroes from becoming acculturated into the prevailing culture. Many Negroes who are not of the lower class are found in the urban slum because of the widespread
pattern of segregation in urban housing. The status role of the lower class Negro male is similar to that of the lower class white male. Among Negro males the tendency to reject the responsibility of family life may be greater. In the plantation culture Negro males did not have the responsibility of being the head of the family, and the lack of education and acculturation prevent more adequate role performance. The real lower class are emotionally deprived. They are often without aspiration or motivation. With the in-migrants, however, there may be some motivation for improving their condition, as their move to the city was an improvement over their previous condition. If social work agencies can aid them in becoming urbanized, they are likely to be upwardly mobile.

Mexicans, too, are crowded into the urban slum. Their families are different from those of the prevailing culture in that they are patriarchal and extended. Women are subordinate to men. As the children of these families become acculturated, they find themselves in conflict with the culture of their parents. The permissiveness of the prevailing culture and the strictness of their fathers often have the effect of confusing the children. As do other youth in the slum, they turn to gangs. These are a source of socialization and, perhaps, protection. Mexican adults are reluctant to join groups for community betterment. They seem to have a fear which may be a carry over from their previous experience with an authoritarian type government. The language makes it difficult for the prevailing culture to be interpreted to the adults. Many times the adult is dependent on the child for interpretation of the urban scene. These people are often Catholic
and most of the activity outside of the home involves fiestas of a religious origin.

Many American citizens who are Puerto Rican have migrated from their island home to mainland urban areas in hope of bettering their economic condition. As with the Mexicans, the Puerto Rican family is patriarchal, and somewhat handicapped by the language difference. They tend toward extended families and are often crowded together in the small slum housing unit. Some of the Puerto Rican in-migrants are well educated. They find housing in the urban areas other than the slum, especially if they are fair-skinned. They are prepared to earn their living in occupations that carry more prestige than the occupations that are usually available to in-migrants. The Puerto Ricans, who are friendly people, often experience prejudice for the first time when they come to the United States. Sometimes their adolescents react to this prejudice with destructive behavior. Often the young people are experiencing the second generation cultural conflict. Puerto Ricans seem to have more facility for participating in neighborhood affairs. Of course, the cultural traits of patriarchal families, the father's authoritative voice in decision-making, the subservient role of women have implications for community organization.

Southern Mountain Whites have, for at least the past decade, been migrating more and more to urban areas. They are most distinctive as to dress and speech. Because of their poor education and lack of occupational skills, they are often at the bottom of the socio-economic scale in the urban area. The Southern Mountain Whites are as unprepared for urban living as are the rural southern Negroes. They are not
familiar with a cash economy and easily fall prey to the "dollar down and a dollar a week" predators. They are conditioned to being crowded into small living areas. Often, they seem intellectually limited. This may have to do with in-breeding, as many of these people have come from isolated mountain areas. Emotionalism in religious expression may be common to most lower class groups, nevertheless, the forms of expression among Southern Mountain Whites sometimes make newspaper headlines.

Some of the ethnic cultural traits may have differing implications from those of the dominant lower class group for community organization in the urban slum neighborhood. There are other ethnic groups in the urban slum such as Jews, Cubans and Italians. However, just as we have found few differing cultural traits in the mentioned ethnic groups, the basic difference in the lower class members of the ethnic groups is the mode of expression of the cultural trait. Among Orthodox Jews where religious practice so influence daily living, this is not entirely true.

Before leaving this section on ethnicity, the American Indian must be mentioned. The majority of Indians have been reservation inhabitants and have been somewhat protected by the United States government. The Indian, too, has been coming to the urban area and many times is found among the lower class in the urban slum. The socio-cultural context in which the Indians lived has in no way prepared them for urban life. The social worker in the urban slum must be aware of this and seek to understand their culture.
CHAPTER III

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Let us turn our attention to the social work method of community organization.

Social work seeks to enhance the social functioning of individuals, singly and in groups, by activities focused upon their social relationships which constitute the interaction between man and his environment.¹

As a social work method community organization is essentially concerned with enhancing social functioning at the intergroup level.

The community organization worker with professional skills brings into dynamic relation various individuals, groups, institutions and resources. He is the catalyst in establishing an interactional pattern through which cooperative action toward the goal of the enhancement of community life takes place.

Community organization for social work is conceived of as a method which oriented to the social work value system moves to reconcile the interests of the cliques (...), associations and institutions and to modify the general "community climate" all in the direction of the social work value system. The social work community organization method is conceived of as emphasizing the pursuits of social welfare goals and is one branch of contemporary community planning.²

This definition emphasizes the value base of social work. The value system in the United States is derived from the Judaeo-Christian culture and is expressed in our nation's political ideology. "... all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with

¹Werner W. Boehm, op. cit., p. 18.

certain inalienable rights. Among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.\footnote{The Declaration of Independence.} Each person is a unique individual. He has certain rights that are, or should be, protected by law. Rights also infer responsibilities. It is also a part of the value base that each individual should be aided toward the maximum fulfillment of his capabilities and for the greatest good of mankind.

Community organization is a social work method, \textit{"... a systematic ordering of certain characteristic professional activities grouped according to their appropriateness for use in given types of situations which require professional service."} In social work the core elements are study, diagnosis, treatment and evaluation. The community organization method of social work then includes these core elements. Related to the task of community organization (enhancement of community life), the elements become fact-finding, called by some authors "determination of need" or "determining the discontent;" planning or program formulation which also includes education and interpretation; implementation of plan and evaluation). These interrelated and dynamic elements constitute the basic community organization method, and establish the process necessary in the community social system.

\textbf{Community as a Social System}

As previously stated in this study, all social work is with human beings and is concerned with enhancing their interaction. Therefore,

\footnote{Werner W. Boehm, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 13.}
understanding the human entity as completely as possible becomes a necessity. Man in his spiritual, biological, psychological, sociological functioning must be seen as an integrated entity functioning in a socio-cultural milieu which is responsive to him and to which he responds. Here we seek the causes for man's behavior not only within man himself but also in the socio-cultural context, within which he functions.

Interaction must be within a group, whether it be a dyad or more than two. Here the term "group" has been used in its broadest sense, meaning more than one individual in social interaction. To understand the group, however, it should be seen as a social system composed of patterned interactions. As all human behavior takes place within such social systems, they should be understood. The community, then, is a social system, whether it be a political, geographical or interest group. It will help in the understanding of community organization to examine briefly the elements of which the social system is composed and the processes which articulate these elements.

The elements of the social system\(^1\) are: knowledge and belief, sentiment, goal or objective, norm, status-role or position, power, sanction, facility, and, underlying all of these, value. The processes which articulate these elements are of two types: 1) the specialized processes which articulate each element and 2) the master or comprehensive processes which affect all or more than one element. These processes account for the dynamic, integrative, ongoing functioning

\(^1\)Charles P. Loomis, Social Systems (New York, 1960), pp. 5-6.
of the system. The specialized elements are: thinking, believing, sensing and understanding for the element knowledge; management of feeling for the element sentiment; goal-directed functioning for the element goal or objective; evaluation for the element norm; status-roles for the element rank; decision-making and action initiation for the element power; application of sanctions for the element sanction; utilization of facilities for the element facility. The comprehensive processes are communication, boundary maintenance, systemic linkage, social control, socialization and institutionalization. In addition, territoriality, size and time are conditions of social systems. The community organizer uses this general knowledge about all social systems to understand and interpret the community.

Community Organization Process

The core elements in community organization are interrelated and ongoing. There is evaluation, fact-finding, interpretation, planning, revision of plans, reinterpretation and reevaluation. Process is dynamic and integrated.

Essential to the community organizer is knowledge and understanding of the community; therefore, fact-finding is important. Usually the organizer's primary relation to the community, especially at first, is through the agency in which he is employed. The organizer, therefore, must understand the agency's goal and its function as a social sub-system in the particular community. The organizer must learn the organizational structures of the agency and the community. Geographical as well as other physical characteristics of the community are learned.
Demographic information is essential, as is knowledge of the economic life, the institutions, the leadership, and the interests of the power structure as it relates to the community. Along with demographic information, there should be socio-economic facts as they relate to particular neighborhoods. The organizer needs information as to the various groupings in the community. It is essential to understand the patterned interaction of the community, which helps in determining the amount of community integration.

Much of the knowledge concerning the community may be gained through the agency; however, a great deal of the knowledge the worker must obtain through contact with the community residents, institutions, health, welfare and other agencies. Many resources of the community are utilized in gaining necessary information, and a continual source of information for the organizer are the groups with which he works.

In determining facts about the community and significantly relating these facts to social work ideals and agency goals, the community problems are determined, as are community leadership and resources. Problems that are most urgent and seem most workable in terms of group involvement and available resources are selected. Sometimes the group involved must be brought into significant relationship. Further research may be needed concerning the problem. Is a research specialist needed or can the organizer with representatives from the groups involved obtain the necessary facts relevant to the selected problem?

With selection of the problem and obtaining the facts as they relate to the problem in a particular community, the organizer helps the group to obtain perspective by letting it know how other communities have handled the same problem. Sometimes in relating the means
used and the results obtained by another community and by relating these to its own community, the group can see the various aspects of the problem and the action most suited for relieving the problem.

After examining the problem more closely the group may decide to undertake only one aspect, or that a group with a wider area of operations could more suitably work with the problem. Utilizing channels of communication, appropriate groups may be requested to cooperate in the solving of a problem. The problem is refined and the steps that must be taken to alleviate it are determined.

The implementation of action on a problem call for decisions on such questions as to what is to be done and which individuals will carry out the various tasks. This process constitutes planning. Too, there must be continual evaluation of process. Have the actions taken resulted in the needed change? Does the plan need adjustment? Have those responsible for action performed adequately? Has there been some growth in community cooperation toward the enhancement of community life? Throughout the community organization process the organizer guides, aids, enables and supports, but must not take over the project. Much of the early phase of working on a project may be a new experience for the participants, hence they must learn by doing. It is often a new group or at least new persons with whom the organizer works in this phase; patience and thoroughness during this phase pay off in later phases of the project with good relationships and participants of greater skill.

The community organization process has been briefly examined. In the urban slum neighborhood, this process will be affected by the lower class cultural traits, as most slum residents are of this class.
Community Organization in the Urban Slum Neighborhood

The urban slum neighborhood is the area of concentration for the lower class in American society. Many of these areas have a concentration of poor housing, heavy density of population, inadequate public service, a lack of parks and recreation areas, poor or limited health facilities, overcrowded schools, inadequate welfare services, and sometimes a lack of coordination and planning among the available services.

The occupants often live in dilapidated older buildings that provide little light, unless it is public housing which may be a high-rise facility. In the slum the occupant lives so close to his neighbor and there is so much aggressive behavior that the opportunities for conflict are great. Many slum areas have been rezoned for commerce or industry. In many areas the zoning laws are not enforced and have not been for many years. The slum dwellers often live in mixed commercial and industrial areas. The landlord is absentee, and only the agent is seen when the rents are past due. These landlords are disinterested in restoration of their slum properties. Moreover the courts seem to have minor success in enforcing the building code in bringing about improvement in these buildings.

Because of the personal problems of the slum dwellers and the social disorder in the midst of which they live, they are reluctant in developing intimate relationships. They are often in fear of the criminals over whom the police seem to have little control. When first approached by the community organizer, they may be extremely suspicious. Often, the only person in their experience with whom the organizer can be
associated is the public assistance worker. Seldom among the lower class has the contact with the public assistance worker been one which was pleasant; therefore, the organizer's efforts to interest the slum dweller are often greeted with resistance.

The slum resident's goal is usually limited to gratification of physical desire. His values limit his ability to work toward future goals. Often the norms of the slum are much lower than those of other urban areas as there is a concentration of criminal behavior, with which the police seem unable to cope. A seeming indifference to crime develops. Only a few members of the lower class participate in criminal activity but the lower class child may often be in conflict with the law. The male adult may be in and out of jail because of disorderly conduct, alcoholism, and at times more serious offenses.

The slum resident is aware of his low job prestige, his lack of prestige as a slum resident, his general lack of status. The slum resident who has prestige is upwardly mobile and unless prevented by discrimination or other factors beyond his control soon moves out of the slum. Those remaining have little rank or power.

In community organization, knowledge is needed. The organizer must work with all, but some natural leadership potential is needed. At the neighborhood level, block clubs are often the base organization. If there are no such clubs, the community organizer must set out to determine what organizations exist and have concern about the neighborhood. Often interest will be only from the agencies, businesses, schools, churches or other such institutions in the neighborhood. These can be used as a first contact, but where the concern is enhancement of functioning at the neighborhood level, the residents, or at least the representatives
from their organizations, must be involved. In the urban slum, where there is much suspicion, this takes time. It means home visits in the area, giving the residents an opportunity to know the organizer and his reason for being in the neighborhood. The organizer carries the burden of the contact in exploring the interests of the residents. It seems that the lower class residents become interested in neighborhood activities only as they see immediate gratification for themselves. The organizer gets to know the leaders in the neighborhood and the groups with whom they are effective. Where there is a need and no existing organization, an attempt is made to organize groups.

The organizer must use himself skillfully in relationship, especially in the urban slum neighborhood. It takes time and frequent contact with residents in order to aid them in working together on their mutual problems or in organizing. Even where there are established organizations of residents, unless some institution has developed leadership or action skills, the organizer still has a time consuming job in developing adequate skills for participation.

To help residents know of the planning, what it embraces, how it affects them, various means of publicity are used. The form of communication depends on the audience that it is to reach and is geared to it. In an urban slum it should be geared to the visual, with bright colors, few and simple words.

If the organizer’s concern is planning with the agencies at the neighborhood level for coordination or cooperation in health and welfare activities, the approach to organization will be different. The organizations serving the neighborhood will be studied in relation to
the services which they provide, the gaps in service, and overlapping services. This type of organization will involve agency professionals as well as governmental representatives.

Using agency data much information is gained. Census tract information, previous neighborhood studies, as well as information from teachers, ministers, businessmen, health and welfare workers help to provide a picture as to the services provided and needed in the neighborhood. After the purpose is clearly understood, it is less difficult to organize a coordinating group for health and welfare agencies. There will be some resistance, much of it because of agency-mindedness, but with patience and tact, the organizer can overcome such resistance.

An acute problem in the slum neighborhood is the disinterest of city officials toward the provision of service in the slum. The infrequency of street cleaning, inadequacy of garbage disposal service, police indifference and lack of zoning enforcement are a few of the ways in which the city government conveys its indifference to residents of the urban slum.

To the planners both physical and social, the slums must be developed into adequate areas which carry their own weight. "The attack on slums is three pronged: 1) public housing program, 2) housing by private enterprise and 3) urban rehabilitation." The social work community organizer has a vital role to play, as people must be brought into significant relationships in the planning and execution of all these programs. In speaking of the social worker's role in these

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Murray B. Meld has said:

The social worker can help in choosing appropriate sites for public housing, advance planning, welfare, health, recreation; in advance planning space for day care and other services to be built into the project...after occupancy to help in orientation of new families, interpret service to tenants, provide referral service and aid management with problem families.

He continues, "Urban renewal needs more social work participation in selecting sites and determining the feasibility of its redevelopment in terms of human dislocation."¹

In the slum the attack on poor physical conditions is of utmost importance and needs social work skill because of the people involved. Residents must be aided in understanding what is happening and helped to participate in such programs. Helping the residents to participate in the planning for better living conditions develops their skill in neighborhood work. Accomplishment of objectives, even small ones, helps to increase their belief in their ability to achieve their goals, and serves as a stimulus toward further accomplishments. With help of the organizer the slum resident becomes less threatened by conflict and disagreement, learns and moves on to further participation and growth. It is in such participation that the democratic process is developed. Respect for the ideas of others and a growth in the use of parliamentary procedure develops.

"Community organization" covers a great variety of things that are done by social workers to deal with all the inter-organizational transactions which are the basis for social work in the community context.²

¹Murray B. Meld, op. cit., p. 35.
The writer has focused on some of the interests of the community organizer at the neighborhood level. Attention has been given to the participation of residents because, often, it is at this level of community organization that the worker comes into contact with the cultural traits of the lower class and must be concerned with their implications. In planning and coordination of service at the neighborhood level, the community organizer must also be aware of these cultural traits, as the response to planned service is often conditioned by these cultural traits.
CHAPTER IV

IMPLICATIONS OF SOME CULTURAL TRAITS RELATED TO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PROCESS IN THE URBAN SLUM NEIGHBORHOOD

As a library study this thesis does not represent scientific observation on the part of the writer. Assumptions have been made on the basis of non-scientific observation and by inference. These are unproved assumptions and, in any event, would hold true only in some instances. It seems to this writer that basically the lack of personal esteem, hedonistic value orientations, and low educational motivation are the controlling variables in the lower class frame of reference. In relating the cultural traits derived from these variables to the community organization process, the writer sees certain implications for community organization in the urban slum neighborhood.

The lack of personal esteem would seem to include individual insecurity, low prestige and lack of occupational prestige. The lack of individual security is an emotional factor related to the inadequate meeting of the developmental need for love. Hostile aggressiveness on the part of children and young people and apathy in the older slum residents are expressions of this insecurity. The lack of possessions and wealth in our materially oriented society contributes to low prestige. The general moral and physical decay of the urban slum contributes to the low regard which the slum residents have for themselves and their slum neighbors. Persons outside of the slum often believe the slum dwellers' situation to be hopeless and regard him as completely lacking in prestige. The type of employment available to
The lower class slum residents take little intelligence or skill and is usually menial hence the slum resident is usually without occupational pride or prestige. Slum residents seem to internalize this lack of personal esteem and their response to life is conditioned by it.

In relating the lack of personal esteem to the community organization process, urban slum residents would seem to need help in being comfortable in relationships with other people. The lower class resident must first be given enough support to feel comfortable in relationship with the organizer. The organizer must get to know individuals well enough to appreciate their strengths and potential abilities, and must work toward the development of these abilities. The organizer cannot work with every person in this manner, but to develop potential leadership is essential in the urban slum. Results of even a small degree of work along these lines are often amazing in improved personal performance. Incidentally, the person's self-esteem increases with successful performance and contributes to greater growth.

At the outset in the urban slum, the organizer may be successful in getting only the aggressive individuals to meetings and therefore he must be prepared for conflict. As the participants are aided in handling this conflict, it becomes an integrative force and a step in their growth. Among the lower class slum residents, the organizer can sometimes help redirect aggressiveness from persons to community problems. If the result is successful problem-solving activity, the residents have grown in their ability to participate and have had an experience in channeling their aggression. In evaluation the organizer aids the participants in relating their actions to the achieved
results. Participants should always be commended when the participation is worthy of praise. Unsuccessful planning and action must also be evaluated with as much of the analysis as possible and also the suggestions about alternative action coming from the participants. The organizer has to help participants in keeping evaluation focused on the process and not on persons.

Some implications that seem apparent from relating the cultural traits included in the lack of self esteem to the community organization process are that the aggressive will often be the participants, the recruiting will take time due to the interpretation to organizations and preparation of representatives for participation. Problem-solving must be the focus with early concentration on short term accomplishments that lead to long term goals.

In initial meetings the agendas must be carefully prepared and time must be spent in preparing those who are to participate. The representatives may be offered turns in chairing the meetings and performing other structural functions until such time as the representatives become comfortable with each other and are aware of the functions of various organizational offices.

An organization in the urban slum neighborhood should be slow in establishing organizational structure. Some of the organizations found in the urban slum neighborhood from which membership can be sought are the churches, the parent-teacher association that is usually affiliated with the neighborhood school, fraternal organizations, ethnic organizations, organized athletic groups, street clubs, civic groups and others. Participation should not be a financial burden to the
lower class slum resident even though some of the organization's activities will need to be focused on fund raising since funds are needed for most programs.

Because of widespread emotional deprivations among children of the lower class in the urban slum, the organizer will be interested in having residents involved in programs focused on the developmental needs of children. Other aspects of family life education should also be included in the programming for the enrichment of family life in the slum. As there should be a neighborhood association of residents, there should also be an association of the health, welfare and recreation agencies serving the neighborhood. These are some implications for community organization among the lower class in the urban slum that would seem to be related to low personal esteem.

The hedonistic value orientation of the lower class seems to underlie the culture of this class. The behavior of the class is oriented to immediate gratification, for pleasure or happiness. The lack of acceptance of the idea of working toward future goals seems all pervasive. There is little belief in a "better tomorrow" through effort today. Persons of the lower class often depend on luck or chance for tomorrow. This lack of awareness of the need for planning and preparation for the future is illustrated in some youths who have careers in mind but no concept of the effort and training that must be a part of preparation for the career.

Because of the need for immediate gratification among lower class participants there is a need for regular short term accomplishments as well as the long range goals. Short term accomplishments, especially
at first, may be more effective if they are somehow associated with
the gratification of physical need. Even though a program may start
with beautification of individual yards it can grow to concern for
upkeep or provision of parks for the neighborhood. The short-term
accomplishments make the more remote goals seem more attainable. If the
lower class participant can be helped to see the relation between the
short-term accomplishments and the long term goals this can be of help
to him in becoming future-oriented. Such development in participants
cannot occur overnight, but should be a part of the organizer's long
range plans.

The organizer educates participants by assisting them in perform-
ing more adequately their assigned roles in the organization. Includ-
ing participants in the budgeting procedures and in utilizing funds
can be an aid in their acceptance of future planning. With the develop-
ment of pride in performance and accomplishment, participants will seek
additional opportunities for growth. The organizer uses the parti-
cipants' growing interests not only to increase the participants' ex-
periences in the organization but also in such a way that they are ever
broadening.

The development of the acceptance of delayed gratification in lower
class residents would be a most important change. It could be the be-
ginning of upward mobility. The cultural traits are so interrelated
that with a value reorientation toward delayed gratification, partici-
pants' attitudes and behavior patterns may undergo change. Although
this change may not be as apparent in the participants' lives, their
children may be stimulated toward educational accomplishment and become
upwardly mobile in the socio-economic scale.

Low educational motivation is closely related to the hedonistic value orientation. Some of the implications for community organization are associated with their poor grasp of tool subjects. Programming must take this into consideration and keep verbal presentations in simple words without too many complicating ideas. Visual aids such as slides or movies if they are not too remote from the socio-cultural context of the lower-class and are short may be used in programming. Publicity should be oriented to the bright and colorful where possible and if neighborhood posters are to be used there should be a minimum of words. The participants that are too limited in their use of tool subjects must not be expected to perform tasks beyond their skill.

The daily newspapers relate the high rate of unemployment among unskilled workers. Since the majority of these workers are among the lower class, it would seem that this class is most affected by this unemployment. The reason most frequently given for this unemployment is technological advance. People who have training that suits them for technological jobs are needed. Unfortunately many in the lower class cannot even be trained for these jobs as they do not have adequate basic education. Added to this is the fact that many young people in the urban slum are dropping out of school before completing high school. The community organizer must try in programming to reach the youth who have dropped out and those who are potential dropouts as well as their parents. The future job situation which will require greater skills must be made real to them. Emphasis must be placed on preparing unskilled youth for the technological jobs where they have capacity for such training. The schools, state employment agencies
industries whose future needs will be for increased technological employees as well as other businesses, must be included in the planning to stimulate young people to complete their education. Some type of employment must be found that the older persons who are not amenable to retraining can do. Able bodied men who are unemployed become demoralized; therefore, the organizer in the urban slum community must be prepared for these problems.

Another implication of low educational motivation for community organization in the urban slum is an interpretation to the school, where possible, of the lower class cultural pattern as an aid in gaining more acceptance for the child and as a guide in helping the school to adjust its curriculum to the child’s needs. Most urban school boards have excellent cultural enrichment programs. Through the local school the organizer may be able to cooperate in bringing some of these programs to the slum neighborhood.

In addition to the implications of the cultural traits which have been mentioned, there are other implications associated with the high incidence of female based households and the interactional group for social life that have implications for community organization in the urban slum. Because many of the households among the lower class are headed by women, many of the participants in the neighborhood residents' organization will be women. The organizer will need to encourage male participation.

1The Vocation Tuition Aid Plan was a demonstration program at East End Neighborhood House in Cleveland focused on intensive vocational training for school dropouts between the ages of 16 and 20.
Youth gangs are often a fact of the urban slum. The organizer must encourage work with these gangs that will aid their members in the development of personal esteem and in the ability to relate to others. Growth in the ability to relate could result in a modification of aggressive behavior.

The high rate of illegal activity in the urban slum has implications for community organization. The organizer must stimulate the participants to work at eliminating the conditions that breed crime and also to work for better police enforcement of the law. The organizer in the slums, as in any community, must skillfully use the available communications media to inform the overall community of the neighborhood problems and its efforts to solve them. Where this involves inadequate functioning of the city officials, an enlightened public opinion contributes to better law enforcement.

The above are some of the implications of the lower class cultural traits for community organization in the urban slum. The organizer must be aware that discrimination has forced many ethnic group members, whose cultural pattern would indicate middle class, to live in the urban slum. Discrimination is so pervasive. It affects education, occupation, area of residence, and almost every phase of the ethnic group members life. This is especially true where Negroes are concerned. In urban slums this results in an attitude of futility among Negro youth. The organizer must make an effort to bring to the attention of Negro youth the accomplishments of Negroes at the same time working in the overall community to encourage employers to use qualified Negroes in their businesses. Negro youth must be encouraged to
qualify themselves for other than traditional positions.

In working with ethnic groups such as Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, the organizer must often encourage the members to learn English. If the group in the neighborhood is large enough the city school board can often be encouraged to make classes available in the neighborhood.

The familial patterns in Mexican and Puerto Rican groups also have implications for the organizer where there are fairly large settlements of these groups. The organizer in programming must help the youth in the acculturation process as well as help the parents to understand the cultural conflict with which the children are confronted. The youth should be encouraged to have pride in many aspects of their parents culture. These are only a few implications of ethnic culture for community organization in the urban slum. This writer believes that the socio-economic cultural pattern in the urban slum will in many ways have an effect on the work that the organizer is trying to do there. The lower class cultural traits are often found among lower class members of ethnic groups, although the ethnic traits sometimes alter the expression of a particular trait.

The task of organizing in an urban slum is a challenge to the organizer. Many of the slum residents will never be participants in cooperating with their neighbors to bring about neighborhood improvement. Often their habits of escape have become too entrenched for neighborhood betterment or any other program to become a reality. The organizer will be aware that many of the participants could profit from casework or other professional help. If the participant indicates his readiness for such help, he should then be referred. Apathy has for
so long characterized the life of many in the urban slum that there
cannot be an immediate change. "...people resist change that threaten
basic securities; they resist proposed changes that they do not under-
stand; they resist being forced to change." Change does threaten what
basic security the slum resident has. Even if the change is for his
welfare, the resident must grasp the goal, and understand its value for
him and his family.

The organizer must be realistic in expectations. Often the "doers"
will be the middle class school personnel, legitimate business men,
churchmen, health and welfare personnel who work in the slum. While
the organizer must spend time in helping residents of the neighborhood
participate, time must also be spent in helping the city power struc-
ture to accept its responsibility for help in improving slum condi-
tions and enriching the lives of slum residents.

Socio-economic status is one of many aspects of life that are of
importance to social work due to the goal of enhancing social function-
ing. The organizer in the urban slum uses the knowledge of socio-
economic status, along with other knowledge to aid residents in cooper-
ating to improve their community life.

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1Edward H. Spicer (ed.), Human Problems In Technological Change
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study of some implications of cultural traits for community organization in the lower class urban neighborhood had significance because the inhabitants are frequently the victims of various planters. It seemed to the writer that persons performing community organization should be aware of and able to deal with the culture of this class. Too, consideration for the movement of people and goods should be an integral part of the planning. Likewise the involvement of the residents in the planning is considered sound as far as long range results are concerned. Social workers have long been concerned with the needs of residents of the slum whether or not those needs were physical, mental or social.

On the neighborhood planning level, the social worker in community organization can aid the residents of the slum to work together toward the enhancement of the area. However, the differences in cultural traits of the middle class social worker from those of the lower class slum resident can hinder program developments. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis was to examine some of the cultural traits of the lower class in light of the implications that they have for community organization in the urban slum neighborhood.

From the exploration of sociological literature the commonly agreed upon cultural traits of the lower class were identified as the variables of education, value orientation, occupation, interactional group for social life, and dwelling area and type. The literature of social work conveyed the essential elements of community organization as
fact-finding, which helps in the determination of need or focusing the discontent; program formulation or planning, which includes interpretation and education; and implementation and evaluation.

The study led to conclusions as follows:

1. An understanding of class and the stratification process is basic to the understanding of not only the society but also of the behavior of individuals and of the groups of which the society is comprised. Class greatly determines the milieu of the individual, and is the basis for his frame of reference.

2. From the works of the social scientists have emerged certain variables or predictors which tend to converge; they form a pattern, and it is this pattern that creates social classes. Included in the pattern are personal prestige, value, education, personal security and the like.

3. The variables in cultural traits lead to various forms of behavior, some of which may be anti-social and hence uncooperativeness.

4. A few cultural traits as related to lower class Negroes, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Southern Mountain whites may have significance to the community organization worker. However, the difficulties noted in the behavior of these groups may be due to language differences, and class rather than ethnicity.

5. In social work the core elements are study, diagnosis, treatment and evaluation. The community organization method of social work
then includes these core elements. Related to the task of community organization (enhancement of community life), the elements become fact-finding, called by some authors "determination of need" or "determining the discontent;" planning or program formulation which also includes education and interpretation; implementation of plan and evaluation.

6. Essential to the community organizer is knowledge and understanding of the community, therefore, fact-finding is important. In determining facts about the community and significantly relating these facts to social work ideals and agency goals, the community problems are determined, as are community leadership and resources. Problems that are most urgent and seem most workable in terms of group involvement and available resources are selected.

Procedures in community organization then call for the defining of the problem, the making of a plan of action including the selection, preparation and assignment of participations to execute the plan.

7. In the slum the occupant lives so close to his neighbor and there is so much aggressive behavior that the opportunities for conflict are great.

Because of the personal problems of the slum dwellers and the social disorder in the midst of which they live, they are reluctant in developing intimate relationships.

The slum resident's goal is usually limited to gratification of physical desire. His values limit his ability to work toward future goals.
The slum resident is aware of his low job prestige, his lack of prestige as a slum resident, his general lack of status.

Each of these factors affects the slum dwellers' ability to work together in the community organization projects.

8. In relating the lack of personal esteem, the orientation to immediate gratification, the low educational motivation, and lacks in economic security, the writer verified certain implications for the community organization worker. Among the implications of these cultural traits of lower class slum dwellers were:

a. A great deal of time must be spent aiding potential leaders to participate.

b. Help will need to be given in the use of simple tools of communication and individuals given specific help in expressing their ideas and building their sense of identification with an organization.

c. The desire for personal enhancement must be stimulated through a combined approach from agencies working in a given neighborhood.

d. Projects selected at first should be of such nature that their achievement may be reached quickly. Long range goals and projects will be undertaken only as such gratification is experienced from those projects where results have been seen.

In this study only a few implications have been mentioned; there are many others of which the community organization worker needs to be aware.
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